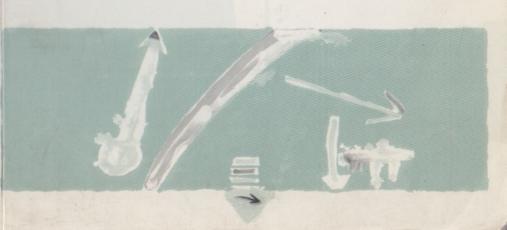# Modernising Religion

## The Missing Link in Social Development

### Policy and Politics

Ahmad Anisur Rahman

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**Ahmad Anisur Rahmån**
*Ph.D. (MIT)*
(Formerly Fellow at Harvard University)

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# Modernising Religion
The Missing Link in Social Development
Policy and Politics

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## The Author

Professor AA Rahmân, Ph.D. (MIT) specialised in Modernisation Theory and Political Economy of Development at MIT as a Doctoral student, and developed further on it at Harvard University as a Fellow. Appointed Professor of Social Development and International Affairs Management at Northern University in Malaysia, he has held positions at leading universities in USA, Australia and Asia, including Harvard University, MIT, Melbourne University, University of New South Wales, and Dhaka University.

His published works include *Elite Ideology Across Developing Societies: The Psychopathology of an International Phenomenon* (1988). The present book (2001) may be considered, in some sense, a sequel to that volume.

His other published works include, *Inflation-Prevention and Distributive Justice in an Era of Monetary Confusion* (2001), *The Second Gulf Crisis: International Security and Law in the Kuwait War* (1990).

# Acknowledgment

The author gratefully acknowledges his debt of nurturing, knowledge and understanding, that has gone into the writing of this book—directly, or indirectly—to his parents and grandmother; his teachers, particularly Professor M.A. Aziz and Mr Ansar U Ahmad.

Special debts of gratidue are acknowledged, to his Eminent Shaykhs.

Debts are acknowledged, also to his wife, whose company and assistance in the day to day mundane, but crucially needed aspects of life made the completion of the book sometimes easier. The cups of tea she provided, and my two beautiful children, Anas and Sakiina were the joy which provided the impetus even when the bones felt tired.

My students and friends, particulary No'man, Adnan, Kashif, were particularly contributive in the sense of raising challenging issues, and providing affectionate assistance beyond the call of ordinary duty or courtsey.

I gratefully acknowledge the debt of all who contributed, whether I name them here or not.

— Author

To

**Development Workers Everywhere.**

# Publisher's Note

## I

Autumn Books is glad to publish Professor AA Rahmån's book on a very striking subject, the Modernisation of Religion itself while retaining its orthodoxy in modern times. It is quite a difficult subject, but an essential reading for any one interested in the workings of Religion in times of Modernisation.

As Professor Rahmån points out,

> "Much of today's world is engulfed in crises touching upon Religion in one way or other. Ranging from Irish Catholic terrorism in Northern Ireland to Jihad in Russian-occupied Chechniya, to theocracies and theocratically oriented party-politics in the Middle East, Hindu fanaticism in India, to Buddhist violent cults in Burma and bizarre Protestant cults in the US—"Religion" is raging, while it ought to have provided "Tranquility" against "Rage".
>
> "At the same time, the illusive goals of planned Modernisation as an expected panacea for the World, have remained a mirage which neither quenches the thirst, nor let the thirsty give up on it. Modernisation has miserably failed in solving the "problem" of Religion. It neither could eradicate Religion, which it had so condescendingly tried to dismiss away as "mere superstition", or psychological projection of the primitive Man, which supposedly was just an addictive "opium of the masses" on its way out and away in the wake of modernisation. Nor could it find a suitable *modus operandi* to continue its own mission of bringing the youthful health it promised to a sick World, despite Religion.
>
> "Indeed, there is no health without inner tranquility, and no tranquility without a youthful health transcending age in years. There seems no way out except by bringing the youthful health of modernisation to the ancient wisdom of Religion, and the wisdom of Religion to the youthfulness of Modern impetus, to eventually bring about tranquility in the hearts and society of modern Man."[1]

We, at Autumn Books, agree. In our own humble efforts in trying to bring to our readership an understanding of Old World wisdom and traditions to the New World, in the modern context—we do value this opportunity to publish a book like this by Dr Rahmån. The title of the book itself is self-explanatory and self-introductory. We wish for it a wide readership across the continents.

Tübingen, Germany                                                    — Kashif Rasul
20 January, 2001                                              Manager, Autumn Books

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[1] AA Rahmån, Discource, Melbourne, 18 January, 2001.

# II

We at the Organisation for Social Development and Research, are actually facing on-the-field, the issues raised and discussed in this very timely, if also very challenging book on Social Development. Indeed we are very glad to publish it, to be able to take it a starting point for thinking out ways and means for cooperating other grass-roots' development organisations like ours in Asia.

With his rather fascinating capacity for coming up with new coinages of terms to encapsulate wide-ranging ideas, Professor Rahmån, after having introduced to us "Culturally Consonant Development" a decade ago, has now brought to us the term, "Optimal Development." In his own words,

> "It is not enough to have sky-rocketing development in one area—say, economic production, with having taken care of its side-effects and fall-outs in other aspects of life, say, in psychological anxiety created by the sudden rise in expectations. We do not want as much development as possible in as many areas as possible. No that is useless, counterproductive, unprofessional, and often dangerous for the masses in the long run. We want balanced, wholistic development, so that, eventually, what is achieved overall—is optima; I call that "Optimal Development". "Culturally Consonant Development" (CCD) is a prerequisite for "Optimal Development" (OD)... Let our people develop with the least of teething pain, with the best of results..."[2]

OSDER is committed to such ideas. The present book which OSDER cooperates with Autumn Books, Melbourne, to publish, addresses some of the most potent aspects of CCD and OD as propounded by Dr. Rahmån. We hope the book will be taken as an important point of reference in social development research and practical grass roots' level work everywhere.

23 January, 2001 — Aka Firowz Ahmad
OSDER

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[2]AA Rahmån, Personal communication, 19 January, 2001.

# Preface

Even though my main Doctoral specialisation at MIT, was in theorising—I hardly have the luxury of pure theoretical concern. This book too, though involves attempts at theoertical generalisations, is not a book of primarily theoretical exercise. Living in a world we do, such a luxury would simply be callous, at the least.

Circumstances involving complex, day to day living interplay of religious orthodoxy, piety and or bigotry on the one hand, and a passion for modernisation and development for the people or sheer cosmetic modernism, on the other—has been what I have personally lived through much of my life. A lot of these circumstances I have not liked. But it is often not for us to choose in what circumstances we find ourselves, and what duties such circumstances burden us with. Passion can transform a burden into a joy, toil into labour of love. Trying to understand this interplay, its conflicting and coalescing elements, its ramifications, and the good even these have to offer—became a passion, and my work, including pieces like this little book, became an eternal labour of love.

Arising as it does from elements of such practically lived circumstances and issues, the book covers a wide range of, sometimes seemingly desperate, subject matters, concepts and questions. However, they all are joined through a common thematic thread: the interplay of Religion and Social Development/- Modernisation---both "Social" and "Modernisation" conceived in the broadest possible sense to include the economic, political, cultural, life-style, etc. This common thematic connection is built upon, and the entire discussion and analysis is weaved into an overall interdisciplinary theoretical framework to provide some understanding of the issues from multiple vantage points, and some indications of applied relevance.

I must clarify that, in this book, I do not go much in to discussing how the modernisation of Religion shall or can be properly done. That is a very crucial matter, but I leave that for a separate book, hopefully to be written in the near future. In this book, I mainly discuss the need for such a modernisation of Religion, as a means not only to prevent the degeneration of religious practice into pseudo-religious bigotry and superstitions—but also as a central aspect of overall social development. I hope, the ideas and insights contained in the book go beyond being just a set of individual understandings of a concerned seeker of the Good, and find resonance with many others with the same concern for a better world. Let there be a bonfire of Light!

Melbourne                                                          — AA Rahmån
19 January, 2001

# Contents

# Chapter 1

# Fashioning A Modern Society

Modernisation, in its real sense—rather than its popular, but erroneous, perception as a collection of some visible signs of Westernisation—is an essential requirement for not only progress, but even the very survival of society. In this real sense, modernisation means bringing life and its environment to a level of optimal functionality in in circumstances of the times one finds oneself. Without this, life—and society, as its expression on a collective level—would be stagnated, hindered, and eventually stunted. Signs of stagnation are already visible in the life of much of semi-Westernised traditional societies. If not modernised soon enough, this stagnation will continue to contribute to their decay, and eventual mutation or end. Mutation is visibly less than end, but a mutant survival is no survival. Mutation is cancer, literally. Mutant survival is life of the living dead. Or, conversely, of dead—fossilised—life. To save such societies, we do need their modernisation, very urgently. The realisation, even if partially, and a lopsided way, of this need, is already present. Thus, modernisation, even though often seen in terms of only economic development and its socio-cultural fruits, has emerged a goal for virtually all developing societies. This has become a goal for developing countries as well as their donors from amongst the developed nations, and international organisations. We need to promote this realisation—but, also correct the perception of modernisation and development involved in the realisation; and carry it out. The modernisation that is needed is not only economic development or its socio-cultural fruits, even less the popularly perceived modernisation in terms of some signs of cosmetic Westernisation. What is needed is a wholistic, overall, fundamental modernisation grounded in the traditional culture of the society concerned. Contrary to the layman's view, sometimes subscribed to even by some experts of some sort, modernisation is not uprooting tradition—it is modernising the tradition itself. Those who understood this, succeeded well in modernisation. Protestant West and modern Japan are amongst them.

