From *Jihad* to Peaceful Co-existence:

The Development of Islamic Views on Politics and International Relations

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I. Introduction

In recent decades the relation of Islam to politics has become the object of numerous studies. The discussions have been wide-ranging, with hardly any subject that has a possible bearing on the relation between Islam and politics left untouched.

There are many plausible ways of classifying the resulting literature. One useful way calls for distinguishing between those studies which view Islam mainly as a subject of national (or regional) interest, and those which view Islam as a subject of international relations. An example of the first kind is the study of the role which Islamic political movements play in relation to the processes of political modernization and transition to democracy which are taking (or failing to take) place in different Muslim majority countries. This has become a fashionable subject, in view of the electoral successes which many Islamic political movements have recently enjoyed in many different places. Another example of the same kind is the study of Islam in relation to national identity, and to self-determination on the basis of nationality (or ethnicity), as opposed to religion.

Obviously, questions about the conduct of internal politics and the definition of collective identity have a particular aspect, in the sense that the answers and the arrangements which different peoples arrive at are for the most part their own concern. Like Christianity, Islam is a universal religion, but it is not a universal phenomenon. Hence its particular manifestations need not all command universal interest or be of universal concern.

In addition to the study of Islam as a topic of specific national interest, Islam has also been studied in connection with international relations as a subject in its own right, regardless of whether Islamic movements attain political power in this or that region. This is the case in studies which focus on the attitude and impact of different Islamic groups and movements on human rights, war and peace, world order, interethnic relations, relations between Islam and the West— in short, foreign and international relations.

These are, then, two legitimate areas of inquiry within the broader subject of Islam and politics. Although they can be studied separately, the two areas are not unrelated. It can hardly be contested that from the time of the first Islamic polity, domestic Islamic politics had, and for a long time continued to have, fateful implications for the surrounding empires and cultures. In recent centuries, the picture has been markedly reversed: the way Muslims conduct their domestic politics has been greatly affected by modern (international) developments in the spheres of ideology as well as organization (e.g., the rise of the nation-state world order). Either way, domestic and international politics have great relevance to each other.

Despite their mutual relevance, the two above-mentioned areas of inquiry have been for the most part considered separately, or with greater emphasis falling on one side or the other. But I think there is much to be gained from a comparative perspective which pays equal attention to both. This is to be done not only for the sake of finding connections or correlations which may serve to explain changes and developments, but because patterns of change and development themselves become more intelligible when they are held in view simultaneously.

The aim of the present paper is to undertake such a comparative study, to determine the implications of Islamic political thought for present-day politics and international relations. In order to accomplish this we have to query the Islamic past in some detail. For, as it has been remarked frequently, contemporary Islamic political thought is deeply rooted in its past.

For our purposes, it is convenient to think of the development of Islamic political thought in terms of three distinct stages: Classical, Middle, and Modern. The Classical stage, from about 632 A.D. to 900 A.D., coincides with the rise of Islamic power which went uncontested until it succeeded in establishing dominion over an area stretching from the Iberian Peninsula in the west to India in the east. This stage is characterized by clear, self-confident and assertive views about politics and international relations. The

Middle stage, which lasted from the tenth century till the nineteenth, includes the periods of the Crusades, Reconquest, and Ottoman Empire. This was a period in which Muslim power saw much fluctuation. It is clear to us now that, during this period, the Classical Islamic view of politics and international relations had ceased to apply to reality, but there was no official recognition of this fact at the time, nor were there any serious attempts at intellectual innovation.

Of greatest interest to us is the Modern stage, which can be dated from the early attempts at reform in the Ottoman Empire during the first half of the nineteenth century, till the present. Although this stage is the shortest in terms of time span, it is considerably richer and more complex than the previous stages in terms of the number of schools of thought, and the arguments which have been used to support different interpretations of Islam.

One of the consequences of the richness and complexity to be observed in the Modern period is that it is impossible to make unqualified generalizations about "the meaning" or "the implications" of contemporary Islamic thought for domestic (national) politics and international relations. Nevertheless, it will be argued in this paper that when we focus on mainstream developments we notice a remarkable difference. With respect to international relations, Islamic thought has progressed from an exclusivist outlook which viewed "*jihad*" (commonly, and rather loosely, translated as "holy war") as a legitimate procedure for dealing with other peoples and states, to a position which recognizes parity and the possibility of peaceful co-existence. But with respect to domestic politics, that is, politics which takes place within each Muslim society (or territory) considered by itself, the view is different. Although we have recently seen Islamic writers discuss ideas of democracy, political pluralism and equal citizenship, mainstream Islamic thinking has yet to give up what others will undoubtedly call its exclusivist vision of divinely sanctioned political truth.

We conclude our discussion with some suggestions for a possible explanation of the difference in the development of Islamic political thought in the two areas of domestic and international politics.

II. The Classical Islamic Theory

Most scholars of Islamic history agree that Classical Islamic views about state and international relations were to some extent a reflection of the manner in which the Islamic state came into being, and the success which Muslims had in building a vast empire in a fairly short period of time.

The details of this history are well known, and they have been narrated many times. But we need to outline them again here, as this is necessary for gaining an impression of the ebb and flow of Muslim power over the centuries, which, in its turn, is a necessary backdrop for understanding the developments which took place in Islamic views of politics and international relations.

When the Prophet died in 632, he was both Prophet and political leader of the Muslim political community (*umma*) of which he was the founder. The Muslim community was initially little more than a federation of tribes, which recognized a single authority (that of the Prophet), as symbolized by the performance of religious rites and duties, primarily among which was the payment of the *zakat* (tithe).

Muslim conquests of neighboring territories began during the lifetime of the Prophet. By 628, four year before the death of the Prophet, the Persian administration in what is now Iraq was crumbling. Soon after the death of the Prophet Muslim armies moved against the two rival empires of Persia and Byzantium. By 644, the Persian Empire was overrun entirely, and its territories came under Muslim rule.

The Byzantine Empire, on the other hand, proved to be a more formidable foe. Nevertheless, Muslim armies made great advances against it, both in the east and in the west. In the east the Muslims

wrested Syria from Byzantine control, and by 674, they were attacking Constantinople. They were not successful, but they tried again from 716-717. The last major expedition on the Eastern Front of the Byzantine Empire was undertaken by Harun al-Rashid in 812. In the West, Muslims had even more spectacular successes. By 634 they had reached Alexandria, and by 718 they had occupied most of the Iberian Peninsula.

In sum, within a little more than one century after the death of the Prophet, Muslim armies had completely vanquished one empire, appropriated vast territories and laid siege to the capital of the other. How did Muslims understand this? How did they understand themselves and what they were doing?

It is commonly agreed upon that the domestic politics and ideology of the Islamic state were closely related to the relations with its neighbors, and that this connection existed from the earliest times. Between these two levels, the domestic and the "international" (as we think of it in retrospect), there is a middle term with roots in the former and direct implications for the other. This term is "*jihad*".

In a way, *jihad* may be viewed as a continuation, albeit a continuation with significant differences, of the pre-Islamic practice of raiding hostile tribes, a practice which has been, according to one historian, "an important feature of the life of the nomads of the Arabian deserts from before the time of Muhammad until the coming of the petrol motor in the twentieth century."[1] There were, however, at least three important differences. Firstly, *jihad* took place on much larger scale in terms of number of men who were involved, the size of the territories which were affected, and the duration of control. Secondly, *jihad* took the Muslims very quickly to lands which lie outside Arabia. Lastly, unlike pre-Islamic raiding activities, a new religious justification was now involved.

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[1] W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1986), p. 15.

The first difference was obviously a function of the success which the new religion was having in terms of gaining adherents. But the other two differences were a function of the new ideology which the new religion represented. Tribes which joined the new Islamic community, becoming part of the "Islamic state" could not very well make raids against each other, since they were all believers. They were part of the new *pax Islamica*, as it has been called. As the "Islamic peace" expanded within Arabia itself, the possibility of internal raiding was closed. The only remaining possibility was for this activity to go farther a field.[2]

In terms of justification, raids came to be described as *jihad*, or "striving in the path of God". This is how Islamic raids against the pagan communities were referred to soon after the first Muslim victory at Badr (623) against Meccan polytheists. So were the expeditions which took the Muslims farther a field, east and west.

The process of growth of the early Muslim polity proceeded in accordance with pre-Islamic practice: the formation of alliances between tribes. The early Islamic state was a federation of tribes, a super-tribe, as one writer put it.[3] During his life-time, the Prophet was the undisputed leader of the Muslim community. After his death his followers resorted to the pre-Islamic tribal practice of choosing the head of the tribe: election by the heads of the most important clans. But given the heterogeneity of the Muslim "super-tribe", it was unlikely that process would work for long. Already on the occasion of the election of the first caliph, disagreements emerged between the Meccan and the Medinan following of the Prophet. So after an initial strife-ridden period of rule by the non-hereditary "Rightly Guided Caliphs" (632-661) whose election proceeded more or less in accordance with traditional tribal

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[2] Ibid., p. 17.

