

CONCEPT OF ISLAMIC STATE IN MODERN WORLD

Man has always endeavoured to make improvements upon his social, economic and political life. In his ceaseless efforts he succeeded to find out better ways of living, in respect of food, shelter and education. Gradually the foundations for a new set up of culture and civilization was laid in various parts of the world. Babylonia, Assyria, Greece, India and China produced some great-men who changed the norms of society and evolved profound ethical, political and philosophical ideals of life. Prominent among these were Plato and Aristotle.

Among the political treatises, Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics* occupy dominant positions. The Greek thinkers have bequeathed their legacy of political structure in a scientific shape and have envisaged rights of citizens and the principles of justice and morality with felicity of diction. Rousseau stands out amongst the modern political philosophers, and has brilliantly propounded his theory of 'social contract'.

The state as a politically organised community has existed in human history from the very early ages. The ancient Greeks called it: *Politcia*, i.e., the state and citizenship; *Polites* i.e., citizen; *Polis* i.e., city—regulation of morals, safety, sanitation, public order and law enforcement. The Romans called it *Civitas* as also *Status rei, Publicao*. The Latin term 'status' became *Stato* in Italian; *Estat* in French and "State" in English.¹ Whatever the nomenclature the concept of 'sovereignty' was always associated with a state in medieval thought. The Hindus actually called it *Danda* and even in the 17th century Hobbes conceived it as a *Leviathan*.

1. Webster's New Dictionary (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 1131 and 1424.

It was, however, in the 19th and 20th century that the concept started changing in the West. Political thinkers of the West began to take a deeper look and Rousseau's 'social contract' theory, sovereignty of the people, government as a trust and as an organization for the welfare of the people began to gain ascendancy. These political thinkers have failed to acknowledge the great debt to Islam. They seem to be immensely influenced by the teachings of the Quran as it was translated in Latin as early as 1143, and later in other languages (Italian, German, Dutch, English and French). Adu Ryer first rendered the Quran into French in 1647.² The Quran was the first book to state the attributes of sovereignty and not Rousseau, Bodin, Hobbes, Kant or Hegel. Centuries earlier the Prophet of Arabia under divine guidance set up a state on the firm foundations of solidarity through accord, equality through law, and freedom through belief in the principle of *tauhid* (monotheism).

Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.) established the first Islamic state after migrating to Madina in 622 A. D. The people of Madina accepted the Prophet as their religious as well as political leader. Prof. Hitti commenting on the Prophet's role in politics and administration, says, "He performed the functions of prophet, law giver, chief judge, commander of the armies and civil head of State".³

There was no constitution in the sense in which the word is used in the present world. The people were guided by the Quran which lays down essential principles of truth and justice for the guidance of mankind in all forms of human activity and for all times. Some of the basic principles are as follows :

1. Submission to Allah alone, which can be realised practically only by the supremacy of the *shariah* which means making the *shariah* the constitution and the law of state ;
2. The dignity of man as Allah's *Khalifa* (vicegerent) on earth ;
3. The equality of man, there being no place for tribalism, racialism and chauvinism ;

2. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 15 (London Chicago : 1974), p. 345.

3. Philips K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London : Macmillan and Co., 1949), p. 139.

4. Strict observance of the Islamic code of human rights, which is inalienable due to its divine source and cannot be violated in any way by any ruler, government or authority, and which no person has the right to surrender ;

5. *Adl* (justice) protects man's rights and obligations. When tempered by mercy it promotes kindness as the basis of relations between men ;

6. *Shura* (consultation) as the method of governance and as the process for policy formulation, decision-making and exercise of authority ;

7. The unity of the Muslim *ummah*, based on common faith and creed, as a step towards achievement of *ukhuwat* (the universal brotherhood of man).

The Quran clearly emphasises : "The words of thy Lord are fulfilled in truth and justice. There is naught that can change His justice. For He is the One who heareth all and Knoweth all".⁴

Sovereignty

The concept of human sovereignty is completely absent in the political philosophy of Islam. It is only for God to command as the Quran says: "Say: O Allah ! owner of sovereignty! Thou givest sovereignty unto whom Thou wilt, and Thou withdrawest sovereignty from whom Thou wilt. Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt. In Thy hand is the good. Lo ! Thou art able to do all things".⁵

His dominance is everywhere. His sovereignty has been clearly emphasised in the following verses of the Quran :

Unto Allah belongeth the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and whatsoever is therein.⁶

Allah createth what He will. If He decreeth a thing, He said unto it only: Be; and it is.⁷

4. Surah 6 : 116. All the verses of the Quran have been quoted from the *Glorious Quran* translated by Mohammad Marmaduke Pickhall (Hyderabad Deccan India : Government Central Press, 1938).