# Chapter 2
# The Need for Political Modernisation

The need for overall modernisation is very much tied up with a need for political modernisation. As noted in the preceding chapter, modernisation, often seen in terms of economic development and its socio-cultural fruits, has emerged a goal for virtually all developing societies. As also noted, this has become a goal for developing countries as well as their donors from amongst the developed nations, and international organisations.

Such economic development, and socio-cultural modernisation emanating therefrom, takes place within, and by, a broader framework, defined by the political forces at work in the context of such developments. For this reason, political modernisation happens to be the essential framework for modernisation in general. Yet, both political modernisation is often neglected—both in academic work, and in policy-formulation—in the very many areas of modernisation. This chapter attempts to focus on this relatively neglected dimensions of modernisation as a process.

## Political Modernisation: The Main Ingredients

Before we get on to a discussion of how political modernisation came be realised as essential collateral, if not precondition, for other aspects of modernisation---and it is indeed so, it would be helpful to first note a few main ingredients of political modernisation.

First and foremost, perhaps, as an ingredient of political modernisation is democratisation of politics. Popular opinion, most prominently expressed in popular vote—instead of divine or expert authority, expressed in theocratic or technocratic supremacy—becomes the main arbiter in political decision-making. Neither the priestly class or the church as the repository of divine authority, nor the "shamans" or philosopher-kings as the supposed reservoir of expert knowledge of "the truth" about the course of politics and history have the ultimate say in matters of power relationship in a politically modernised society. Even less any class of fighting men—the kshatriyas or the knights—as the repository of sheer physical force, or bloodlines or claims to power deriving from family-ties as in dynastic rule, have any more claim to making the

final decisions in politics. Judged by this criterion alone, many societies of the world, and almost all Asian societies are anything but politically modern. This, notwithstanding clever attempts to disguise the rule by clergy, shamans, knights or dynasties by superficial, cosmetic facades of systems laced with nomenclatures usually associated with democracy, e.g. "parliament", "prime minister", "constitution", "rights", "popular votes", "elections" etc.

As a corollary to the phenomenon of democratisation, a second ingredient of political modernisation is the emergence of a "civil society", embodying what has been termed "pluralism". Accordingly, a vast plurality of interest groups with their own limited repositories of political muscle, is expected to emerge in between the family as the most basic political unit—and the the national government as the highest.

A third element of political modernisation is the emergence of constitutionalism, upholding certain principles enshrined in a constitution—instead of arbitrary decisions by a monarch, a group, a minority, or even a majority—as the supreme arbiter of political behaviour.

Yet another ingredient of political modernisation is impersonalisation of politics. A marks modern political behaviour is that people do not make political decisions on the basis of personal relationship of patronage, or of personal likes and dislikes of the politicians involved—but on that of the merits and demerits of the politicians' stands on various issues at hand.

Another important ingredient of political modernisation is the sanctity of certain individual rights, which are guaranteed to exist despite and overriding any majority decision to the contrary. Often termed as "human rights", these are often enshrined in the constitution of the nation-state concerned.

## Theorising on the Linkage

Theorising on the essential linkage between political modernisation and modernisation in general, came about in the wake of developments in the debate on modernisation that characterised much of the latter half of this century. A serious well-known active interest in theorising on over-all modernisation of societies on a global scale, seems to have started with theorists of modernisation such as Lucian Pye, Sydney Verba, Myron Weiner, and Almond Gabriel at MIT and the Harvard University, in the 1960s. The background to their seminal work, and to what I go on to say here as an extension that, comprises what came to be known in the 1960s and following decades, the Modernisation-Development Theoretical Debate.

The roots of the debate lay in the earlier debate between the classical/capitalist school of development, holding that development primarily means economic development, and that economic development was an autonomous area in itself, and therefore could be pursued without any necessary reference to the nature of political life of the society where the development was pursued. Only relevant point of political nature, according to this line of reasoning, was the necessity of political stability to ensure undisturbed economic development.

Following from such a line of reasoning, the classical/capitalist policy pre-scribers for development and modernisation suggested pursuing development goals through stages of development such as outlined by Rostow, under the protective umbrella of stable governments—irrespective of their nature. Con-sequently, the West as a champion of such development and modernisation, aided and guided development policies and plans in countries held in strong grips of military dictatorships e.g. in Pakistan, Chile and Uganda; absolute, medieval monarchies e.g. Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Kuwait; and "democra-cies" with draconian laws, e.g. the Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia.

Countering this classical/capitalist line of thinking were the Marxist/Marx-ian ideologies, holding that economic development was intrinsically tied with political development; that real economic development, and resultant social modernisation, was not possible under "reactionary" governments; that mod-ernisation needs political revolutionism as well.

The theorists of modernisation such as Pye and Verba were clearly on the classical/capitalist side of the Modernisation-Development Debate between the classical/capitalist and the neo-Marxian theorists. But, what they had to say about the overall modernisation process—interestingly—included an ex-plicit acceptance of the Marxian premise vigorously promoted in their aca-demic work by the neo-Marxian side of the Modernisation-Development De-bate. The premise was, as noted above, that, development can not be just economic development, nor can modernisation can occur through economic growth alone either. That, development and modernisation ought to be in the broader context of the political economy of the society concerned at large.

The Modernisation school, representing the classical/capitalist side, in the work of its founding fathers, not only leaped from its original position of re-garding development as economic development as a possible process on its own—to embrace the originally Marxian/neo-Marxian position that any de-velopment ought to be broader, encompassing the politics of the process as well. They went even further: not just politics as well—the process of mod-ernisation and development, to be really workable and successful, must en-compass and take account of the even broader cultural context of the society where the processes are to take place. I call, for convenience of reference to a rather vast and sometimes desperate-looking sets of paradigms at work at the same time in the same society involved in development and modernisa-tion bid, "culturally consonant development". Though the term "Culturally Consonant Development" was coined as recently as in 1996. what it denotes in terms of theoretical exposition and policy recommendation, is really noth-ing new. It is mainly a convenient way to say in a compact, single expression, what theorists like Pye et al., already said—particularly, in their work on the crucial relation between political culture and political development.[1] I, within the expression, have only added emphases or height of relief to certain aspects of the broader theme of their arguments, which were until now left, perhaps, a little neglected.

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[1]Lucian Pye et al., Political culture and Political Development.

Thus, in a rather perhaps unintended way, the classical/capitalist and the Marxian/neo-Marxian schools came to agree on the need for political modernisation or development as a necessary requirement for economic development and overall modernisation. They might have arrived to such a common point of agreement from entirely different ideological positions, but the conclusion so arrived seems, by now, to be an uncontrovertible premise in the study and pursuing of modernisation in general. Though such a convergence of perception on the inescapable linkage between modernisation and its broader context, including the political, emerged as far back as 1990s in the thinking of pioneer theorists like Pye, Verba, Weiner and Almond, it took some time for the policy-machineries to absorb the realisation. This lag has resulted into the fact that, unguided and unrestricted politically, economic modernisation embodying

> "Free market economics ... invariably concentrates economic power
> in the hands of the few wealthy exporters, landlords and natural-
> resource exploiters. As a result, this privatized development path
> ends up being profoundly undemocratic,"

leading to a very undemocratic—and hence, unmodern—society.[2]

Such realisation amongst academic theorists are now reflected in policy-formulation as well. Thus, it is out of such a realisation of the impossibility of pursuing economic development without linking it up with the broader context, that UN as a major arbiter of global development policy formulation and implementation, went on to declare in the 1990s, the futility of the earlier attempts at economic modernisation in isolation. Thus, according an UN report of 1995, detached from its societal context, such planned

> "economic modernization ... did not foresee ... that the social im-
> pact could itself frustrate the desired economic effect,"

and thereby, in effect, frustrate and thus abort the economic modernisation itself.

## Politics as the Inescapable Context for Social Behaviour

Why is political modernisation such an essential framework for modernisation in general? For one thing, nothing happens in the mundane world outside politics—i.e. the context of power-relationships. Every piece of social behaviour is political at one level or other. This is so because of the very intrinsic nature of behaviour, society and politics as separate, and at the same time, interrelated phenomena.

Politics, at the very basic level, is the acquiring, keeping and manipulating of power at any and all levels of relationship between human beings. As such there is politics right from the two-some relationship in marriage, right across the family, local and regional levels of government and social life, through national government and policies, on to international relations. It is a realisation

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[2]Robin Broad et al. (1994), pg. 3.

of this permeance of politics through all these levels of conceivable human re-
lationships, that has led the traditional treatment of politics as solely, primarily
or mainly as statecraft, onto its analysis on many levels, including that of what
has been now termed as "micropolitics"—politics at the very basic level of the
nuclear family unit.