[3] Ibid, p. 17. Cf. Bernard Lewis, "Politics and War", in *The Legacy of Islam*, ed. Joseph Schacht (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 157.

customs,[4] the Islamic state adopted a system of government which was more similar to that of neighboring imperial governments than traditional tribal ways: hereditary kingship, justified by religion, but maintained by force and/or negotiated alliances.

To early Islamic theorists, Islamic politics and relations with other nations were not governed by economic necessities, realities of power distribution, or pre-Islamic Arabian customs. On the contrary, they were divinely ordained in style and substance. To the early theorists, the state existed by virtue of a divine contract based on the *Shari'a* (sacred law).[5] Hence politics was not separated from religion, and political science was considered to be part of theology.[6] The need, even the necessity for a divine government, was deduced from either one of two sources. Some said humans needed divine guidance in government because humans were by nature war-like and destructive and could not govern themselves by laws of their own making.[7] But more frequently, the necessity was deduced from strict Qur'anic injunctions, such as the verse which says: "O ye who believe! Obey Allah, the Messenger, and those who are in authority". (Q. 4:59).[8] In either case, people needed divine guidance, which was

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[4] Khalil 'Athamneh and Jamal Joudeh, *al-Intiqaliyah al-Siyasiyah fi al-Watan al-'Arabi*, Pt. 2 [Political Transitions in the Arab World] (Birzeit: The Graduate Institute of International Studies, 2001), pp. 20-22.

[5] Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (New York: AMS Press, 1955), pp. 8-9.

[6] A.K.A. Lambton, "Islamic Political Thought", *The Legacy of Islam*, ed. Joseph Schacht. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1974), p.404.

[7] Lewis, "War and Politics", 162. The theme of human need for divine guidance in government has continued down to modern times and can be found the writing of different authors. Cf. Rashid *Ghannouchi, Muqarabat fi al-'Ilmaniyyah wa al-Mujtama' al-Madani* [Approaches to secularism and civil society], (London: al-Markaz al-Magharib lil-tarjamah, 1999), p.27.

[8] Both grounds are mentioned in al-Mawardi in Chapter One, which deals with "the Appointment of Imam" of his well-known. *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya*. See al-Mawardi, *The Ordinances of Government*. (Reading: Garnet Publishers, Ltd., 1996), p. 3.

to be found in revelation. To institute the divine law and to ensure that it was carried out, an "Imam who commands obedience" is needed.[9] Obedience to the Imam was thus considered a religious as well as political obligation.

How did political community come to be defined in Islamic thinking? According to one writer, the great majority of the Arabs in the early seventh century had no concept of the body politic other than the tribe.[10] The basis of their social solidarity was kinship and blood-ties, real or imagined. Although the early model of Islamic political community was at first the tribe, this had to change quickly as religion came to replace kinship as "the ultimate basis of corporate identity and loyalty".[11] Underlying the new definition of political community was the idea of universal religion: the idea, as Lewis puts it, "that there is a single truth for all mankind, and that it is the duty of those who possess it to share it with others…"[12] According to another author the Islamic political ideal was that of "a universal society, between the members of which perpetual peace was assumed".[13] This was, indeed, a religiously imagined community, in the sense explained by Anderson. It was a "sacred community", "historically clocked", and different from modern nations in its idea about who could be included in the community.[14]

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[9] Ghazali's succinct argument can be re-stated thus: Religion cannot be upheld unless man's worldly affairs are put in order. The latter cannot be accomplished without an Imam who commands obedience (*imam muta'*). Therefore, religion cannot be upheld without an Imam who commands obedience. See Ghazali, *al-Iqtisad fi al-I'tiqad*. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub, 1983), p.148.

[10] Watt, *Islamic Political Thought*, p. 12.

[11] Lewis, "Politics and War", p.158.

[12] Lewis, "Europe and Islam", in idem *Islam and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.5.

[13] Lambton, "Islamic Political Thought", p. 411.

[14] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. (London: Verso, 1991), p. 13. In this Islam was not unique, having developed in an age in which "religiously ....

Most of the ideas explained above have been elaborated in the writings of al-Mawardi (d. 1058), who is commonly taken to present the standard account of Islamic political thought.[15] At the beginning of Chapter One of his famous *Ordinances of Government*, he defines the office of the caliphate (referred to alternatively as *Imamate*) in terms of being "vicarate of prophecy". It is something which the Islamic *umma* is obligated to establish, the basis of obligation being reason or, alternatively, revealed law.[16] al-Mawardi considers the caliphate to be an elective office, but allows that the electors could be very few in number. Furthermore, "Investment by the nomination of a predecessor is permissible and correct".[17]

According to al-Mawardi, allegiance to the caliph is not an unconditional duty of the subjects, but is contingent upon the latter carrying out his duties. Of these al-Mawardi enumerates no fewer than ten. Eight of these have to do with of internal policy administration, such as guarding the faith against heretics and religious dissenters, adjudicating disputes and enforcing legal judgments, preserving internal security, collection of alms and taxes, and the appointment of good administrators. The duties which have to do with foreign nations and states are two. One (the fifth) is mainly defensive, requiring the caliph to "strengthen border posts by deterrent equipment and fighting force so that the enemies may not gain the chance to violate what is sanctified or shed a Muslim's or a protected non-Muslim's blood". The second duty (the sixth on al-

.... imagined communities" were common. Anderson mentions *Christendom and Umma* as two examples of religiously imagined communities. But if Lewis is to be believed, hostility to the idea of national or territorial political community was greater in the Islamic world than in Christian Europe, where "there were Kings of the Franks, Goths, and other people, later of France, England and other lands". In Islam, according to Lewis, ethnic titles were "rare" and of "minor importance", while territorial titles are "virtually unknown". See "War and Politics", p. 174.

[15] Watt, *Islamic Political Thought*, p.101.

[16] al- Mawardi, *Ordinances of Government*, pp. 3-4.

[17] al- Mawardi, *The Ordinances of Government*, p. 9.

Mawardi's list) is more interventionist: "[the caliph] must fight those who resist the supremacy of Islam after being invited to embrace it, until they convert or sign a treaty of subjection, so that God's claim to have the faith superior to any other is established".[18]

The caliphal duties as expressed by al-Mawardi are stated unequivocally and with great assurance. This and other statements by other classical Islamic writers on external relations have led modern writers to re-state these classical Islamic doctrines with an equal degree of assurance and lack of equivocation. Majid Khadduri, for example, summarizes the classical Islamic view of external relations in these words:

> "The basic assumption underlying Islam's external relations
> with other nations is the principle that only the community of
> believers is the subject of Islamic legal and ethical system,
> while all other communities are the object of that system,
> although the latter communities are by no means denied certain
> advantages of the Islamic system".[19]

The two communities which are envisioned here have traditionally been referred to as *Dar al-Islam* (House of Islam or Pax Islamica) and *Dar al-Harb* (House of War). Between these two houses there was supposed to be open war, until, as al-Mawardi puts it, "God's claim to have the faith superior to any other is established".[20]

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[18] Ibid, p.16. Of course, al-Mawardi was not the first to write on relations with non-Muslim nations. Shaybani (d. 804) is more frequently mentioned in connection with what has been called "Muslim law of nations". But, as Majid Khadduri has observed Shaybani "rarely formulates the general principles" on which his discussion is based. See Majid Khadduri, *The Islamic Law of Nations: Shaybani's Siyar* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), p. 6.

[19] Majid Khadduri, "The Islamic Theory of International Relations and Its Contemporary Relevance", in J. Harris Proctor, ed. *Islam and International Relations* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965), pp. 24-25.

[20] al-Mawardi, *Ordinances of Government*, 16. In addition to the House of War and House of Islam some jurists added a third, "the House of Hudnah or Sulh", provided the other party paid tribute to the Islamic state on the basis of a treaty of "surrender on terms". Other theorists argued that this made them part of "the House of Islam" See Khadduri, "The Islamic Theory", p. 26.