5. *Surah* 3 : 26

6. *Ibid.*, 5 : 120

7. *Ibid.*, 3 : 47

Lo! your Lord is Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then mounted He the Throne. He covered the night with the day, which is in haste to follow it, and hath made the sun and the moon and the stars subservient by His command. His verily is all creation and commandment. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of the worlds.⁸

His is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. And afterwards unto Him ye will be brought back.⁹

It cannot be denied that Islam stands for the sovereignty of Allah, it does not allow all powers to the people in the modern sense of the word. The people or the community exercise only delegated power—they cannot change the divine law. It is, however, reasonable to assume that the Law-giver never intended the *shariah* to cover in detail all conceivable exigencies of life. He intended no more and no less than to chalk out, as it were, the legal boundaries within which the community ought to develop, leaving the enormous multitude of “possible” legal situations to be decided from case to case in accordance with the requirements of the time and of changing social conditions.¹⁰ The Quran rightfully guides: “For each We have appointed a Divine Law and an “open-road” (*Minhaj*).¹¹ The Law-giver has granted us an “open road” for temporal legislation to meet our new requirements.

Government

Now let us see what is the idea of government in Islam? The government in Islam is for Quran and the state can never be an end in itself, it is only a means to an end and that end is the establishment of “Din”, i.e. the Islamic way of life which includes every aspect of man’s existence. The government is not for the advancement of any race or nation or any section of humanity to the detriment of any other class or section or individual but for the good of all. The Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.) and the first four caliphs had proved this ideal to be attainable.

8. *Ibid.*, 7 : 54

9. *Ibid.*, 39 : 44

10. Muhammad Asad, *The Principles of State and Government of Islam* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961), p. 12.

11. *Surah* 5 : 48

The Quran repeatedly warns against the consequences of corruption and injustice and gives examples of how the decline of mighty empires and prosperous communities was brought about by their misdeeds. We are told in the Book of Allah: "Allah never changeth the grace He hath bestowed on any people until they first change that which is in their hearts, and that is because Allah is the Hearer and the Knower".¹² To enjoin what is right and to forbid what is wrong is the duty of every Muslim (believer). This has been repeatedly stressed: "Keep to forgiveness (O Mohammad), and enjoin Kindness, and turn away from the ignorant".¹³ "And the believers, men and women, are protecting friends one of another; they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and they establish worship and they pay the poor-due, and they obey Allah and His messenger. As for these, Allah will have mercy on them. Lo! Allah is Mighty, Wise".¹⁴

The main objective of Islamic law is man's righteousness individually and collectively. The Society must cooperate to follow the envisaged pattern of Islam. This responsibility can be discharged by the state invested with the powers of (*Amr*) command and (*Nahy*) prohibition. A state which is administered in the name of God, as every state which claims to be Islamic should be, is bound to safeguard the interests of all, the poor and the rich, the minorities as well as the majority community. This can be made possible only by promoting right conduct and suppressing injustice and corruption. This was the guiding principle of administration in the days of the Prophet and the first four caliphs.

It must be admitted that after the Industrial Revolution, democracy and parliamentary form of government came into existence. The divine right of Kings was replaced by social contract principles and the foundation of the government by the people and for the people was laid. But during all these periods the separatist tendency of the church and the state had its firm roots in the Western civilization. In Islam God and the universe, spirit and matter, church and state are supplementary to each other. Allama Iqbal thinks that undoubtedly there should be harmonious adjustment of

12. *Ibid.*, 8 : 53

13. *Ibid.*, 7 : 199

14. *Ibid.*, 9 : 71

ethics and politics in any system of government. The state is no doubt a human institution for the good of mankind. Morality and state are, therefore, concomitant.

The Head of State

The head of Islamic state must be elected by the people of the country or by their representatives. He must be physically and mentally fit to administer the country. He must be a man of character and integrity, understanding and insight as the Quran says: "Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct".¹⁵ As he combines in himself the temporal and spiritual authority, he is required to be a true Muslim or believer fully conversant with the working knowledge of the *nusus*¹⁶ of the Quran and *sunnah*, and widely awake to the sociological requirements of the community.