Society, in its turn, is primarily a network of multiple relationships. The
simplest form of society is the bi-actorial marital unit. Even that is complex
enough to keep baffling analysts with its ever newly discovered aspects of
complexities. Polity, as the mainly politically defined aspect of society has
many levels of existence, the most commonly understood today as "political"
is the nation-state. But this does not preclude all other aspects of society from
being political in nature. This is because of the very nature of behaviour as
a phenomenon, which essentially underlies all relationships—including that
making up, as parts of networks, the society. Relationships are made out of
patterns of actions and reactions in interaction. Actions and reactions, both,
are but pieces of behaviour. As such, society as a network of relationships are
made up, in the ultimate analysis, by behaviour-in-interaction—which, by its
very nature, is bound to be political. As such again, this renders society it-
self political. What is this in the very nature of behaviour-in-interaction as a
phenomenon, that makes it intrinsically political? It is the necessity of power
for any action to take place. If someone does not have the necessary power to
take the intended action, he simply can not take the action. The action, sim-
ply, would not be. Reaction also, as a kind of action—that which takes place
in response to an action—would cease to be without power. Interaction, as the
interplay between action and reaction, then, also would cease to exist with-
out power. All behaviour-in-interaction would simply cease to exist without
power.

Since the acquisition, holding and/or manipulating of power is politics,
and power can not be used in interactive behaviour without acquiring, hold-
ing or manipulating it—interactive behaviour happens to be intrinsically de-
pendent on politics. As such, interactive behaviour as social behaviour, intrin-
sically power-based as it is, is also intrinsically political.

It follows from all this, that, every piece of social behaviour is indeed polit-
ical at one level or other. If that is indeed the case, then, whatever happens in
society and through social behaviour, is bound to be by the nature of politics
through and in the context of which that "whatever" happens to happen.

Modernisation as a process would involve many zillion trillion billion mil-
lions of pieces of social behaviour. As such, all its contributing pieces of be-
haviour are bound to be affected by the nature of the politics through and in
the context of which such pieces of behaviour would occur. Even the very sim-
ple logic would tell that pieces of behaviour affected by non-modern politics
and political context is unlikely to turn out as modern, or contributing to mod-
ernisation. Trying to create or carry on a process of modernisation—economic,
or social—through non-modern politics would be like trying to create a foun-
tain of blue water through a green pool. It simply would not work.

For this reason, an overall modernisation would need to be carried through

a modern political context. People used to modern politics and modern political context—modern ways of power-relationships—would habitually act out modern ways of doing things. They would find modern ways of economic activity and modern ways of social living as easy as a second nature. This would result into modern ways in general throughout the society. That would amount to modernisation.

As such all and any modernisation is required to be through and within the framework of political modernisation.

## Relevance of Political Culture

Modern ways of power-relationship is, actually, a matter of the modernisation of political culture, the very basic motor of all politics. Without modernising political culture of a society, modernising politics—and thereby, modernise the society in general—would remain impossible. This is so, because, political culture affects political behaviour—and thereby political modernisation—in a very basic way. Modernisation would need changes in patterns of political behaviour, and without understanding the function of political culture in the very shaping of political behaviour, we shall never be adequately prepared to bring about any such changes. More important is perhaps the fact that, change itself is behaviour, and to accomplish this behaviour comprising the function of changing also would be affected by political culture. Without understanding the role of political culture here also, we would be unable to optimise our chances of bringing about the kind of change sought after. Many an attempts at change towards modernisation have backfired—precisely because of a lack of understanding, or disregard of the cultural motor involved in the situation. The events of Iran in the wake of the seemingly very promising modernisation move by the Shah's government is but only one glaring example of such blunders.

A look into the workings of political culture into the patterns of political behaviour is thus imperative for any understanding or planning for modernisation of any society. Asian societies are no exceptions.

Political culture works through acculturation of a person into certain power-related attitudes well early in his childhood. It is only in the twentieth century that we are becoming aware of the extent childhood experiences affect and shape almost all the basic modalities of adult thought, feeling and behaviour. And even now, it is only a rather a narrow expert domain, leaving not only the lay—but also expert in other fields—largely unaware of this crucial and vast role of childhood experience and acculturation through child rearing practices play in latter adult thought, feeling, and behavioural pattern.[3]

The power-related attitudes acquired through unconsciously absorbed childhood experiences, eventually crystallise as modalities or response patterns in situations where power is involved. When we say "power" here, we do not

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[3]For an excellent and lucid, yet scientific description of this, vide: Erik H. Eriksen, *Childhood and Society*.

mean what is generally referred to political power alone. Modalities of response to power per se, internalised into the Unconscious, later shape the person's response to all political situations. For, after all, politics is nothing but the management of power—wittingly, or unwittingly—by those who find themselves in its proximity. This management of power includes responses to power. And, responses to power, obviously, also includes responses to policies as the outflow and application of power over society and its individual members.

Acculturated through a given political culture, into certain culture-specific combinations of modalities of responses to policies—individuals are prone to respond to certain policies, including those reted to modernisation—in certain culture-specific ways. Knowing a given political culture gives clues to such pronenesses, and thereby help tailor the policies to elicit the required kind of responses, in any attempt not only to get the people accept and support a given policy in any area of modernisation—but also to modernise the very politics and political culture of the society in question.

Thus, all and any modernisation requires the modernisation of politics in the given context—both on the deeper and micro-level of political culture affecting the power-related attitudes of individual actors and subjects of politics, and the superstructural macro-level of the substance, e.g. policies, and system of politics at large.

## Politics and Modernisation: The Western Experience

That overall modernisation happens in the framework of political modernisation, seems to be borne out by the experience of modernisation in the West, which is the prototype of modernisation globally. Thus, reflecting political modernisation already in place as the power-relational framework for other aspects of modernisation in process in England,

> "in mid-seventeenth century England ... the world [was] turned upside down ... [by] the freedom with which people expressed their opinion on political ... issues ... meddling with things above one's calling."[4]

Obviously, popular participation in politics—one ingredient of political modernisation---already in action.

Another aspect of political modernisation, the primacy of public opinion as reflected in the advent of decisions by votes, rather than by expertise, also was well-established by this time when overall modernisation was proceeding fullswing in England. This additional feature of political modernity, the rise of human and popular opinion—as opposed to divine or expert knowledge—as a dominant factor in shaping the very substance of politics, was well reflected

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[4]Rule by Opinion, pg. 1.

in such contemporary broadside reports as that, "The World Is Ruled and Governed by Opinion,"[5] and that,

> "Public opinion ... turn[s] society upside down, to leave it bereft of its traditional hierarchies and rules [as] ... people [were already being] "governed by opinion" ... "[6]

This was, in fact, the advent of democracy—an ingredient of political modernisation---as a system based on popular opinion, rather than divine—or even secular but expert knowledge of the wise, the elders and scholars. This advent of democracy, as an aspect of political modernisation, was already in motion as a dimension of overall modernisation of England.

Another aspect of political modernisation, the advent of what came to be known as the "civil society", embodying the principle of political pluralism, also was in place as a part of the political context of modernisation of England. Pluralism, whereby politics proceeds by aggregation of the opinions of the very many interest groups in the society, was reflected in the emergence of an array of non-governmental bodies evolved as autonomous actors in the political environment of the society. As a contemporary report put it, the situation had already become such in

> "the Common-wealth ... [that] It is easier to reckon up all the Species and kinds of nature, than to describe all the ... Divisions ... and opinions ... that is now in London"[7]

as elsewhere throughout the Commonwealth, i.e. England.

While the few examples are taken from the English experience, the situation was more or less the same for the rest of the West. Everywhere in the West, aspects of political modernisation were visible as corresponding, if not definitely preceding, economic development and other aspects of overall modernity. England was pioneering in this respect, and Holland and France very close on her heels. These aspects of modernisation were seen a little later in Germany. And the West European settlements in the New World also showed the same tendencies in their modernisation. Everywhere, a little sooner or a little latter, modernisation came about as a stage in their "natural" evolution as societies—and in every case, political modernisation was there as the power-relational context of overall modernisation.

## Need for a Deliberate Policy of Political Modernisation

While political modernisation is essential as a framework for any modernisation at all, it needed not be undertaken as a conscious, deliberate policy in

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[5] The World Is Ruled By Opinion.

[6] Dagmar Freist, Governed by Opinion: Politics, Religion and the Dynamics of Communication in Stuart London, 1637–1645 (London, New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1997), pg. 4.