The explicit presupposition of the division of the world into a House of Islam and a House of War, together with the implicit idea that the former had an unquestionable right to impose on other communities a choice between embracing Islam, paying tribute, or going to war, were based on "a continued pattern of Islamic military expansion at the expense of non-Muslim countries".[21] Given this it is not remarkable that classical Muslim theorists did not pay attention to what is referred to in the Western just war tradition as *jus ad bello*, that is considerations that justify the waging of war, such as self-defense, rectification of wrongs done, or punishment of aggression.[22] Instead, their focus was on what is called *jus in bello*, that is considerations which have to do with the conduct of war. The admonitions given by the first caliph, Abu Bakr, to Muslims warriors are worth quoting:

> "O people! I charge you with ten rules; learn them well! Do not betray, or misappropriate any part of the booty; do not practice treachery or mutilation. Do not kill a young child, an old man, or a woman. Do not uproot or burn palms, or down fruitful trees. Do not slaughter sheep or a cow or a camel, except for food. You will meet people who have set themselves apart in hermitages; leave them to accomplish the purpose to which they have done this. You will come upon people who will bring you dishes and various kinds of food. If you partake of them, pronounce God's name over what you eat. You will meet people who

[21] Ann Elizabeth Mayer, "War and Peace in the Islamic Tradition and International Law", in *Just War and Jihad*: *Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions*, ed. John Kelsay and James Tuner Johnson. (New York: Green Wood Press, 1991), p.196.

[22] These are the three parts of the just cause which is required for waging a just war. See James Turner Johnson, "Historical Roots and Sources on the Just War Tradition in Western Culture", in *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions*, ed. John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson. (New York: Green Wood Press, 1991), p. 8.

> have shaved the crown of their heads, leaving a band of their hair around it. Strike them with the sword. Go in God's name, andy God protect from sword and pestilence".[23]

Lewis finds some irony in the fact that while Abu Bakr could order his commanders to leave in peace monks who secluded themselves in hermitages, he apparently had no sympathy for those "who have shaved the crown of their heads leaving a band of hair around it". Ironical or not, this should instill some caution against reading modern ideas and sentiments into old texts and ancient practices.

This is not the only point where Classical Islamic ideas about politics and international relations reveal their pre-modernity. There are some other important features which can be used to sum up the Classical Islamic views. These should be kept in mind as we proceed to dwell on subsequent intellectual developments.

With respect to internal (domestic politics) two features are of great importance. The first is the definition of political community on the basis of religion. Since Islam understood itself to be a universal religion, the community is theoretically co-extensive with the human race. Here some will no doubt say that Islam's belief in the unity of the human race, its insistence on the ultimate insignificance of race and language and ethnicity stand in marked contrast with the "philosophical poverty" and "irremediable particularity" of nationalism and ethnicity.[24] The second feature is the lack of any genuine interest in the establishment of institutions and procedures that can serve to limit despotism and autocracy. al-Mawardi's theory allows the caliph to designate a successor; the caliph can also designate the electors.[25] While most Islamic political theorists agreed that a ruler who contravened Islamic law had no right to rule, and could be disobeyed, hardly

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[23] Quoted in Lewis, "War and Peace", pp. 75-76.

[24] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 5.

[25] al-Mawardi, *Ordinances of Government*, pp. 9-13.

any one of them presented criteria for knowing when the ruler is no longer legitimate, nor did they present a theory of institutions that could be relied on to decide on these matters.

With respect to the Islamic view of international relations, the most conspicuous fact (to the modern eye) is that Islamic political thought refuses to think of other nations and religions as equal. The ideas of parity and reciprocity were not thinkable in terms of the then available categories. To al-Mawardi (and, for a long time, to others, before and after him) it seemed axiomatic that Islam is the true religion, and that it is legitimate to wage war on others because of the falsity of their religious doctrines.

In these respects, the Classical Islamic view of international relations was hardly remarkable, given the historical setting in which ideas about war and peace were formulated. It was normal, at the time, for people who took religion seriously to think in absolute and exclusive terms. Moreover, as the Sudanese author Abdullahi an-Na'im reminds us, force was the basic method used in international relations when the Islamic state was first established.[26] (According to "realist" theories of international relations, the situation has not changed basically since then, despite appearances to the contrary).

III. Transition to Modern Times

The nine centuries or so which elapsed between the formulation of al-Mawardi's theory and the nineteenth century which witnessed the first appearance of "modern" Islamic ideas about politics and international relations were very eventful. This eventfulness did not manifest itself so much in terms of ideas and intellectual innovations, as in historical developments which proved the

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[26] Abdullahi Ahmad An-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), p. 142.

inadequacy of the Classical theory. In their turn, these historical developments paved the way for the appearance of modern Islamic political thought.

That al-Mawardi's theory was not true to the facts of his time was evident from the start. In the words of Albert Hourani, "Even as [al-Mawardi's] doctrine of authority was being stated the movement of history was making it inadequate".[27] Already from the ninth century onward, Turkish mercenary soldiers, first imported during the caliphate of al-Wathiq, had begun to exercise real power, appointing and dismissing caliphs, and generally determining government policy. Independent dynasties arose in different provinces—they ruled in the name of caliph, acknowledging his religious authority, but he had no power over them. Eventually, the Abbasid caliph ceased to have power in his own capital, Baghdad. During the reign of al-Mustakfi (944-946), a generation or so before al-Mawardi was born, the Shi'ite general Ahmad ibn Buwayh arrived in Baghdad, which was supposed to be the capital of Sunnite orthodoxy, and was made commander-in-chief (amir al-'umara') by the caliph.

Not only did Muslim dominion suffer form internal division and feuding, but towards the end the eleventh century the Crusaders descended on lands which were conquered by the Muslim only few centuries before, and were not completely Islamized yet. Ghazali (d. 1111), a great theologian but also a political theorist, died only sixteen years after the First Crusade (1095). His political ideas reflect the troubled times during which he lived. They also show the extent to which the jurists were willing to make concessions when it came to the qualifications and method of electing the caliph. With regard to the method by which the caliph may come to occupy this position, Ghazali mentions three: a caliph could be designated by the Prophet, he could be designated by

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[27] Albert Hourani, *Arab Thought in the Liberal Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 10.

the previous caliph, or finally (and more interestingly) he could be nominated by a "possessor of power" (*rajul dhi shawkah*).[28] Although it is desirable, the caliph (or Imam) need not have excellent knowledge of the *Shari'a*, provided he is willing to consult with the jurists. Ghazali is willing to make a concession not only with respect to the imam's knowledge, but also his justice. His plea is that these concessions are not voluntary:

> "The concessions which we hereby make are not voluntary, but necessity may render lawful even that which is forbidden. We know that it is forbidden to eat carrion, but it would be worse to die of hunger. If anyone does not consent to this, and holds the opinion that the imamate is dead in our time, because the necessary qualifications are lacking, and he persists in this opinion but is not able to replace the imamate, not having at hand anyone who possesses these necessary qualifications, then we would ask him 'Which is the better part, to declare than the *qadis* are revoked, that all authorizations are invalid, that marriages cannot be legally contracted, that all acts of government everywhere are null and void, and thus to allow that the entire population is living in sin – or is it better that the imamate exists in fact, and therefore that the transactions and administrative actions are valid, given the actual circumstances and necessities of these times?" [29]

With Ghazali's "concessions" about the qualifications of the caliph and the manner in which he may come to occupy his position, one can say that classical framework of ideas about the constitution and the inner workings of the Islamic state has been more or less completely abandoned.

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[28] Ghazali, *al-Iqtisad fi al-I'tiqad*, p. 150.

[29] Ibid., p. 151.This passage is translated in Lewis, *Political Language of Islam*, pp. 101-102.

Just as developments within "the House of Islam" eventually made the classical political theory invalid, so relations with "the House of War" were eventually destined to make the classical ideas about *jihad* equally untenable. But this did not happen quickly. In fact, it was not until 1535, when the Ottoman Sultan, Sulayman the Magnificent, signed a treaty with the King of France, that indications of a serious change of attitude could be seen.

Of course, this was not the first time that a Muslim ruler reached an understanding with kings and lords of "the House of War". Treaties between Muslims and unbelievers go along way back. In fact, they go back to the lifetime of the Prophet himself, who made truce with the Meccan unbelievers in 628. The treaty, known as "Sulh of al-Hudaybiya", was contracted at a time when both parties were in need of a breathing space, and was supposed to last for ten years only, during which people on both sides were to be "secured and guaranteed [from attack] by each other".[30]

Subsequently, many treaties were contracted by Muslim rulers under a variety of circumstances, and for different reasons. During the Umayyad period, both Mu'awiyah and 'Abd al-Malik concluded treaties with the Byzantines, so they could free themselves to fight rivals and insurgents. Remarkably, they had to pay tribute, something which led to disagreement among Muslim jurists.[31] In 802 Empress Irene had to pay tribute to the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid; in 1192, during the period of the Crusades, Saladin reached an understanding with Richard Lionheart to facilitate pilgrimage;[32] and in 1229 Sultan al-Kamil of Egypt concluded a treaty whereby the (Crusader) Kingdom of Jerusalem was ceded the area of Bethlehem along with a corridor running to the sea.[33]

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[30] Khadduri, *War and Peace*, p. 212.