The duties and functions of the head of Islamic state had been best expressed by first Caliph Abu Bakr. He addressed the people thus: "I have been given authority over you but I am not the best of you. If I do well, help me, and if I do ill, then put me right. Truth consists in loyalty and falsehood in treachery. The weak among you shall be strong in my eyes until I secure his right if God will; and the strong among you shall be weak in my eyes until I wrest the right from him. If a people refrain from fighting in the way of God, God will smite them with disgrace. Wickedness is never wide-spread in a people but God brings calamity upon them. Obey me as long as I obey God and His Prophet, and if I disobey them you owe me no obedience. Arise to prayer, God have mercy on you".¹⁷

15. *Ibid.*, 49 : 13.

16. The ordinances of Quran and *sunnah* are described technically as *nusus* (singular *nass*). All Arab philologists agree that *nass* of the Quran and *sunnah* denotes the ordinances (*Ahkam*) forthcoming from the self evident (*Zahir*) wording in which they are expressed. All such *nass* ordinances are so formulated that they can be applied to every stage of man's social and intellectual development. Thus it is the *nusus* of Quran and *sunnah*—and only these—that collectively constitute the real, eternal *shariah* of Islam.

17. A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad* (Karachi: Oxford University Press 1978), p. 687.

Another contribution of far-reaching significance of Abu Bakr was the subordination of the status of *Amirul Momineen* to *shar'i* law. The Amir was to be considered a member of the society just as a commoner. There were no privileges attached to that exalted position. For instance, *Amir* was not the master but only the custodian of the public treasury. A salary was fixed for him beyond which he could not draw a single penny for his personal use. He was thus the servant of the *ummah*.

Mohammad Asad rightly comments: "To make the law of Islam the law of land in order that equity may prevail; to arrange social and economic relations in such a way that every individual shall live in freedom and dignity, and shall find as few obstacles as possible and as much encouragement as possible in the development of his personality; to enable all muslim men and women to realise the ethical goals of Islam not only in the beliefs but also in the practical sphere of their lives; to ensure to all non-muslim citizens complete physical security as well as complete freedom of religion, of culture, and of social development; to defend the country against attack from without and disruption from within; and to propagate the teachings of Islam to the world at large; it is in these principles, and in these alone, that the concept of an Islamic state finds its meaning and justification. If it realises them, the head of state can rightly be described as "Gods vicegerent on earth"—at least in that part of the earth which falls under his factual jurisdiction".¹⁸

Consultative Assembly

The government is only a "trust" and it is to be carried on with consent and consultation as directed by the Quran: "And consult with them upon the conduct of affairs".¹⁹ Hazrat Abu Bakr introduced the democratic system of taking counsel (*shura*) and arriving at decisions by the majority of votes. For all matters in hand, reference was first made to the Quran for light and guidance. In case no explicit ruling on that matter was found there, reference was next made to what the Prophet had said or done. Not finding any clear ruling from that source as well, recourse was finally made

18. Mohammad Asad, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

19. *Surah* 3 : 159.

to counsel (*shura*) to which all the prominent companions were invited. The matter was thoroughly discussed and the line of action agreed by the consensus of opinion (*Ijma*) was finally adopted.

As the *shariah* has not envisaged details in respect of various problems of administration, international trade and banking etc., it becomes imperative for the *Majlise-Shura* (consultative assembly) to evolve relevant legislation through *Ijtehad* (exercise of independent reasoning) of the elected body in consonance with the Quranic principles and *sunnah* to meet the growing needs of the time. They must be in the highest interest of the entire community and based on consensus (*Ijma*). These powers should be rested in the elected representative of the community. The members of the Assembly should be elected by means of the widest possible suffrage. All transactions are to be made according to the Quranic principles. It is necessary that the members of the *Majlis* should be men of understanding (*ulul—albab*) fully conversant with the divine law and *sunnah*, and understand the current socio-economic and political problems of the *ummah* and the world at large.

Salient Features of the State

Tolerance: Having completed the task of organizing the Muslims into a social polity, the Prophet of Islam next diverted his attention to the incumbent task of providing protection to the newly formed community from the Quraish who did not give up the idea of destroying the Muslims. Therefore, it became imperative to consolidate the position of the community within Madina itself which was then inhabited also by a large number of Jews. The hand of friendship was extended to them, and treaties of mutual security and defence were entered into, guaranteeing them equal civil rights, freedom of religion and mutual protection against external aggression, in return for their recognition of the Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.) as the paramount executive, military and judicial authority. Thus the city-state of Madina came into being as a political entity by making a contract with the Jews—which is known as the first charter of tolerance ever made in human history. Some of its clauses are as under :

(1) Whosoever of the Jews follow us, shall have aid and succour; they shall not be injured, nor shall any enemy be aided against them.