[7] Seventeenth century pamphlet, *The doleful Lamentation of Cheapside-Crosse: Or old England sick of the Staggers* (1641), BL E.134.9.

the case of the Western prototype of modernisation. It simply happened in the processes involved. Processes leading to economic development and social modernisation produced, in their wake, the framework of political modernity as well. There was no clearcut, planned policy of modernisation. Modernisation, including political modernisation, occurred through a confusing conglomeration of bits and pieces of the very many processes which added up to what was later seen as modernisation, as contributing to modernity in Western Europe—and by extension, to other, outlying parts of the West. In the circumstances, it was not possible even to sort out which preceded with—political modernisation, or other aspects of modernisation as an overall process. What was clear, however, by the time it appeared that all these bits and pieces of the various modernising processes had brought about modernity, was that political modernisation and other aspects of modernisation were at least mutually contributive and interdependent.

Unlike for the West, in the case of modernisation in Asia, and in the Third World in general, the temporally decided circumstances have made it both possible and imperative that political modernisation be sought and pursued as a matter of deliberate policy, as necessary factor for the overall modernisation of the given societies. It is possible because, unlike in the case of the West, modernisation itself is a very much consciously pursued deliberate policy. As such, political modernisation as an aspect of modernisation also can be conceived of, and pursued as a deliberate policy. At the same time, unlike in the West in its historical period when it underwent political modernisation, the Third World societies are generally used to and are subjected to, in their post-colonial bid to "make up" for the time lost under colonialism, planned development on a national level, along predetermined time-frames as seen in the very many successive "five-year plans" through which such societies keep on passing.

It is also imperative that political modernisation is pursued as a matter of deliberate policy now. Unlike in the case of the West, political modernisation of Third World societies has to be achieved in the shortest possible time, if the goals of overall modernisation are to achieved in the context of continuous competition from the very prototype of the West which these societies try to emulate and catch up on. These "lagging-behind" societies can not afford the luxury of proceeding through trials and errors in a vast number of areas, proceeding "naturally" onwards on to modernity. If they were to so proceed, they would always find themselves outdone by their prototype, and globally speaking—always far behind the developments of the "times". This would mean, if so left to proceed at their own "natural" pace, they, despite development compared to their own preceding stages, such societies would still remain constantly lagging in modernity compared to the developments of the world at large.

When it is both possible and imperative, such a deliberate policy of political modernisation seems to be very much needed to be a cause on the agenda of the champions of modernisation in general, of the Asian societies.

## Conclusion

As the Asian nations aspire for the modernisation, they must bring about political modernisation as a necessary power-relational paradigmatic setup for the various other aspects of the modernisation process. This would mean, they must democratise their political systems and behaviour, help develop autonomous interest groups as healthy complements as well as counterbalance to the state, ensure constitutional continuity and stability, and guarantee basic rights of the human person. Only by bringing about these elements of political modernisation, can these societies expect to have created the political environment where—and only along with which—economic development and other fruits of modernisation can be really and sustainably achieved.

The historical changes brought about in the circumstances of the world at large, now makes it both possible and, for the enthusiasts for modernisation—also necessary, that such a political modernisation be pursued as a matter of deliberate planned policy, rather than left at the mercy of the "natural" course of these nations' historical development.

# Chapter 3

# Political Culture as the Context for Modernisation

In the preceding chapter, we saw that political modernisation is the essential framework for any modernisation, whatsoever. In doing so, we also touched upon the need for modernising the political culture of a given society, as part of its political modernisation. In the passing, we also noted how political culture is the very basic pattern-setter in political behavior in any given society. As such, political culture is the basic determinant of elite response to various policy options in policy-formulation. It is even more of a determinant of popular response to policies handed down by the elite. Consequently, political culture turns out to be the basic determinant of whether or not modernising policies would be consistently, zealously and sincerely formulated and implemented, and if such modernising policies would succeed through popular acceptance and participation. This way, political culture comprises the very basic context of political modernisation—and thereby, of all aspects of modernisation in general. In this chapter, we will further elaborate upon the workings of political cal culture discussed in briefer terms in the preceding chapter, to explicate the role of political culture as the essential context of modernisation. This will be done to prepare grounds for discussion, in succeeding chapters, of the required modernisation of the religious context of overall modernisation.

## Deep-rooted Value-Expression Composite

Political culture is the that aspect of culture in general, which primarily relates to politics—i.e., to the acquisition, holding or using of social power. Culture, in turn, is the composite of habitually held values and their habitual forms of expression. Thus, political culture turns out to be a composite of such habitually held values in a society which primarily relate to the acquisition, holding or using of power—and habitual forms of the expression of such values in that particular society. Because it is built on deep rooted habitually, often unconsciously held values, and unconsciously lived by patterns of expression such values—political culture is almost impossible to override in any sustainable way.

Examples make things clearer. Let us try to clarify this further by examples.

In Malay culture, one important value is deference to the elder. A visible expression of this invisible value is lowering one's gaze when talking to a person older in age than oneself. Together, this one value and one expression make up a segment of Malay culture that a Malay would generally lower his gaze when talking to someone older than himself, and would expect the same from those who are younger than him. As a minute segment of Malay culture this would not only guide certain aspects of behavioural patterns, but also both reinforce attitudes of deferential hierarchy and constitute a part of non-verbal communications' language. Malays, as said, would generally lower their gaze when talking to someone older than them. In a generalised form, this segment of culture would guide Malays to lower their gaze while talking to anyone they would like to show deference. Thus, they would keep their gaze lowered while talking to someone even if he is younger, if at the same time, he turns out to be—or is believed to be—superior in some other way of hierarchical placement authorised by any other segment of Malay culture. For example, a ninety year old ordinary Malay would keep his gaze lowered when speaking to a tengku—prince—even if the tengku is only a boy. Same will happen if he is talking to an 'alim—religious scholar—even if the alim is younger than himself.

Even further generalised, this deference-related segment of the Malay culture would guide the Malay keep his gaze lowered when talking to someone who does not necessarily occupies a higher position in the deferential hierarchy, but is shown respect out of courtesy. For example, in a business negotiation, a Malay businessman may keep his gaze lowered when talking to a foreign businessman. This, not because he thinks the foreign businessman is in any way superior to himself, or deserves deference as tengku or an 'alim—religious scholar—deserves. He does it simply as a courtesy, non-verbally saying, "I treat you as if you were deserving deference, as if you were superior!"

This segment of the Malay culture, comprising the value of deference to the elder, in its grades of generalisation and transference onto other forms of "superiority" on the one hand, and its tangible expression in the lowering of gaze on the other—when applied in power-relational context, becomes a part of the Malay political culture. Thus, deference to the "sultan" expressed by lowering the gaze when in his presence, and a generalisation of this piece of expressive behaviour into a general subordination of one's own opinion and interest to that of the "sultan", is a part of the traditional Malay culture. That such aspects of Malay political culture may have serious repercussions for popular, or even elite response, to a policy or political stance, seem to be born out by very contemporary incidents in Malaysia. Thus, a brief look at the incidents leading upto the dismissal and jailing of the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim seem to suggest that one reason behind his fall from power and inability to muster enough public support to return to power by undoing the government of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed, might have been his falling on the wrong side of the traditional Malay political culture.

# An Illustrative Micro-level Case-analysis

As the 18 member APEC's summit scheduled for November 1998, in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur drew closer, issues raised by the detention of Malaysia's sacked Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim remained unresolved, suggesting potential for trouble. The extension of free trade throughout the APEC region, as agreed in 1994 and targeted for 2020, would be of great significance for trade and economy for such globally important economic powers as APEC members US and Japan, not to mention the other members, including China, Singapore and Australia. None really would want the APEC summit to be troubled by the lingering issues arising out of Anwar's dismissal and detention. Still, important APEC members, Indonesia and the Philippines indicated both their displeasure at Anwar's detention and ill-treatment by police brutality, and their intention to use the APEC summit to try to pressure the Malaysian government in Anwar's favour. The last British Governor of Hong Kong, now part of China, another important APEC member, openly asked APEC members to put such pressures on the Malaysian government. Australian Prime Minister showed concerns over Anwar's fate. All this seemed to somehow cast a shadow on a successful holding of the planned APEC summit in Malaysia.

The mood in the Malaysian capital itself, very recently fired with demonstrations, also raised doubt about even the suitability of Kuala Lumpur as the venue for a summit like the APEC's. No sooner had Mahathir bin Mohammed, the Malaysian Prime Minister declared during a recent visit to Japan that calm had returned to Kuala Lumpur, demonstrations turned out again in its streets, cheering Dr Wan Azizah, Anwar's wife. However, demonstrations this time were less violent in mood than those which had broken out immediately after Anwar's dismissal, upon Anwar's call. It did indeed seem that the pro-Anwar move within Malaysia was now very unlikely to stage an Indonesian-style immediate "revolution". The "movement" for liberalisation, rallying around Anwar's arrest, seemed to now recede into a movement digging in for the long haul. Prime Minister Mahathir complained during his recent Japanese tour that Anwar supporters had tried to derail the Anwar trials from the "constitutional" course taking shape in the courts into trial by the mob in the streets. It seemed, in the clash between "mob"-led move for democratic liberalisation lost out, at least for the time being, to the government's resolve to stand by its "democratic constitutionalism" at, seemingly, any cost. Kuala Lumpur, after all, seemed to be ready enough to host the APEC summit, and the summit seemed to be all set for Kuala Lumpur—despite concerns shown by some APEC members on the Malaysian situation.