[31] Ibid., p. 216.

[32] Ibid., p. 217.

[33] *Encyclopedia Britannica* (15th ed.) (Chicago: E.B., Inc., 1974) vol.5, p. 307.

Khadduri notes that the text of these treaties was invariably brief and general, with the preamble containing names of representatives and their titles.[34] The treaties themselves were supposed to have a limited duration, a maximum of ten years, following the precedent set by the Sulh al-Hudaybiya. More importantly, they did not imply *de juri* but only *de facto*, recognition. That is, the ethical-legal codes subscribed to by the one party could not accord legitimacy to the other. There was only one type of recognition – the recognition of mere "facts of nature", which were to a great extent outside the moral order of things. This applies even to "the Peace of Amasya", which Sulayman the Magnificent concluded with the Shah of Iran in 1555. It was simply an exchange of letters in which each of the two leaders sets the terms to which he agreed.[35]

The 1535 treaty between Sulayman the Magnificent and the King of France was very different. It was different in that it implied, for the first time, an official recognition of Christianity by the most important Muslim ruler of his time. According to Khadduri, the treaty involved three major innovations: the treaty provided for a "valid and sure" peace between the Sultan and the King of France "during their lives", as opposed to the 10-year period which was customary in Islamic law; the parties were to treat each other "on the basis of equality and mutuality of interest", and finally, French subjects (merchants, travelers, etc.) were to be exempted from payment of the poll-tax allowed to live in accordance with their own laws and jurisdiction, not being subject to the *Shari'a* in their dealings with Muslims.[36]

As the Ottoman Empire grew weaker, it was forced to enter into less and less favorable treaties with Western powers. In particular, during the time between the second siege of Vienna in 1683 and the beginning of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire fought

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[34] Khadduri, *War and Peace*, p. 219.

[35] Lewis, *Political Language of Islam*, p. 83.

[36] Khadduri, *War and Peace*, pp. 272-274.

many wars which led to loss of much European territory, and to the emergence of what came to be called the "Eastern Question". In 1699, the Ottomans were forced to sign the Treaty of Carlowitz as a defeated power. The treaty of 1535 was revised in 1740 to give France the right to protect the Sultan's Christian subjects, regardless of their "Ottoman" nationality. Similar rights were given to the Russians in the Treaty of Kuchuk Qaynaria of 1774.[37] In many cases the Ottomans had to enlist the help of friendly Western powers in order to get a better deal for themselves, and in this way they were "forgetting the strategy of Holy War; they were learning the politics of survival and the new art of diplomacy".[38]

The significance of such treaties to Islamic political thought is not readily apparent. Some, in fact, may say that they have no significance at all, since Muslim theorists have habitually refused to lend juristic recognition to precedents set by caliphs and sultan whom they regarded as being less than "exemplary". Such, undoubtedly, would be the judgment over treaties which flaunted the 10-year limit of truce with Dar al-Harb, or which agreed to limiting the operation of *Shari'a* in "Dar al-Islam".

But to say this is to underestimate the indirect effect which political practice eventually comes to exercise on political theory. For despite the rift which developed early on between an "idealistic" Islamic theory of politics and international relations on the one hand, and the practices of Islamic states themselves on the other, theory could not indefinitely remain oblivious to political realities. Ghazali's "theoretical" concessions were not made in isolation from the political realities of his time. The same is true of modern period: it is doubtful if we can understand the relative ease with contemporary Islamic political thought has come to recognize "parity" between equally sovereign states in abstraction from the practices of Islamic states in recent times. Political theory, in the

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[37] Ibid., p. 286.

[38] Lewis, "Politics and War", p. 205.

end, is forced to come to terms with what exists in reality. Shireen Hunter is probably right to think that

> "The only constructive way to develop a view of an Islamic theory of international relations ... is through the study of the history of Islamic states' relations with other Muslim and non-Muslim states, as well as their application of certain basic … Islamic concepts bearing on international relations, especially regarding the interpretation of these principles to fit the external realities of the times and the internal needs of the states".[39]

Repeated encounters with the West, defeats which Muslim states were subjected to, and the unequal treaties which they had to sign, all these factors in the long run had the effect of making it practically necessary (even if not theologically desirable) to think of the "other" in terms of equality or reciprocity.

To these factors which affected the development of Islamic ideas about international relations must be added the different processes of Western-based reform during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These reforms not only implied the humbling recognition of the need to learn from the "other", but they also had the effect of facilitating further changes in political thought and attitude which were to come to fruition only in the twentieth century.

From the late eighteenth century onward, the Ottomans began to make efforts to modernize the army. European technicians were brought in, and factories were built to manufacture modern weapons and ammunitions. But the most important efforts at reform were the famous Tanzimat Reforms, from 1839 to 1876. In the field of education, the reforms meant the introduction of specialized Western-type training in medicine, naval engineering,

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[39] Shireen T. Hunter, *The Future of Islam and the West: Clash of Civilizations or Peaceful Coexistence*? (Westport: Praeger, 1998), p. 63.

diplomacy, translation, and civil service. More generally, the Ottomans sought to emulate the non-Muslim schools founded by foreign missionaries, which used a modern curriculum. Laws were also reformed to be more in line with European laws: thus commercial, maritime and penal codes were introduced in the second half of the nineteenth century. There were also administrative reforms which affected government organization, and the economy.[40]

Symbolic of the spirit of the "modern world" into which the Muslims were being ushered under the leadership Ottoman Empire is the new language of the Imperial proclamation known as Hatti-i Humayan of 1856. In this proclamation the Sultan declares his aim to be the happiness of all his subjects, and that no inequality on the basis of religion, language or race in regard to holding government posts would be allowed.[41] This was indeed a new language, never heard before, as far as the Muslim lexicon is concerned. It was spoken under European pressure, but it was also in part born out of a desire on the part of the Ottomans to make themselves acceptable in the modern European world which was becoming their world also.

Hatti-i Humayan was not implemented; it is not likely that it was promulgated on the basis of genuine conviction. But it does not matter if the new political language which the educated and ruling classes were becoming acquainted with did not carry much conviction for them, or did not have mass appeal at the time. Many modern European ideas about politics and international relations were destined to strike root among twentieth century Muslims in such a way so as to make Classical Islamic political thought a thing of the past. This process was aided by historical developments (colonization, integration into world economy) which the Muslims were powerless to prevent.

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[40] Hourani, *Arab Thought*, p. 47.

[41] Ibid., p. 47.

IV. The Modern Period

The entry of Muslim nations into the modern period meant integration into a world that was characterized by two salient facts. Both were to have important consequences for the content of Islamic political thought. Firstly, Muslim power has been greatly diminished. Two important Muslim dynasties, the Safavids in Persia and the Mughals in Central Asia, were in collapse, while the greatest dynasty of all, the Ottomans, was slowly losing many of its possessions to Western powers. This process reached its final conclusion in the final dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire shortly after the end of World War I. Muslim thinkers who witnessed this process gradually unveil before their eyes in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were not in a position to assert a distinctive Islamic "truth" against European ideas and practices. If anything, they were forced to occupy the position of the pupil who had to absorb lessons, who had to learn the ways of the modern world. A feeling of respect for the West began to develop gradually, which in the fullness of time was translated into a readiness to think of the West in terms of parity and reciprocity. From the point of view of Classical Islamic thought, this was a great concession.

Secondly, the modern world into which Muslim nations were ushered was rapidly becoming a world of nation-states. This is a mode of being which Muslim populations did not and could not experience under Ottoman rule. But when the Ottoman Empire was dismembered, many peoples and territories were forced to take this path. They were "mandated into nationhood", as one historian put it, referring to the political development which Western mandatory powers initiated in former Ottoman territories.[42] This development was bound to have far-reaching

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[42] Musa Budeiri, "The Palestinians: Tensions Between National and Religious Identities," in Joel Beinin and Joe Stork, eds. *Political Islam*. (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 1997), p. 194.

consequences for Islamic political thought, long used to the idea of the "universal community of believers" which transcends all distinctions of language and race, and which does not recognize geographical boundaries. Now Islamic political thought had to come to terms with "the national community", in many ways the very antithesis of the universal community.

Many Islamic political movements, schools of thought, and intellectual orientations flourished during the last two centuries or less, since Western influence over Muslim life began to gather momentum. But lest we lose sight of the "forest" on account of the many trees to be found here, two "macro" traits of modern Islamic political thought, associated with main-stream developments, should be noted.