(2) The Jews who attach themselves to our commonwealth shall be protected from all insults and vexations; they shall have an equal right with our people to our assistance and good offices.

(3) The Jews shall contribute with the Muslims and join with them in defending Madina against a common enemy.

(4) The Jews of all branches . . . and all others domiciled in Madina shall form with the Muslims one composite nation, that is, one people with the believers.

(5) The Jews will profess their religion as freely as the Muslims theirs.

Thus for the first time in the history of the world—Muslims, unbelievers and the Jews were welded into a commonwealth and the first charter—for freedom of conscience, belief and religious worship was promulgated in the world, and free church in a free state was allowed to have its own existence. And this was done by a Prophet who and his followers had been persecuted for their religious belief for thirteen long years.²⁰

Not only this, even to the Christians of Najran, the Prophet gave the following guarantee :

To the Christians of Najran, and the neighbouring territories the security of God and the pledge of His Prophet are extended for their lives, their religion and their property—to the present as well as the absent and other besides; there shall be no interference with the practice of their faith or their observances; nor any change in their rights or privileges; no bishop shall be removed from his bishopric; nor any monk from his monastery, nor any priest from his priesthood . . . no image or cross shall be destroyed; they shall not oppress or be oppressed; they shall not practice the right of blood-vengeance as in the Days of Ignorance; no tithes shall be levied from them nor shall they be required to furnish provisions for troops.²¹

20. Prof. Ilyas Ahmad, *Sovereignty, Islamic and Modern* (Karachi : The Allies Book Corporation, 1965), pp. 209-210

21. Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam* (London : Christophers, 1935), p. 273.

This guarantee was carried on and followed by the Prophet's successors, especially so by Caliph Omar whose guarantee to the Christians of Aelia has become proverbial. He granted the Charter of Jerusalem in 15 A.H., protecting their lives, properties, churches, cross and stating that their churches will not be demolished, nor any harm will be done to their buildings. He said that there will be no compulsion in religion and the Christians will enjoy freedom of conscience.²² These charters clearly envisage the principles of toleration as laid down by the Quran :

- All religion is for Allah. No compulsion or force is to be used for its acceptance.
- If persecution in the matter of belief or worship is adopted, it is to be resisted.
- The best way is the principle that if one follows one way, the other should go his own way. "Unto you your religion, and unto me my religion".²³
- Men of diverse religions may also try to agree on an equitable proposition so that harmony may continue.
- The churches, the synagogues and the mosques are not to be demolished, for they are sacred places where Allah's name is much remembered.

It is now obvious that in Islam life is presented as a harmonious whole and church and state are not differentiated. That is there is no racism in Islam. It is, therefore, imperative for the government to establish virtue and prohibit evil.

Liberty. "The Quranic revelation", says David de Santillana, "styles itself a law of liberty Considering its spirit, therefore, we see that the tendency of Islamic law is to allow human action the widest limits, and we may agree with the Muslim jurists when they teach that the fundamental rule of law is liberty. But the liberty (*Ibahah*) cannot be unlimited. . . Human society would not have been possible, and the individual himself would not have been able to subsist, had God allowed free scope to the appetites of every individual as well as to the injustice and vio-

22. Allama Shibli Nomani, *Al-Faruq* (Lahore: Shaikh Mubarak Ali, 1922), pp. 228-229.

23. *Surah* 109 : 6

lence of all. God has therefore set a bound to human activity, and this bound (*hadd*) is precisely what we call law (*hukm*) which restrains human action within certain limits, forbidding some acts and enjoining others, and thus restraining the primitive liberty of men, so as to make it as beneficial as possible either to the individual or to society".²⁴ He further states: Starting from liberty as fundamental basis of law, Islamic jurists have reached a two-fold conclusion:

1. Liberty finds its limits in its very nature, because liberty unlimited would mean destruction and that limit or boundary is the legal norm.

2. No limit is arbitrary, because it is determined by its utility or the greatest good of the individual or of society. Utility which is the foundation of law, traces also its boundary and extent.²⁵

When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body of magistrates, there can be no liberty. And also there is no liberty, if the judiciary is not separated from the legislature and executive.