The issues involving Anwar Ibrahim's recent arrest and detention remained there, unresolved, despite the embarrassment caused to the Malaysian government by the APEC leaders expressed concern over the issues. These central issues are basically related to political modernisation. These are issues of democratic liberalisation—symbolised, it seems, in the current Malaysian crisis, by Anwar Ibrahim, and democratic constitutionalism as a guarantee for stability, symbolised by Mahathir Mohammed's stand. As seen in the preceding chap-

ter[1], both these matters—liberalisation and constitutionalism—are essential in-gredients of political modernisation. Paradoxically, these two basic values of political modernisation so crucial to overall modernisation of the region, seem to be in conflict in Malaysia. This may well be the case for all or many of the developing societies of the region. What might be the reasons for such a situa-tion? A deeper into the political culture of the societies involved—in this case, Malaysia—seems to provide some clues.

One aspect of the political culture of such traditional—even if now mod-ernising---societies is the basic role played by religion in their shaping. This is a point we would discuss in greater detail, in the following chapter[2]. In Malaysia, while supporters of Anwar and Mahathir both justified their stands in terms of such modern ideological terms of reference as "democratic liberali-sation" and "democratic constitutionalism", they are more often than not rep-resent one or the other side of a religious conflict going on underneath the thin veneer of modern secular political concerns. It is true that many a times, some of the proponents of either position may not themselves realise the religious undercurrents of their stances. This may be particularly true of the western educated champions of one or the other position. But there are tell-tale clues to the religious origins of their "secular" stances.

Even though Anwar Ibrahim was being hailed as the hero of democratic liberalisation, it is not to be forgotten that he was, not long ago, a fiery leader of the Islamic fundamentalist Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement. One reason he was co-opted into the Mahathir-led ruling United Malay National Organisa-tion was precisely this Islamic activism of his. As a fiery Islamic fundamentalist leader, with wide following amongst the young, partly modernising Malays—specially students but also urban lower middle class—he was both a threat to stability, and a potential source of increased support. By inducting him into the ruling party, seen by the fundamentalists, and religious elements in general, as "not Islamic enough", Mahathir had not only thwarted a potential Iranian-style revolution, but also had further consolidated the UMNO's power-base amongst the Malay, who count Islam as an essential ingredient of their ethnic identity. Islam is a major part of Malay culture, including the Malay political culture.

As Anwar fell from UMNO favour and power, much of Anwar's support amongst the "mob", appeared to be amongst the Islamic fundamentalists, and other Islamic activists. It is not insignificant in this context, that the demonstra-tions that broke out upon Anwar's arrest, had the Masjid Negara—the "Na-tional Mosque"—at the heart of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's largest urban seg-ment, as their focal point. Anwar, in the minds of the Malays and in the context of internal socio-politics of Malaysia, represented the fundamentalist strain of Islam. That is where the source of his support lay. His championing of what appeared from outside to be "democratic liberalism", was rather more of a pe-ripheral import. It was, from the fundamentalist Islamic point of view, only

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[1] Vide: Chapter 2.
[2] Vide, ch. on "Religion ... "

an aspect of the issue of "justice"—something very basic to the fundamentalist understanding of Islam.

The forces seeming to champion "democratic constitutionalism", also, in fact derived this penchant for "stability" and "abiding by the rules" of the system, almost to the point of holding them sacred, from a religious stand enshrined in the Malay political culture. The Malaysian constitution has Islam as an essential ingredient of Malayness, and has Islam as the State Religion of Malaysia. Also, it has the Malay "sultans" as the supreme political authority over the people. Though the term sultan has often been, erroneously, equated with "king" or "monarch" in the western sense, it is not so. While the western "king" or "monarch" is the secular counterpart of the religious "pope", "papal representative", or the like—the Islamic "sultan" is supposed to be both in the one, with the religious identity being the superior between the two in the composite. In fact, the very term and the institution of the "sultan" derives from a Koranic verse, indicating the bestowing of the office of the "sultan" on the Prophet Mohammad. As such, by the traditional and orthodox understanding of Islam, not only is every successive genuine "sultan" everywhere is a successor and representative of the Prophet, and as such, of God Himself. But, to be a genuine "sultan", one would have to be a true representative of the Prophet through an unbroken line of succession in religious discipleship. In Malay sultanates, the sultans were believed to be such true representatives of the Prophets not only in religious discipleship, but, incidentally, often, also in bloodline. The Orthodox Muslims retain this sense of reverence for the sultan. One such revered sultan from the past, perhaps the most well-known in the West, was the Kurdish sultan Saladin of the Crusades, made famous by the ballads about Richard the Lion-hearted.

As sultans disappeared from much of the Middle East, the Malay sultans not only retained their position, but also continued to enjoy the reverence of the orthodox Muslims in Malaysia. In a culture where reverence has a crucial place in the people's value-system and expressed behavioural pattern, this reverence for the sultan would be something more important than whatever might be written down in the modern constitution or politically arrived at policies. The sultans' status as the supreme rulers in their sultanates individually, and over entire Malaysia collectively was, in any case, confirmed in the Constitution of Malaysia when it came into being in 1963.

It is true that most orthodox Muslims too, like their fundamentalist counterpart, might not be aware of the theological intricacies or cultural ramifications of the origins of their current political stance in favour of the status quo, symbolised, ultimately, by the office of the "sultans". Notwithstanding that, their position is largely generated, and acculturated into the unconscious, by the orthodox Islamic outlook, very much ingrained in the Malay political culture. The conflict between the political cultural orientations shaped by the fundamentalist and the orthodox positions in Islam spills over in many aspects of social and political outlook in Malaysia. Anwar as a fundamentalist revolutionist taken into the UMNO ruling elite upholding the constituionalised status quo with its support base amongst the largely rural, orthodox Muslims,

had made great advances for the fundamentalist position from within. Largely spurred by his enthusiasm, it seems, numerous restrictions were gradually imposed upon the powers of the sultans, including that of the Yang Di Agong Pertuan—the supreme sultan, during the period between 1984 to 1994. The roots of fundamentalist opposition of the very office of sultan go far back in history, in the Middle East. Formulated mainly by lay ideologues of Islam and occasionally petty clergy disowned by the general body of authenticated scholars with due succession chains, the fundamentalist position had to develop a vested interest in defying and denouncing any religious authority which required and claimed authority in authentication through successive discipleship. It is for this very reason, the fundamentalist theology denounces all the main schools of law and theology in Islam. This gives their outlook a distabilising and revolutionary colour. This, notwithstanding that they can be much more rigid and violently fanatic in holding on to their own brand of theology and politics. Whatever be the roots of such destibilising revolutionistic tendencies of Islamic fundamentalism, this goes against the very grain of the deference-centred aspects of traditional Malay political culture, symbolised by the office of the sultan, amongst many other cultural artifacts.

On the other hand, the orthodox position, in an interestingly paradoxical way, offers a composite of stabilising tendencies that go with conservatism, and a kind of liberalism that is cultivated by a culture of toleration of differing schools of law and theology within the same religion. Due to its own deference-oriented sympathies, this orthodox tendency within Islam could and was, more easily taken into the Malay cultural fabric. Once taken in, the orthodox Islamic tendency also further reinforced the deferential aspect of the Malay political culture. It might be interesting to note in the passing here, that, while the fundamentalist denounce all views prevalent amongst Muslims that differ with their own as heresy, the orthodox—right from the beginnings in the Prophet's times in the 7th century, regard all schools of law and theology as valid as long as they fall within a minimal parameter of Islam. Such toleration of the "other" within Islam, gradually coloured the Orthodox with a general culture of toleration, which has the potential for easily translating into political liberalism. But, such liberalism, however, is very unlikely to be achieved at the cost of the deep-rooted Malay cultural tendencies centred on the values of deference.

It might be interesting that a hero of the fundamentalist persuasion like Anwar Ibrahim emerged in Malaysia as a focal point for such liberalist demands as those for civil liberties. But it was the predominance of the orthodox Islamic political culture in the UMNO which had actually contributed much to the gradual evolution of Malaysia, in the entire Islamic world, as anything close to Western liberal democracy. Through, what seems to be careful cultural engineering, the sultanate system was gradually transformed into a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system akin to the Westminster model. This was a very successful attempt at political modernisation in line with political cultural context. This trend, embedded in the orthodox Malay culture, not only thwarted the mainly Chinese- supported Communist move to bring about a

revolutionary Communist regime in the 1950s and the 1960s, but also has done much to pre-empt an Iranian-style fundamentalist takeover in the 1970s. One wonders if the trend could continue to achieve further gains for democratic liberalisation in its own way. This, however, would be possible more through the orthodox religious ethos and traditional political style and system making up much of the substance of Malay political culture—rather than through a head-on collision course against these forces. Coming back to the immediate point of our micro-level case-analysis, Anwar Ibrahim, it seems that one of the costly mistakes he committed was his clash with the sultans, and his lack of deference in a culture built on the institutionalisation of deference and patronage. It seems, this, perhaps among other things, was one of the critical things which seems to have cost Anwar not only his brilliant career, but also his great potential as an agent of change in the substance of Malaysian politics. In the Malaysian context, he would have appeared to the tradition-bound orthodox Malay as "arrogant" and an "impolite upstart". Mahathir Mohammed, himself a liberal in many ways, could not "take it". In this, he reflected the general traditional outlook ingrained in the Malay political culture, prevalent amongst his largely rural Malay constituency.