Firstly, modern mainstream Islamic political thought still envisions the establishment of an Islamic state. Nothing that has taken place in the intervening centuries since the Classical period has succeeded in convincing the great figures of the modern period of the need or the desirability of making a clean separation between the spheres of religion and politics. Thus opposition to secularism in all its forms (liberalism, nationalism, socialism, humanism) is a theme which runs through many otherwise moderate Islamic writings.

Nevertheless, mainstream Islamic political thought knows that the only realizable type of Islamic state for the time being is a "nation-state" type of Islamic state. In other words, it know that, to succeed at all, it must succeed in a world of nation-states. For this reason attempts are made to come to terms with nationalism, without forsaking altogether the idea of a single Islamic *umma* with no ethnic or linguistic boundaries.

Secondly, mainstream Islamic political thought has dropped the traditional "House of Islam vs. House of War" terminology, and with it, the idea of waging *jihad* on non-Muslims for the sake of propagating the Faith. Having reached maturity in a world of diminished Muslim power, and superior Western force, it is content

to call for equality and reciprocity when it comes to dealing with other nations and religions. As far as goal of the universal community is concerned, it has been part of the process of adaptation of Islamic thought to external reality to postpone the goal so far into the future, so that, as one writer puts its, "it becomes transformed from a historical goal, achievable within historic time, into a messianic goal to achieved at some distant and unknown time".[43] Consequently, the notion of *jihad* is gradually re-interpreted to mean self-defense against aggressors, the peaceful propagation of the Faith, or some other equally inoffensive proposal.

We shall return to these two traits of the mainstream in order to explain the apparent lack of parallelism between them with regard to the question of the relation between religion and politics. But for now we need to take an overview of the range and variety of schools of thought which have found followers among Islamic thinkers, political activists, people, and political movements. Here we are initially faced with a bewildering variety of terms that have been used to describe different Islamic ideologies. A partial list of adjectives includes: Fundamentalist, Extremist, Terrorist, Radical, Traditionalist, Revivalist, Moderate, Militant, Modernist, Reformist, Liberal, Conservative, and Leftist. Most of these names capture something of the essence of this movement or that, but a classification system is needed to put order into this bewildering variety.

For the sake of completeness, we shall consider not only those Islamic ideologies which have succeeded in establishing political movements or parties, but also those which have been restricted to the realm of intellectual discussion, or which may even be opposed to the idea of political organization on the basis of religion. (These, too, may are not altogether irrelevant to what transpires in reality). Having said this, we shall use two classifications which (together) succeed in capturing most, if not all of the intellectual and political

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[43] Hunter, *The Future of Islam*, p. 63.

movement that have had an impact on Islamic scene. The two classifications to be presented here are not unrelated, but exact correspondence is not to be expected in all cases.

The first classification considers Islamic ideologies and movements in terms of the *methods of action* which they encourage or allow. From this perspective we can distinguish between three groups: Militant, Popular, and Official. Militant Islamism allows the use of violent methods of action, which their opponents, specially in the West, will not hesitate to describe as "terrorist". They have a "revolutionary" aspect, and they may encourage infiltration of the armed forces in the hope of reaching power by mean of an army rebellion. Typically, such groups are not overly concerned with grass-roots activism. The "masses", which are kept at a distance, are expected to rise up suddenly after cataclysmic events helped on by the militants.

Popular Islamism, on the other hand, is in many ways the opposite of this. Theirs is a grass-roots type of activism. Typically, they form political parties, create civil society organizations, and they seek to Islamize society in a gradual and peaceful sort of way. For this reason they have been often willing to participate in elections, even when elections take place under constitutions and systems of governments which are (from an Islamic viewpoint) essentially flawed.

What we may call "Official Islamism" is a not a commonly recognized type of Islamic activism, but it deserves separate recognition on account of its distinct mode of operation, and the impact which it has had nationally and internationally. What we intend to refer to here is "the religious establishments" in different Muslim countries which receive financial support form the governments, by means of which they are able to support charities, mosques, and schools which spread a certain type of conservative Islamic doctrine.[44] Members of the

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[44] In this connection one can mention the debate which arose in some Western countries (America in particular) over the activities of Saudi charities in the world (sponsoring "terrorist" organizations and teaching intolerance) after the events of September 11.

religious establishment generally support policies and programs of change under government guidance. Like governments in most Muslim countries, this type of Islamic activism is hostile to Militant Islamism, and deeply suspicious of the democratic implications of Popular Islamism.

The second classification of Islamic ideologies (and movements) is the more familiar classification in terms of the general character of the ideas and concepts which they employ. Under this heading it is possible to distinguish at least three distinct orientations: Fundamentalist, Centrist, and Liberal. All have implications in the areas of domestic and international politics.

Of all these orientations, Fundamentalist Islamism is in some ways the simplest and easiest to deal with. The Fundamentalist view of domestic and international politics is governed by a conception of Islam, which (to external observers) is "static" and "immutable". Fundamentalists do not see religion as being shaped by social reality and development; on the contrary, they think religion should shape social development and reality.[45] Their attitude towards modernity is deeply hostile. Speaking of the Qutbians, Takfirists, and Jihadists, one writer says that they neither want to modernize Islam, nor do they want to Islamize modernity; rather, they are simply "anti-modernity".[46]

In their vision of the Islamic state, Fundamentalists do not depart very widely from the ideal that was laid during the Classical period, except (perhaps) in so far as they explicitly deny certain

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[45] Barbara Stowasser, "Women's Issues in Modern Islamic Thought", in *Arab Women: Old Boundaries and New Frontiers*, ed. J. Tucker. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 4.

[46] Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*. (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 231. Compare this to Kurzman's estimate of the "Revivalists" who "call upon modernity in the name of the past", instead of calling upon past in the name of modernity, as the liberal Islamists do. See Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 6.

modern notions which they regard as un-Islamic, such as the idea of popular sovereignty, or the idea that people (or their representatives) have a right to legislate laws. Sayyid Qubt's words in this regard have been taken to heart by most contemporary Fundamentalists:

> "The right of ruler-ship gives rise to the right to legislate to people, the right to prescribe a way for people to live, a right to institute the values which this life is to be based on. ... Whoever claims for himself the right to legislate a way of life for a people thereby claims divine authority over them, for he seeks to appropriate the most important attribute of divinity. Whoever amongst the people accepts this claim has thereby agreed to make this person a God in place of the true God, for he attributes to him the most important attributes of divinity".[47]

Thus Article 72 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, whose formulation is supposed to have been influenced by Imam Khomeini,[48] states that "The Islamic Consultative Assembly cannot enact laws contrary to the usul [fundamental principles] and ahkam [rules] of the official religion of the country";[49] even a moderate Islamic thinker such al-Turabi says quite clearly that "there is no place in Islam for a popular government which is separated from the Faith", that democracy in Islam means "popular power in accordance with shari'a [divine law]".[50] It is this

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[47] Quoted in Nasr Hamid abu-Zayd, *Naqd al-Khitab al-Diniy* [critique of religious discourse]. (Cairo: Sina lil-Nashr, 1994), 105. For a general and systematic description of the Islamic system of government as seen by "modern" Fundamentalist see Mahmoud al-Khalidi, *Shura* [Consultation]. Beirut: Dar al-Jeel, 1984.

[48] Mayer, "War and Peace in the Islamic Tradition and International Law", p. 206.

[49] Gisbert H. Flanz, "Islamic Republic of Iran,", in *Constitutions of the Countries of the World*, ed. Albert P. Blaustein, and Gisbert H. Flanz. (Bobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc. 1992), p. 46.

[50] Hasan Turabi, *Qadaya a-Hurriyyah wa al-Wihdah wa al-Shura wa al-Dimoqratiyyah* [Questions of freedom, unity, consultation and democracy]. (n.p.: al-Dar al-Su'udiyyah lil-Nashr, 1987), pp. 63-64, 67.

insistence on the central role of divine law, which is supposed to have equal power over the ruler and the ruled, that has led some authors to speak of the form of Islamic state as a type of "nomocracy". [51]

With respect to nationalism and belief in the transnational Islamic *umma*, it is possible to obtain an impression of tension between the two in the aforementioned Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thus whereas Article 9 emphatically states that "No individual, group or authority, has the right to infringe in the slightest way upon the political, cultural, economic, and military independence the territorial integrity of Iran", Article 11, nevertheless insists that "…all Muslims form a single nation, … and [the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran] must constantly strive to bring about the political, economic, and cultural unity of the Islamic world".[52] What is not clear is how the pan-Islamic goal can be achieved without infringing on the national integrity of the modern Muslim nation-state, something which is protected by International Law. The latter does not view relations between "sister" Muslim states (for example, Iran and Iraq which fought against each other from 1982 to 1988) as internal relations within one and the same "*umma*" (nation). There is a lesson in realism here which Fundamentalist Islamism is having to learn.