Equality: The equality of man was not only emphasised by the Prophet of Islam but it was actually practised in all phases of human life. In the mosques, five times a day, the highest stood in line shoulder to shoulder with the lowest and there was no distinction of race, or colour, before the Almighty Creator. All differences of slave and master, or rich and poor were wiped away before the ideal of righteous and noble actions, as ordained by the divine law. Hence, service and sacrifice were the objectives of the believers according to the ordinance of the glorious Quran. Margo-liouth rightly comments: "The equality of all Muslims, was we have reason to believe, a fundamental doctrine with the Prophet, and the earliest interpreters of his ideas were probably right in thinking that he intended the rule to be absolute without exception, even his own family enjoying no privileges. He would seem to have regarded the ideal brotherhood of Islam as superior in closeness to all family ties. He established no hierarchy of officials; at most some of his followers received titles of honour which belonged exclusively to themselves. He made no permanent appointments; officials created

24. David de Santillana, *The Legacy of Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 288-289.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 292.

by him were purely for the occasion, and when that was over, the office as well as the appointment lapsed".²⁶

Fraternity: In the environment completely polluted with blood feuds, revenge and warring spirit, it was an uphill task for the Prophet of Islam to wipe away all these evils and barbarism and establish a common brotherhood. Blood relationship vanished and the strong bonds of Islam (*din*) gave a new lease of life. Every individual became a brother of every other individual. In his famous sermon at Arafat on the occasion of his farewell pilgrimage, on 9th *Zilhij* the Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.), proclaimed the greatest charter of human rights in these words ;

"Ye people I listen to my words, for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this year to find myself amongst you at this place.

Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until you appear before the Lord, as this day and this month is sacred for all ; and (remember) you shall have to appear before your Lord. Who shall demand from you an account of all your actions.

You have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you.

Keep always faithful to the trust reposed in you and avoid sins.

Usury is forbidden.

Henceforth the vengeance of blood, practised in the days of paganism (*jahilya* or state of nature) is prohibited and all blood feud abolished.

See that you feed your slaves with such food as you set yourselves and clothe them with the stuff you wear.

All Muslims are brethren unto another, you are one brotherhood and all of you are on the same equality. Nothing which belongs to another is lawful unto his brother unless freely given out of good will. Guard yourself from committing injustice.

26. D. S. Margoliouth, *Early Development of Mohammedanism* (London : 1914), pp. 79-80.

The Prophet asked those that were present to communicate this message to those that were absent, and addressing God said: "O Lord: I have delivered my message and accomplished my work".²⁷

This Declaration of Human Rights of the Prophet is far more significant and superior to later Declarations of the Rights of Men of America and France, the Human Rights of the United Nations of the modern age. It is crystal clear that while the modern declarations were only pious wishes for the future, the Prophet Mohammad's (S.A.W.) declaration was made after every thing had been established in practice and was already working with complete success in the community and society.

Justice: Justice is a quality of mind to discern between right and wrong and observe impartiality. The Quran has stressed in a number of verses on this phase of human life:

- O ye who believe! Be steadfast witnesses for Allah in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty. Observe your duty to Allah.²⁸
- O ye who believe! Be ye staunch in justice, witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man or a poor man, for Allah is nearer unto both (than ye are). So follow not passion lest ye lapse (from truth) and if ye lapse or fall away, then lo! Allah is ever informed of what ye do.²⁹

The Prophet himself has laid great emphasis on justice. The following traditions will bear eloquent testimony to it.

Abu Sayeed reported that the Prophet said: "Verily the dearest of men near Allah on the Resurrection Day and the nearest of them before Him for company will be a just ruler".³⁰ Imam Ghazali has pointed out that the Prophet once said: "one day of just rule

27. Ameer Ali, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-107

28. *Surah* 5 : 8

29. *Ibid.*, 4 : 135

30. Fazlul Karim, *Al Hadith, Translation of Mishkat-al-Masabih* (Calcutta: Scholar Printing Works, 1939), p. 597.

by an equitable Sultan is more meritorious than sixty years of continual worship".³¹

Justice in Islam stands for a sense of balance in conducting the affairs of the state and community. The Quran states: "He raised up the heavens and He set the Balance".³² In another verse the same idea is expressed thus: "Allah it is who sent down the book with truth and the Balance".³³

Justice is reckoned next to piety in *Surah Maida* (The Table Spread) verse 8: "Be just; that is next to piety, and fear God. For God is well-acquainted with all that ye do". God is the fountainhead of justice and the doing of justice is a religious duty. The entire community is responsible for seeing that no one dares to harm or encroach upon the rights of others. Since justice is to be done in God's name and according to His laws, no one is above the law. There is no immunity from law for anyone. Doubtless, the Prophet himself never claimed any immunity. Every one was equal before the law and enjoyed equal opportunities. Consequently the most important appointments were made on the basis of merit only and not on the grounds of kinship, wealth or status.