The winds of fundamentalism has touched mainly the urban youth and lower middle class. This might have deflected these segments of the Malay population away from the Malay political culture to a limited extent. But, that was not enough as a support-base to carry on an Iranian-style, or even an Indonesian- style, revolution in Malaysia. The orthodox trend permeating the Malay political culture seemed to have won over once again. That, irrespective of whether or not the grand old Prime Minister Mahathir himself survived UMNO's internal struggles. This also meant yet another opportunity for an alliance between the orthodox Islamic tendencies of the Malay political culture, and liberal secular tendencies of modernising forces, to carry on the gradual process of political modernisation of the nation. As the threat to the status quo and its gradualist approach to the progress of both liberalisation and Islam recede, the regime might be less worried about the jailed Deputy Prime Minister, opening doors for his freedom. Freedom for someone like Anwar Ibrahim might have to offer much to Malaysia and, perhaps in other areas than radical activism, essentially built into the fundamentalist tendency due to historical and theological reasons. Such developments will have far reaching implications for political modernisation of Malaysia, through—rather than in conflict with—the Malay political culture.[3]

## The Basic Motor of Individual Political Behaviour

All politics, in the ultimate analysis, is individual behaviour. This is fact we often tend to forget when trying to absorb political news as global and abstract phenomena. But the fact remains that, politics is made up of individual, small segments of individual power-related human behaviour. Political culture, as a

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[3] AA Rahmân, "Religious Factor in Malaysia's Political Crisis" (Melbourne, 1998).

composite of many similarly individual, small segments of values and expressions, is the very basic motor of all politics. Without understanding this role of political culture, we would be unable to optimise our chances of bringing about the kind of change sought after as part of modernisation. To understand this role of political culture in shaping political thinking and behaviour of individuals, we need to understand how political cultures works through the individuals mind.

Political culture works through acculturation of a person into certain power-related attitudes well early in his childhood. Childhood experiences fundamentally and greatly affect and shape almost all the basic modalities of adult thought, feeling and behaviour. Childhood experience, through acculturation via child rearing practices, shape these basic modalities and thereby play a very crucial, often inescapable role in latter, adult thought, feeling, and behavioural patterns.[4] Unconsciously absorbed childhood experiences inculcate certain power-related attitudes into the unconscious layer of a person's mind. These attitudes eventually crystallise as response patterns, alternatively called "modalities", in situations where power is involved. Such modalities of response involving power are thus internalised into the Unconscious. They later shape the person's response to all political situations—situations involving the acquisition, holding and/or using power. Such responses to political situations also include responses to policies as "the outflow and application of power over society and its individual members".[5]

As noted in the preceding chapter,

> "Acculturated through a given political culture, into certain culture-specific combinations of modalities of responses to policies—individuals are prone to respond to certain policies, including those related to modernisation—in certain culture-specific ways."[6]

Some psychologists of acculturation have given detailed description and analyses of stages of childhood experiences, right from birth, which go on to inculcate in the child certain generally life-long lasting patterns of responses to certain situations. A brief discussion of some aspects of these stages, put in a power-relational context, by way of illustration, may help further understand the workings of political culture through the unconscious level of the individual human mind.

## Acculturation: Politicising the Child

The child, right at birth, finds itself in a power-relationship in which both the child and the mother engage, albeit unwittingly. Normally, at birth, the mother is the only source of life-sustaining resources for the child. The child

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[4]For an excellent and lucid, yet scientific description of this, vide: Erik H. Eriksen, *Childhood and Society*.

[5]Ch. 2, supra.

[6]Ch. 2, supra.

needs some form of interaction with the mother to be able to take in these resources, packaged out in the shape of mother's milk. The mother too, for her own reasons, needs to deliver the resources, so packaged, to the child. Apart from complex psychological needs, dubbed as "maternal instinct", "love" etc., there are physical reasons as well for her to try to breast-feed the newborn.[7] In the circumstances, the first power-relational modality the child learns and unconsciously absorbs, is to respond to the power of the all-powerful-seeming mother with a passive and trusting acceptance of whatever she delivers. At this stage, the child does not even needs to solicit or actively pursue his goals of nourishment. The modality normally learnt at this stage is that of passive and trusting acceptance of whatever is handed down[8] by the powerful counterpart in a power-relationship situation.

For a person, who, for some reason or other develops a fixation at this stage, or unconsciously regresses to this stage—sometimes referred to as "the primary oral stage"—live with a life-long tendency to uncritically, trustingly and passively accept any policies handed down by powerful government authorities.[9]

But normally a child will proceed on to the "secondary oral stage", retaining a healthy level of "trusting", known as "basic trust", but tempering with newer modalities learnt at this second stage of child development. At this stage, the mother's milk is no longer that overflowing as to make her want to feed as intensely or as eagerly as when the child was just born. Not being that overflowing, neither does it just flows into the passively open mouth of the child. Now the child both needs to seek the milk—demand it by crying for it, and also actively suck it out of the mother's breasts.[10] Unlike in his days of passive receptance, he no longer passively receives images onto his eyes, either. Now he actively seeks out the mother, concentrates on her, as he tries to see and ensure that it is her there, so that he can demand the attention and the milk from her. In doing so, he actively sucks in—takes in—the images he sees and concentrates upon. Through his seeing habits, and his breast feeding habits—the most often, regular, prominent and actively engaged in—he comes to unconsciously acquire and absorb the habit of actively pursuing, demanding and extracting his desired objects from the still more-powerful-than-him source of resources, the mother.

Over time, this modality becomes generalised, and he acquires the habit of actively seeking out the sources of his desired objects, demanding it, and extracting it therefrom by active engagement in any required struggle in any encounter with the powerful source of sought resources, e.g. The government. Combined with "basic trust" as a healthy residue from the primary oral stage, such a modality from the secondary oral stage, gives the person a very self-confident, demanding, active, go-getting attitude towards powerful authorities. If the person grown out of this child, for some reason or other has had

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[7] For the mother's need to feed the child, vide: ???

[8] Eriksen, . . .

[9] Eriksen, . . .

[10] Eriksen, . . .

developed a fixation at this second stage of his childhood developmental experience, or unconsciously regresses to that stage, he is likely to live with a life-long tendency to be very demanding in whatever he seeks, and would actively pursue whatever he demands, not resting until he extracts from the authorities what he demands—trusting, with a very basic trust, that he will get whatever he wants, eventually. He might turn into one of those life-long political agitators many of whom are seen as radical activists, or revolutionaries.[11]

But normally, a child would pass on to the third stage of his personality development, sometimes referred to as the "anal stage", for his habitual extra attention during this stage to the workings and required control of the anal region of his body. If saved from any fixations or regressions to the earlier two stages, he will retain from modalities learnt therein, only healthy aspects such as the "basic trust" that all will be all right—sooner and later, and the penchant for action and a go-getting attitude towards the goals he pursues in life. He will add to these, newer modalities learnt at this third, "anal" stage.

At this stage, the child undergoes toilet-training, trying to learn to "release" and "keep in" bodily refuse, alternately and at appropriate times, in appropriate ways, at appropriate places. As he struggles to master these rather difficult matters, the concern for these aspects of life becomes more prominent in his daily life and thought. That is why this stage had been named as the "anal" stage—referring to the bodily site of such concerns—in the first place. Being so absorbed with such concerns, he internalises a concern for "propriety", and a habit of "holding back", as well as "releasing all". Though all this is practiced initially, primarily, in relation to bodily refuse—over time, these generalise. In power-relational context, these come to give him a habit of being concerned with what is politically "appropriate", and of "holding on" to power when he can, and releasing power in the form of politically applied anger, opinion, agitation, votes etc. The jump from the "initial" to such a "political" level, of the basic third-stage modalities of concern for appropriateness, "holding back" and "releasing", of course, happens through much more complex mechanisms than it might appear from the simplified form it is presented here for easier comprehension. But the jump occurs, and gives the person a tendency to try to be politically correct; inclined towards holding on to power if power comes by; holding back political support until the appropriate object, time and place for support comes along; releasing political anger through agitation, or releasing political opinion by votes; and relinquishing power, if in power, at the appropriate time in the appropriate manner.

If fixated on any of the aspects of this third-stage modalities, or regressed to any of them, for some reason or other, the person might develop a tendency of holding on to power, or political agitation, or extraordinary concern for being politically correct. In various combinations with residual modalities from earlier stages, these might give a person different patterns of political orientations towards authority and policies handed down by them.