Of all Islamic schools of thought, Fundamentalist Islamism is the only one which continues to give credence to the Classical conception of *jihad* as something which involves active (violent, if need be) propagation of the Islamic faith. Here reference can be made to the preamble of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran which speaks of striving to "prepare the way for the formation of a single world community", a task which the Army will presumably help with, since it is entrusted with the

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[51] This is the term which is used by Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, p.14, and Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 218.

[52] Flanz, "Islamic Republic of Iran", pp. 20-21.

task of "*Jihad* in God's way; that is, extending the sovereignty of God's law throughout the world".[53] Particularly forceful in this regard is Imam Khomeini's speech on July 20, 1998 on the occasion of accepting cease-fire with Iran, in which he said

> "Our war is one of ideology and does not recognize borders or geography. We must ensure the vast mobilization of the soldiers of Islam around the world in our ideological war. …We say that as long as there is infidelity and polytheism, there will be struggle, and as long as there is struggle, we will be there".[54]

Reference may also be made to the view of Sadat's assassins who belonged to the Fundamentalist group al-Jihad. In a pamphlet called "*Al-Farida al-gha'ibah*" ("The neglected duty") they reject attempts to re-interpret *jihad* as self-defense, and assert that "Islam had been spread by the sword and that Muslims were duty bound to take the military initiative against unbelievers".[55]

The military echoes to be heard in Khomeini's voice, as well as that of Sadat's assassins argue for identifying Islamic Fundamentalism (in our second classification) with Militant Islamism (in our first classification). I think the identification is plausible, subject to some caveats. For example, it possible to argue that the Fundamentalists are not all of the same type, that transition in and out of violence may depend on contingent circumstances, such as location vis-à-vis governments. The Wahhabi religious movement which underpins the regime in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is no less deeply "conservative", "rigid" and "literal" in its interpretation of the Faith than the Khomeini movement. But it differs in its interests, its alliances, as well as its

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[53] Ibid., pp. 8-12.

[54] Quoted in Mayer, "War and Peace in the Islamic Tradition", p.207.

[55] Ibid., 209. Mayer refers to Johannes J.G. Jansen, ed., *The Creed of Sadat's Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East* (New York: MacMillan, 1986), p. 193.

"fundamentalist" interpretation of the Faith (Sunnite vs. Shi'ite). In its method of action it has not been revolutionary, preferring to spread its conservative version of Islam by use of oil money. Nevertheless, the same Saudi fundamentalist milieu gave rise to 'Usama bin Laden and his followers, as well as occasional armed confrontations within the Kingdom. Obviously, Fundamentalist Islamism can assume different forms. Sometimes the difference between those who are "revolutionary" and those who are "conservative" is, as one writer puts its, "one of tone, mood, decibel, need to act, and act now".[56]

In terms of numbers, it is safe to say that Fundamentalist Islamism does not have a large following. The same is true of Liberal Islamism, to which we now turn (leaving mainstream, or "Centrist Islamism", to the last). In almost every other aspect, Liberal Islamism is the exact opposite of Fundamentalist Islamism. Liberal Islamists tend to be academics, "men of learning", or civil society activists. In keeping with their liberalism and "enlightenment", their mode of action shuns violence and encourages dialogue and toleration. They are not "party builders" either, which means that their impact on society (if they have one) is most likely to be of the indirect sort, and not immediately visible.

Like the Modernists and the Reformists, with whom they have much in common, Liberal Islamists tend to "perceive" Islam as a dynamic religion, and they emphasize its "openness" and "permissiveness" …which allow them to consider the factors of time and societal change in their interpretation".[57] As many writers have remarked, Liberalism comes in a variety of forms. Accordingly, some Liberal Islamic thinkers have argued that liberal injunctions can be explicitly found in Divine Law, while others have argued that Divine Law is "silent" on political and many other affairs of this world; still others have argued that

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[56] Stowasser, "Women's Issues", p. 7.

[57] Ibid., p. 3.

religion (like any other form of human knowledge), must be interpreted within human needs and limitation.[58]

With respect to their vision of domestic politics, the most noticeable thing about the liberals is that they are willing to live with nationalism. Their political realism leads them to believe that the Islamic *umma* in an untenable notion. More remarkably, some have been known to throw the door wide open for secularism. This applies particularly to Ali ʾAbd al-Raziq who wrote in 1925 saying that "The Prophet Muhammad … brought a pure spiritual message, with no admixture of political authority or call for establishing a state".[59] In this respect ʾAbd al-Raziq has found a worthy heir in Justice Saʾid al-Ashmawi who believes that "the form of government in Islam is that which follows the spirit of religion. … [it] flows from the will of the people and rules in the name of the people for the people".[60] According to al-ʾAshmawi, the government in Egypt is Islamic, because it does not prevent people from performing their religious duties, and works for justice. "Every government looking for justice is an Islamic government".[61]

Because of their willingness to accommodate nationalism and secularism, the Liberal Islamists' view of domestic politics may be considered to be "modern". Modernism is also the hallmark of their view of international relations. Some are explicit in their criticism of the shortcomings of *Shari'a's* in this area. According to Abdullahi an-Na'im, *Shari'a* is "in direct conflict with the Charter of the United Nations"; furthermore, "*Shari'a's* underlying theme of a permanent

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[58] See Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 244; Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*: *A Sourcebook*, pp.14-17.

[59] Ali ʾAbd al-Raziq, *Islam and the Principles of Government*. (Cairo: Matba'at Misr, 1925), p.64.

[60] Saʾid al-ʾAshmawy, *The Essence of Islam*. (Cairo: Madbouli al-Saghir, 1996), p. 52.

[61] Joyce M. Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam: Profiles in Islam*. (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997). "Interview with Saʾid al-Ashmawy", p. 160.

state of war with, and non-recognition of non-Muslim states repudiates the entire basis of modern international law".[62] In common with his teacher Mahmoud Taha, who held similar views for which he was put to death during the rule of the Sudanese General Ja'far al-Numeiry in 1984, an-Na'im in effect argues that large sections of the Qur'an are no longer valid. He advocates reform in the *Shari'a* so as to bring in line with modern international law. The only way to achieve the desired reform is to

> "substitute as bases of Islamic law those clear and definite verses of the Qur'an and related Sunna that sanction the use of force and in propagating Islam among non-Muslims and in upholding it among renegade Muslims with texts of the Qur'an and Sunna that enjoin the use of peaceful means in achieving those objectives".[63]

Liberal Islamists do not hesitate to re-interpret the notion of *jihad* so as to accord with modern notions about non-aggression. To some like Ashmawi, *jihad* is not holy war; what it mean, rather, is "to control yourself, to refine yourself… and as you fight, it is only for self-defense".[64] Others have sought to view *jihad* in terms of liberation and humanism. Such is the view of Ayatollah Murtza Mutahhari, who wrote in the 1960s saying that "the holiest form of war is that which is fought in defense of humanity and of humanity's rights". To Mutahhari, the Europeans who fought along with the Algerians for the sake of the liberation of the latter, engaged in *jihad*; not only that, but their *jihad* was holier than the *jihad* of the Algerians, because it was on behalf of the universal rights of humanity.[65] This is a far cry from the classical notion of *jihad* as something which only Muslims could engage in.

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[62] An-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation*, p. 151.

[63] Ibid., p. 158.

[64] Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, "Interview with Ashmawi", p. 154.

[65] Quoted in Bruce Lawrence, "Holy War (*jihad*) in Islamic Religion and Nation-states Ideologies", in *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions*, ed. John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson. (New York: Green Wood Press, 1991), pp.154-155.

We remarked earlier that, in common with the Fundamentalists, the Liberals do not have a large following.[66] In this respect, both groups stand in marked contrast with what have chosen to refer to as "Centrist" or mainstream Islamism, to which we now turn. Initially, it should be noted that some writers do not see the "Centrists" the same way we do here. Raymond William Baker, for example, places the "Islamic center" between two forces: "discredited secular rulers, who preside over failed nationalist development projects", and "the foundationalist Islamic militants".[67] We agree with Baker in placing the foundationalists and the militants (the Fundamentalists and the Militants in the classifications which we have been using), to the "right" of the Centrists, but to the left we place the "Liberals" who are indeed sometime associated with "secular rule" (think of Justice Ashmawi who believes that the Egyptian government possesses Islamic credentials).