6. *Accountability*: In the Islamic concept the authority or power to rule is vested as trust (*amanat*) of the community and not the birth right of anyone. The Quran says: "Lo! Allah commandeth you that ye restore deposits (trusts) to their owners, and if ye judge between mankind, that ye judge justly".³⁴ This trust is indicated in *Surah Hajj* (Pilgrimage) as well: "Those who, if we give them power in the land, establish worship and pay the poor-due and enjoin kindness and forbid inequity".³⁵ The concept of trust automatically brings in the concept of accountability because a trustee appointed by the people has to render account to those by whom he is appointed.

No European writer who traces the development of constitutional or parliamentary government from Magna Carta (1215 AD) and

31. F. R. C. Bagley, *Ghazali's Book of Counsel for Kings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 14.

32. *Surah* 55 : 6

33. *Ibid.*, 42 : 16

34. *Ibid.*, 4 : 58

35. *Ibid.*, 22 : 41

the Petition of Rights (1621 AD) had ever said that the legislature and the executive exercise their power as a trust from the people, and therefore, the holders of power were responsible not only to the people but also to God. The first clear enunciation of this principle was made by the Quran when it had directed the Prophet: "And consult with them upon the conduct of affairs".³⁶

Justice Hamoodur Rehman, former Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Pakistan, in his booklet, "*Islamic Concept of State*", writes; "The final picture, therefore, that emerges is that an Islamic State is an ideological State set up by the will of the people in a constitutional manner following the democratic principle of decision-making in which every citizen has an equal right to participate, and governance is a trust which has to be regulated on the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity enunciated in the glorious Quran with absolute fairness and impartiality, without giving any preference to anyone, for the welfare of the entire community and in such a manner that the basic needs of all are satisfied and every one enjoys equality of opportunity without distinction of race, caste, colour, creed, birth or rank".³⁷ Muhammad Asad in the light of an authentic *Hadith* (tradition) of the Prophet of Islam comments :

The government's responsibility towards the citizens has been put on a par with a father's or mother's responsibility towards their children. Just as the father is a "Shepherd"—that is a guardian, morally and legally bound to ensure the maintenance and well-being of his family, the government is normally and legally bound to ensure the economic well-being of the citizens whose affairs it administers, and to see to it that no person's standard of living falls below an equitable level. For although Islam has made it clear that human life cannot be expressed in terms of physical existence alone—the ultimate values of life being spiritual in nature—the Muslims are not entitled to look upon spiritual truths and values as something that could be divorced from the physical factors of human existence. In short, Islam demands a society that is righteous not only in its moral outlook, but in its deeds as well; a society

36. *Ibid.*, 3 : 159

37. Justice Hamoodur Rahman, *Islamic Concept of State* (Karachi: 1978), p. 11.

that provides not only for the spiritual needs of its members, but for their bodily needs as well. It follows, therefore, that a state, in order to be truly Islamic, must arrange the affairs of the community in such a way that every individual, man and woman shall enjoy the minimum of material well-being without which there can be no human dignity, no real freedom and, in the last resort, no spiritual progress.³⁸

The Quran has exercised remarkable influence on the great personalities of the West. Even Napoleon Bonaparte, a versatile genius, had to express thus :

Arabia was idolatrous when, six centuries after Jesus, Mohammad introduced the worship of God of Abraham, of Ishmael, of Moses and of Jesus. The Ariyans and some other sects had disturbed the tranquillity of the East by agitating the question of the nature of the Father, the son, and the Holy Ghost. Mohammad declared that there was none but one God who had no father, no son and that the Trinity imported the idea of idolatry.

He wrote on the flyleaf of the Quran. "There is no god but God". He further wrote: "I hope the time is not far off when I shall be able to unite all the wise and educated men of all the countries and establish a uniform regime based on the principles of the Quran which alone are true and which alone can lead men to happiness".³⁹

38. Asad, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

39. Cherfils, *Bonaparte et L' Islam* (Paris), pp. 105-125.