In the next stage, through intricacies of family relationships within the nu-

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[11]Eriksen, . . .

clear family set-up, the child learns modalities of repressed hostility and am-bivalence towards the most powerful in his life-situation, and absorbs his norms and ways through psychological processes known as "identification" and "in-trojection". These modalities translate into attitudes of repressed hostility or ambivalence towards political authority and their policies, or absorbing and internalising of its policies and norms as a matter of unconscious, habitual pattern of political response to government and its policies. Again, through various combinations with residues from earlier stages, differing patterns of political response may evolve in different persons.

An offshoot of this modality-formation of this stage is the development of dealing with aggression—one's own, and vis-a-vis others'. Here too, various combinations may result in various patterns of aggression management and response to aggression, ranging from passive resistance to active war.

## Culturally Shaped Commonalities

As obvious from the above, political acculturation—inculcation of modes of political thought and behaviour—is very much a matter of shaping the indi-vidual's mind. As such, each different individual is likely to have a different patterns of political thought and behaviour than another individual. Or, from an alternative point of view, all individuals all over the world, excepting a few affected by abnormal fixations or regressions, are likely to have the same kind of political orientation. The truth, however, lies in between. A vast majority of individuals acculturated through the same culture are likely to have common patterns of political thought and behaviour in a significant extent of aspects. At the same time, such vast majority acculturated through one particular cul-ture is likely to have political orientation quite different to a significant extent than the vast majority of those acculturated in another culture. That is where political culture becomes an useful tool for analysing the different ways people in different cultures might respond to the same policies—such as, those aiming at modernisation.

## For Social Acceptance of Modernisation

It is a given political culture which, through complex and deep rooted psy-chological processes, creates and maintains specific pronenesses in response to policies. Modernisers pursuing their modernising mission in any given soci-ety, need to shape their policies in line with such pronenesses, specific to the given society. This they need to do, to ensure the required kind of responses. This will be necessary to get the masses accept and support the modernising policy in question.

# Chapter 4

# Religion and Political Culture: The Inescapable Nexus

In the preceding chapters we saw how an overall modernisation requires political modernisation as its framework, and political modernisation would have to occur essentially within the context of a given political culture. Political culture of any society preceding, requiring or undergoing modernisation, in turn, is essentially largely shaped by religious values. This way, the entire project of modernisation is found to be inescapably tied up with paying attention to the pre-existing religious values of the society where modernisation occurs. Paradoxically enough, modernisation is, this way, impossible without a central part being played in it by religion—through the political culture of the society in question.

This chapter, and the next chapter will focus on this essential role of religion in modernisation. This chapter will see how religion happens to be an inescapable basic determinant of political cultural tendencies in any society requiring or undergoing modernisation. The next chapter will carry on that discussion into an analysis of how that makes political modernisation very dependent upon being pursued as consonant with the society's religious values.

## Traditionality of Modernising Society

Modernisation is the process of transformation of a traditional society into a modern one. As such, Modernisation by definition takes place in traditional societies. If they were not traditional—i.e., pre-modern, they would not need or be open to modernisation.

It is relatively easier to see the traditionality of a pre-modern society. Not only the values of the society are traditional, but also are their tangible expressions. The entire culture, including the given society's political culture, is visibly, quite tangibly traditional. Kings, sultans, emperors, sheikhs, village headmen, all are visible with all their visibly traditional garbs, ways, mannerisms. The predominance of the shamans, priests, brahmins, mullahs, witch-doctors etc. Is open for all to see, notice and take cognisance of. They, as dominant social figures, are very visible in their traditionally expected garbs an express tra-

ditionally expected mannerism. People's traditionally grounded and expected attitudes of deference towards them—both the primarily secular, and primarily secular traditional social elites—are visible and well- acknowledged in very visible bits and pieces of symbolic behaviour starting from the abeyance, hand-kissing, lowering of the gaze, etc.. Tradition as the very life-substance of such societies is vibrantly alive for all to see. But problem arises with the already-modernising, but still traditional societies. A cosmetically grafted veneer of modernity, usually thicker over the urban elites, may disguise the actually, fundamentally, primarily and largely traditional nature of such a society. I have sometimes called them "tradition-bound" as a matter of convenience, to differentiate them from the unmistakably traditional societies who have not yet acquired even the cosmetic appearance of modernity. Notwithstanding that, such "tradition-bound" societies too are, basically, traditional. Societies in rural Afghanistan are largely of the unmistakably traditional category. Societies in most developing societies, e.g. India, Kuwait, Malaysia etc. are of the second category.

The cosmetically grafted appearance of "modernity", often comprise of such visible but often relatively trivial fruits of modernity as found in the truly modernised societies, e.g. the TV, the fridge, the washing machine, the telephone, the western-style dresses, smoking cigarettes, motor cars, high rise buildings and freeways, etc. Providing the people some creature-comforts of the most addictive kind, and elevating them with a sense of "personal success" upon acquiring or being able to avail of such amenities, they hide away from their consciousness the fact that, deeper down, they are still for most of their life's circumstances, motivated by traditional values. For example, even while watching the election campaign on a very "modern" TV set, fitted with the dish antenna, smoking American brand cigarettes, donning western-style suits designed in Paris and sewed in Hong Kong, western-educated elite in Bangladesh, or Indonesia, or the Philippines or Jordan or Kuwait, would still vote generally on the basis of personal likes and dislikes for a politician, and for his her intergenerational, i.e.dynastic, family connections with a former politicians. This would be a far cry from the politically modern tendency to vote on the basis of impersonalised judgment of merits or demerits of stands taken by the politicians on various issues at hand—rather than the traditional tendency to support political figures on the basis of personal likes and dislikes, or the politicians' dynastic connections. It is such traditional orientations in politics that keep bringing daughters, wives, sons of former prime ministers or presidents to power in India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Bangladesh etc., for example. Or, bring a popular film actor to political authority primarily for his popularity acquired as the popular film star—in the Philippines, or in an Indian state. While superficially similar to some extent to the election of Ronald Reagan, one-time actor, to presidency in the US—such riding by popular film stars to power on the tide of their popularity as film stars in the Philippines or India, is not the same. Ronald Reagan was not popular as an actor—not even remembered by many as such, was dubbed only a "second rate comedian" long ago, and was elected to Presidency not because of any popularity

as a film-actor.

In such cosmetically "modern" of the modernising but still traditional, "tradition-bound" societies very deceptively show symptoms of "modernity" even in their express political positions and in their parlance. But this still does not make them modern. Deep down, on the unconscious level of the mind which really motivates people in much of their activity, they still retain their traditional values—now repackaged and sold in cosmetically "modern" expressions and terminologies. Thus, for example, as a cynical but popular and revealing saying goes in modernising India, "scratch a communist, you will find a communalist".

## Communalist-Communist Example: A Micro-level Analysis

What it wittingly points to is that, in India, politics is still guided mainly by religious communal loyalties—and the religiously minorities, finding it impossible to undo the political predominance in a liberal democratic system, resort to try to undo the liberal democratic system itself—but do this in name of the very "modern" sounding "Communist" call for demolishing the "capitalist", i.e. liberal-democratic state. This they as the religious minority, do, in reality, in pursuance of their very traditional religious-communal urge to undermine the political dominance of the numerically dominant religious group in the country. Unlike a politically defined minority in a modern political system, the religiously defined minority group in a country where religious affiliation is almost always hereditarily acquired, has no real hope of ever becoming the numerically dominant group—at least not in a foreseeable future. In such a situation, they would feel their only way out of a permanent minority status politically, would be to undermine the very system—liberal democracy—which equates political and numeral majority. However, having acquired some familiarity with "modernity" through largely western education, the communal minority does not proceed to trying to undo the "modern" liberal democracy in the name of any traditional religious communal self-interest. Instead they do this, in the name of another "modern"-sounding position—that of "Communism". It is not surprising that persons from a religious minority background seem to have a disproportionately higher presence in the Indian Communist movement, across its various shades.

The same appears to be true in Bangladesh, neighbouring India. Here the status of the main minorities and main majorities are reversed, as compared to India. The religiously defined group comprising the main minority in India, finds itself to be the religious-group in numerical majority. Similarly, the religiously defined communal group comprising the majority group in India, finds itself to be the main minority religiously defined communal group. But the m axiom, "scratch a communist, you will find a communalist" may well apply in Bangladesh as well. Here too, the religiously defined communal group in numerical minority seems to have a disproportionately higher presence in the various Communist and similar left-wing parties and organi-

sations. It might not be without intriguing significance that the leader of the main communist party in the country for decades was a landlord from the minority communal group in the country. Here too, the "progressive"—i.e. "modern"—protestations and pretenses of such leftist activists might only be convenient ways of disguising their actually traditional, communalist tendencies to destabilise any political authority dominated by the numerically major, rival religiously defined group in the country.

This is not just an aberration attributable to any uniquely Subcontinental matter. To take another example, this time from the Middle East, we can note the origins and development of the leftist movement in the Syria and Iraq. The Ba'th Party, being the main leftist, "modern", "progressive" party enjoying the support of and promoting the cause of the Soviet bloc for decades, was founded by and initially led by a Christian, Michael Aflaq: a man from the minority religious group, in a largely Muslim society. Its power elite, particularly in Syria, seems to have a disproportionately higher presence of the Shii, again, a bitterly anti-Sunni religiously defined communal minority in a land dominated by the Sunni religious group. As a matter of fact, the "pro-Soviet" "president" of Syria for decades himself is reputed to be a Nusayri Shii—a minority even within the minority.