According to the same writer, the Centrists are hard to define. They have family resemblances, "a set of characteristics that, when found in some substantial combination, give a moderate appearance or character to the group". The most important qualities which Baker lists are worth mentioning. They include: belief in gradual change through dialogue (as opposed to the use of violence); tolerance for diversity; transnational outlook; the practice of social action; support of civil society against the authoritarian state; and openness to global dialogue.[68] Understandably, the difference between the Liberals and

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[66] Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the Fundamentalists, on the whole have more credibility with the masses, who often perceive the liberals as "insincere" believers. Davis' description of Ashmawi's life-style in her book *Between Jihad and Salaam* will certainly raise eye-brows among ordinary believers: Ashmawi is not married, he does not fast (for health reasons), and he keeps statues of Greek gods and goddesses in various part of his house.

[67] Raymond William Baker, "Invidious Comparisons: Realism, Postmodern Globalism, and Centrist Islamic Movements in Egypt," in *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform*, ed. John L. Esposito. (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), p.116.

[68] Ibid., p. 122.

the Centrist (who may all be called "modernists", reformists", and —from a certain point of view— "moderates") is often a difference of degree. For example, no single "Centrist" author named by Baker will follow Ashmawi's almost explicit support of secularism, or an-Na'im's abolitionist view of the Qur'an. But they all would accept most of the above-mentioned criteria of "centrism".

Of all the Islamic movements that claim to occupy a middle position between different contending interpretations of Islam, the Society of the Muslim Brothers, which was founded in Egypt in 1928, is probably the most well-known and most influential. It has nurtured or otherwise influenced the intellectual development of many leading contemporary Islamists, such as Hasan Turabi of Sudan (Nationalist Islamic Front), and Rachid Ghannouchi of Tunisia (Islamic Tendency Movement), and Mahfoud Nahnah of Algeria (HAMAS). But, of course the "centrist" position has not been restricted to the Muslim Brothers movement. Many individuals in and out of politics are arguably "centrists". Prominent figures include Muhammad Khatami (President of the Islamic Republic of Iran), Khurshaid Ahmad (Pakistan Islamic Front) and the well-known scholar Yusuf al-Qardawi.

Unlike, the Fundamentalists, the Centrists have come to terms with the modern nation-state, and are able to function within the framework which this latter provides (limited territory and popular sovereignty). But unlike the Liberal Islamists, the Centrists do not seem to be willing to give up on the project of establishing an Islamic state, ruled by *Shari'a* (suitably interpreted and reformed). The Centrists are typically social activists who hope to Islamize society "from below". Hence they are active in areas of social welfare, health, and education, often meeting needs which are not adequately met by corrupt secular regimes.

Centrist Islamists have also typically been willing to participate in elections, even when secular governments, afraid of Islamic victories at the ballot box, banned Islamic parties. This is what the Egyptian Muslim Brothers did in Egypt in 1984, when they participated in elections under the banner of the secular New Wafd Party, and again

in 1987, when they allied themselves with the Socialist Party.[69] But the willingness displayed by some Islamists to accept the rules of the political game as laid down by secular nationalist governments has sometimes carried them close to conservatism. This applies particularly to the Muslim Brothers of Jordan, who, for a long time, made common cause with the Jordanian regime in fighting Nasserists, socialists, and other political movement on the Left. Though they may have wanted an "Islamic Jordan", they wanted to go about this task slowly and peacefully, so as not to upset basic social and economic structures. "People have a right to expect Islamization," says one of their representatives, but "the government has a right to be choosy, to be selective in these steps, and to move when things are ripe and correct and necessary".[70]

There is no blue print of Islamic government which the followers of the "Islamic center" would be prepared to institute if they were to be given full mandate by the people, something which they have yet to obtain. It is tempting to say that the Iranian experiment in Islamic rule, with its Guardian Council which keeps watch on legislation lest it breach Islamic rules, provides a suitable model for mainstream Islamists. It is tempting to make an inference to this effect on the basis of reservations which prominent thinkers such as Ghannouchi and Turabi express with respect to the power of the legislature. Ghannouchi, for example has expressed the view that the power which the people (and their representatives) have is limited by the divine law which is to be found in the Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet.[71] Similarly, Turbi has expressed the view that "there is no place in Islam for a popular government which is separated from the Faith", and that the divine law is like

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[69] Joel Beinin, "Late Capitalist Crisis, Middle East Oil, and Political Islam", Lecture delivered at Birzeit University, on March 28, 2001, p. 17.

[70] Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam* "Interview with Kamil al-Sharif", p.138.

[71] Rachid Ghannouchi. *al-Hurriyat al-'Ammah fi al-Dawlah al-Islamiyyah* [Public liberties in the Islamic state]. (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wihdah al-Arabiyyah, 1993), p. 119.

a "detailed constitution".[72] In other respects, the Islamic Centrists are not constrained to follow the model of government to be found in Classical Islamic theory. As the Iranian experience has shown, it is possible to adopt Western modes of organization and administration while keeping to the spirit of the Faith.

With respect to their position on international relations, relations between Islam and the West, and intercultural dialogue in general, the Centrists hold moderate, middle-of-the-road views which distinguish them from both Fundamentalists and Liberals. Like Liberals, but unlike Fundamentalists, they tend to re-interpret *jihad* so that it does *not* imply propagation of the Faith by force. Says Turabi in an interview:

> "…the Qur'an itself prohibits forcing anyone to become a Muslim. So you don't spread [Islam] through military [force]. You defend yourself, of course, through argument or through military. It depends on how the aggression is If it is an aggression by words, you just reply. It it's an aggression by military, you can also defend yourself in a military manner. But the religion has to be spread freely".[73]

Cooperation with other nations and cultures on the basis of mutual respect and the exchange of interests is welcome. According to Ghannouchi, "The Message of Islam is not to uproot or ban any achievement from any civilization, from wherever it comes, but to protect, to preserve it and to build on it".[74] Some authors seek foundations for peaceful international relations in the Qur'an itself. Thus Qardawi says "The true message of Islam is peace. Islam invites all nations to come together as the Qur'an says: 'We have made you people and tribes to know each other".[75] (Q.49:13)

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[72] Arthur Lowrie, ed. *Islam, Democracy, the State, and the West: A Round Table with Dr. Hasan Turabi*. (Tampa, Fl.: The World of Islam Studies Enterprise, 1993), p.25.

[73] Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, "Interview with Turabi", p. 27.

[74] Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, "Interview with Ghannouchi", p. 99.

[75] Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, "Interview with Qardawi", p. 228.

The Fundamentalists are not likely to be found interpreting *jihad* in these terms. Instead they prefer focus on Qur'anic verses which seem to imply conflict and the use of force. (A case in point is the verse which says "Prepare against them whatever force you are able to muster, …striking fear into the enemy of God and your enemy and others beside them" (Q. 8:60), which is featured in the preamble to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran).

Still, the Centrists are able to differ from the Liberals also. With respect to their attitude towards other nations and cultures, the Liberals do not seem to be overly concerned with the issue of "Islamic cultural authenticity", nor do they seem to worry about cultural imperialism. Whether out of trust that Islamic culture will survive, or out of indifference to the eventual outcome, liberals have few if any reservations about opening the doors fully for cultural interaction between Islam and the West. But the moderate Centrists want to proceed with caution here, and they seem bent on protecting Islamic cultural specificity. Qardawi pleads for the West to "recognize our right to exist, and the right of Muslims to live their religion". His aim is for the West to see that "life can stem from more than one culture, one civilization. This variety is in the interest of humanity, not against it".[76]

V. Lessons and Explanations

It is apparent that Islamic thought has developed towards a more realistic perception of itself and the world in which it seeks to realize its ideals. In the light of the preceding discussion it is also

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[76] Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, "Interview with Qardawi", p. 232. The same idea is expressed elsewhere by Khurshaid Ahmad who claims that "the whole Islamic resurgence … is simply about one thing, and that is that Muslim people also want to order their own house in accordance with their own values, their own aspirations, their own principles in the same way that Americans are doing, that Europeans are doing". (Davis, *Between Jihad and Salaam*, "Interview with Khurshaid Ahmad". p. 247).

possible to see that the development towards realism has been uneven. In the area of international relations, the progress is clear. Islamic thought here has moved from a starting position of exclusivity and non-recognition, to the place where it is able to accept the idea of treating the "Other" on the basis of equality and reciprocity. However, in the area of domestic politics, that is the internal politics of the Muslim *umma*, the change has been considerable, but less radical.

The basic changes in the area of domestic (national) politics can be summed up in these two points. Firstly, there has been reduction of the scale of the political project. In the past, when the idea of the universal community was alive and effective, it was hoped that all Muslims (and eventually all humanity) could come to together to live as one believing community, with one religion, and one way of life. Nowadays hardly anybody believes in the possibility of a religious community which is coextensive with the whole human race. Instead, Islamic movements seek to realize their political projects in separate, independent and sovereign nation-states. Even the pan-Islamist idea has limited appeal, and is conceived of mainly as a foreign policy goal of having special cooperative relations between sister Muslim states.

The second point where change has taken place has to do the over-all moderation of the domestic political program. The need for reform and for flexibility in the application of the *Shari'a*, and the need to open and up and co-operate with the outside world, are recognized by a majority of contemporary Islamic thinkers. This new and moderate outlook has implications for important segments of society, including women, non-Muslims and the secular-minded.

Nevertheless, it is possible to say that no revolutionary transformation has taken place in this sphere. There has been little or no willingness to accede to the modern idea of "privatizing" religion, the idea of making a clean separation between religion and politics. Aside from increasing the latitude of tolerance, and some tentative moves towards the justification (in Islamic terms)

of modern ideas about the institutions of government (elections, constitutions, branches of government, etc.), the old, classical notion of the organically conceived Islamic *umma* still persists, even it is reduced to nation-state size. The new Islamic *umma*s are conceived of as organic unities; difference of belief (beyond fairly narrow limits) is not welcomed as healthy and natural pluralism, but as a precursor to strife and division.

In sum, there is a lack of parallelism that can stated thus: whereas modern Islamic political thought recognizes the "external Other" and is willing to deal with "him" on the basis of equality and reciprocity, there has been comparatively little progress towards recognizing the "internal Other" who lives inside what use to be referred to as "Dar al-Islam". Modern Islamic political thought strives to take control of the nation-state, ignoring its basic logic which says that religion is (may be) one of many elements in the definition of political identity, that other factors, such as language, ethnicity, and international recognition are equally important. Domestic non-Muslims, secularists, and others, find Islamic professions of toleration and accommodation somewhat condescending and ultimately unsatisfactory, while Islamists, for their own part, do not understand why their professions and assurances are not gratefully received. There is thus a gulf between the unqualified acceptance of the "external Other" and the grudging, and uncertain acceptance of the "internal Other".

Classical Islamic political thought, it could be said, had the virtue of self-consistency, whereas Modern Islamic political thought seems to be in a state of conflict with itself. In Classical Islamic thought the "Other" (external or internal) had to play by Islamic rules, or he was be fought. Modern Islamic thought has let go of the "external Other", but the one who remains inside still faces this choice between accepting the basic institutions and constitution of the Islamic state, or being shut out of political life.

Is there an explanation for the lack of parallelism? As far as the development of Islamic conceptions of international relations is concerned, one rather obvious historical fact stands out. Islamic

foreign relations (like all other foreign relations of that time) were struggles for domination (regardless of the motivation, be it spiritual or economic). As long as Muslims were achieving victories and expanding their control over other peoples and territories, there was no call for recognition of equality or reciprocity. However, during the last few hundred years, this pattern of expansion and domination stopped; in fact, it has been reversed, so that Muslim were put in the position of self-defense, suffering from the same lack of recognition which they meted out to the "external Other" during the previous centuries.

Dar al-Islam has been faced with a great challenge from Dar al-Harb. Recognition of parity came only after a period of challenges and defeats, which showed Muslims the limits of their power. As Khadduri puts it, "Dar al-Islam" has at last reconciled itself to a peaceful existence with "Dar al-Harb".[77]

If this is a reasonable explanation (or part of a more complex explanation) of the change that took place in Muslim conception of international relations, then one is next invited to ask if "Dar al-Islam" itself witnessed struggles and settlements of the kind that gives rise to mutual recognition and subsequent peaceful co-existence between contending parties.

This is something which is worth exploring in some detail—how internal battles were fought, the character of the different parties which he participated in them, and the type or results they eventually led to. This is a large undertaking for which we have no space here. But we can point to some general features of the internal relations within Dar al-Islam, which seem to suggest that the pattern of challenge-followed-by-mutual-recognition did not take place in any meaningful way.

Consider first the challenge that the native religions and cultures could have posed to the conquering Muslims in the early stages

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[77] Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, p. 293.

of Muslim expansion, at a time when these religions and cultures had the advantage in terms of history and the number of followers. Apparently, this did not happen. A slow process of Arabization and Islamization began in the conquered territories, and it proceeded peacefully for the most part. Those who did not become Muslim were content live under Muslim rule, subject to certain limitations, but enjoying certain advantages.

It is true that many customs and ideas were taken over from the Persians, the ancient Greeks, and Byzantines, but these were woven into the fabric of an Islamic culture which recognized the dominance and uniqueness of the Islamic voice. An instance of this can be seen in the case of the so-called *Shu'ubiyya* movement which involved "struggle over the orientation of Islamic civilization" during the Abbasid period. Followers of this movement chose to express their distinctive ethnic position by upholding the principle of equating nobility with piety, rather than Arab origin, as the conquering Arabs were prone to do. In this the Shu'ubites were following the precept contained in the well-known Qur'anic verse, which says "The most noble among in the sight of God is the most pious".[78] (Q 49:13).

This has become typical. Throughout Islamic history, social and political movements of a non-Islamic origin or character were almost always constrained to explain themselves in Islamic terms, to make peace with Islam, as it were, before they could be allowed to develop and spread their message. This applies to modern and cotemporary Arab and Muslim thinkers who developed a fondness for democracy, nationalism, socialism, and women's rights, which they learned about from the modern West. In this respect these modern thinkers have been true heirs to the classical Muslim philosophers who sought to reconcile Greek philosophy to Islamic learning. The difficulties which the moderns are facing now are reminiscent of the difficulties which the classical philosophers faced.

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[78] Liouse Marlow, *Hierarchy and Eglalitarianism in Islamic Thought*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 115

By comparison, the position which religion has come to occupy in the Modern West is very different. Christianity had to do battle with many forces and ideologies, some internal to the West (the Reformation), some external (Islam), some from the distant past of the West (the Classical Legacy of the Greek and Roman worlds), some of more recent origin (science). These challenges, powerful and continuous, have had a humbling effect on Christian political thought, which has been forced to see itself as one among many possible points of view. Christian political thought continues to make it contribution to on-going political and social debates, but, having lost the battle with secularism, it is not in a position to expect (or require) other points of view to pass a test of faith.

In the context of contemporary Western political thought, John Rawls is able to raise a question which, form an Islamic point of view, is not easy to understand:

> "How is it possible that there may exist over time a stable and just society of free and equal citizens profoundly divided by reasonable though incompatible religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines?"[79]

His answer, known as the theory of "political liberalism", is a conception society along liberal-democratic lines, which all "reasonable" religious doctrines are expected to endorse – "each from its point of view".[80]

This parity of perspectives (the equality among the different reasonable "points of view") which Rawls's theory presupposes is not a viable idea, as far as mainstream Islamic political thought is concerned. The reason is simple: the religious perspective which informs society and culture has not been seriously challenged, or say, the challenges which it has had to face were not such as to

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[79] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), xx.

[80] Ibid., p. 134.

convince people at large than religion is one among many possible ways of viewing reality.

Why has not the challenge arisen? The question which we have been seeking to answer here is why Islamic political thought recognizes "parity among the different" in the area of international relations, whereas it does not seem willing to recognize parity in the domestic domain. We are now reminded that our suggested answer – in terms of the presence of serious challenge in one case, the absence of this in the other– itself needs an explanation.

The explanation (of the explanation) has a name which is all too familiar: it is called "modernity", something which took place in the West, but which did not take place in Muslim lands. But to give a name to something is at best to describe it, to say what it is; it is not to say how it came about, or why it took place here but not there. These are all difficult and interesting questions which cannot be dealt with here. It is not obvious whether modernity is an unrepeatable event, something which is unique to the West, or whether it something that can take place in many times, and in many different places. In other words, it is not obvious if modernization is equivalent to Westernization.

At any rate, one thing can be said with certainty. If Liberal Islamism, instead of middle of the road "Centrism", were to become the dominant intellectual trend, then that would signal a retreat of the kind which took place in the West when religion lost the battle with secularism. Such a retreat would probably pave the way to political liberalism of the kind that Rawls describes. To some writers who want to see political liberalism succeed in the Middle East, Liberal Islamism is the party which must be supported, since "at the present time, secularism is declining in acceptability and is unlikely to serve as an ideological basis of political liberalism".[81] But Islamic Liberalism need not be thought to be an alternative to secularism.

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[81] Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism*: *A Critique of Development Ideologies*, p. 9.

Remembering the assertions of Ali Abdel-Raziq, and his latter-day incarnation, Justice Sa'id Ashmawi, Liberal Islamism throws the door wide open for secularism, and thus need not be an alternative path leading to political liberalism.

If this were to happen, then unity would be restored to Islamic political thought, in the sense that its prescriptions for domestic and international relations would be similar. But of course, this would represent a complete reversal of the position adopted by the Classical Islamic theorists.

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