In yet another case from the Middle East, the most radically "Marxist" faction within the PLO, was carved out and led by a Christian George Habash, undermining the majority of Muslims in the PLO. It might as well be that the rise of religiously defined radical groups like the Hamas as a Palestinian organisation was a result of a Muslim backlash to the PLO's gradual shift towards the left due to the activities of such initially religious-minority initiated and led factions. There is no doubt now, looking back with the benefit of hindsight, that, the extra-radical terrorist activities of groups like George Habash's within the PLO had caused much to undermine the PLO as an organisation dominated by the majority trends amongst the Palestinians. One might as well wonder whether here too was some kind of "Communalist-Communist" equation at work.

All the above goes to show that in such modernising societies, politics often continues as motivated by traditional passions and traditional ways of political thinking—even when disguised by "modern"-sounding protestations and pretenses. There is no suggestion that all, or even the most of those pursuing traditional politics under the guise of "modernist" claims, are consciously engaged in deliberate deception. Often this might happen even without those involved even having realised this. As we have seen in preceding chapters, much of the motivation in political life takes place on the unconscious level of the ind, and the conscious level provides for acceptable justificatory appearances for the actual, unconscious motivations.

# Living by a Traditional Values Expressed in Modern Terms

Policy-formulators and policy-implementors are not, generally, psychoanalysts. Therefore, they are often unable to differentiate between what actually motivates the receptors of the policies, and what they claim to be their motivations. Put in another way, they are not able to differentiate between what the people really want—deep down, and what they say they want. As such, the policy-formulators and policy-implementers, in their task of policy-formulation and subsequent policy-implementation, go by what appears to be popular opinion—as expressed through popular votes, elections, referenda, letters to the editor columns in newspapers, polls etc. This, when the policy-makers and policy-implementers have arrived to a level of enlightenment themselves, at which they themselves want to correlate their policies to what people want. In most traditional—including the modernising ones—this might not even be the case. Any claims to taking account of popular wishes and attempts at incorporating popular participation in policy-making and policy-implementation in such societies, too, are often "yet another" examples of disguising what the person really wants by what he claim to want. After all, the policy-formulating and policy-implementing elites in such society, themselves, too suffer from the same situation of remaining traditional on the unconscious levels of their thinking, and showing signs of cosmetic, superficial modernisation to some extent in their expressions. They, actually even more than their masses, show the syndrome of living with a composite of traditional values and modern expressions. Such a composite is both unhealthy, and deceptive, but nevertheless, happens to be a reality in modernising societies.

This being the case, there is much confusion all around. The masses are sold policies—including modernising policies—with promises or explanations of these policies to be designed to deliver results which the policy-makers and policy-implementors do not themselves actually intend them to be. This they do, because they, again misreading the actual mind of the masses, believe that those are the results the masses want out of any policies they would be prepared to support. In reality, the masses do not want such results from policies; they want something else to accrue from policies. When such policies are handed down with promises of the kind of results the policy-makers and policy-implementors thought the masses wanted, the masses can not wholeheartedly support them—because these do not seem to promise what they actually, deep down, wanted out of policies. The result is that policies do not succeed. Neither the policy-formulating and policy-implementing elites, nor the masses upon and among which the policies are attempted to be implemented, achieve out of the policies what they actually want. The result is frustration on both sides. Popular frustration can lead to resistance or apathy towards the policy. Elite frustration may lead, among other things, intra-elite struggle resulting in putch, coup, and change of government. And any of such changes may start the cycle all over again. In the process, the prospects of real modernisation remain stalemated, the process stagnated.

The above can be further clarified by an example. In many a countries de-

colonised in the aftermath of the Second World War, the ruling elites happen to be the western educated urban upper and middle classes. Large-scale urbanisation in these countries was largely a function of European colonial policy. So was the development of the urban, western educated middle class. Education being often free or offered at nominal cost was open to all, and as such many a sons of those without any place in the traditional rural elite earned western education. Colonial policy being favourable to those willing and able to acquire some level of western education, such western educated could get urban jobs under colonial patronage. As such, they became the urban middle class, in the immediate proximity of the halls of power in the postcolonial capital. They, without any roots in traditional rural elite, however, became the new ruling elite of the country in any of the given cases.

From their power base in the capital, they needed or wanted to extend their control to the villages—the vast rural hinterland providing for the country's revenues—the very source of the new urban elite's wealth, power and security. The rural elite, upholding and sanctioned by traditional values, would generally see these sons-of-serfs or sons-of-peasants as nothing but rude upstarts trying to bully the real "nobles" in the villages through their agents in the villages. The rural elite would resent and resist the urban elite and their policies. In this, they would often find support, sanctity, authorisation and strength in religiously justified traditional values—upheld by the rural religious authorities, e.g. the village priest, the mullah, and so on. The struggle between the traditional rural social elite and the new urban political elite would take the shape of a conflict between the urban-based government run by the urban political elite and the rural religious authorities, handing out religious decrees, fatwas etc. Against the policies and agents of the urban-based government. In the event, the urban elite might find it necessary or convenient to safeguard their own interests of extending their control over the rural hinterland—to somehow banish the rural religious figures, or their traditional right to pronounce religiously sanctioned decrees or fatwas on government policies actually made and handed down by the urban elite. They would do it. The purpose would be to be win a victory for the "our-group" against the "their-group"—a very traditional kind of struggle. But this would be justified in such modern-sounding terms as "secularism"— preventing religious interference in political matter.

As the policy of banishing the religious authorities or preventing them from pronouncing judgments on policies handed down by the government of the urban elite is "sold" to the masses as in the interest of "secularism"— preventing religious authorities pronouncing judgments in non-religious matters, this arouses hopes amongst the masses that this might free them from the very many religiously justified controls by the "corrupted" worldly-wise religious authorities in the people's day to day mundane, worldly life. As such, the rural masses come to expect that the government policy of secularism aimed against the religious authorities will in fact prevent the corrupt, worldly-wise amongst the religious figures from interfering into day to day non-religious aspects of life. But soon enough they would start realising that, that is not the case. To them would appear that the government is hostile towards religious

authorities in general, and prevents their interference only selectively—only in cases where the interests of the urban-based government's interests so required. The masses would have expected the reverse: that the opposition of the religious figures would be selective—against the "corrupted" and worldly-wise amongst them, and prevention of interference in worldly matters would be total and generalised, applying to all cases of such mundane matters.

Thus, there would be a gap between the actual intention on the urban elite's part in promulgating the policy of opposing the rural religious figures in their traditional-style struggle against those justifiers of their rival, rural elite—albeit in the name of such modern ideals as secularism, on the one hand, and the actual expectation aroused amongst the masses from such a policy so declared. Because of the gap, the masses would soon be frustrated with the policy, for it not having delivered what they had thought it was promised to deliver.

Consequently, their response to the policy would be one of rejection, reducing the policy to fail achieving what the urban elite had actually intended it to achieve for them. This failure of the policy to achieve what it actually was intended to achieve would frustrate the governing urban elite also with the policy. As a result, the policy would be abandoned either in the face of active resistance from the largely rural and traditional masses, or because of the urban elite's disenchantment with it, or for both reasons contributing to the abandoning of the policy. One causality of the process would be the potential for real modernisation in the given area in which the policy was "sold" as aimed to bring about some aspect of modernisation, e.g., in this case, secularisation of the primarily non-religious domain of life.

This kind of confusing differences between what the urban elite intends by a policy, what it claims to intend by it, what the masses actually expect of it as "sold" to them, and the eventual frustration of both the governing elites and the masses with the policy can occur with many other aspects of seemingly "modernising" policies promulgated, and often unsuccessfully implemented in modernising, but still-traditional, societies.

This is the problem of dealing with traditional societies with a veneer of "modernity", as opposed to clearly traditional societies. But, by definition, all modernising societies will be under some extent or other of this kind of cosmetic modernity—and in analysing or planning for their real modernisation, we would need to proceed through such cognitive problems.

## Religiousity of Traditionality

Looking beyond the veneer of cosmetic modernity, then, we see that all modernising societies are largely motivated and moved by traditional attitudes. Societies move by the interaction of individuals, whose thoughts, feelings and actions are shaped by their conscious and unconscious values. In traditional societies, the most pervasive and deepest of values are those deriving from religion. For this reason, traditional values and religious values are often synonymous in such traditional societies. Tradition is religious. Consequently,

societies where modernisation is to be pursued, are always found to be bound, shaped and moved by religiously shaped and religiously coloured traditional values. For this reason, no modernisation strategy can succeed without taking into account the religiously shaped traditional values of the given society. Modernisation strategies would need to be formulated in terms which would seem to accord, as much as possible, with the religiously shaped traditional values concerned. This, to avoid provoking unnecessary social rejection of the modernising policies, and consequent turmoil. This would apply as much to political modernisation as to any other dimension of modernisation.

However, this seeming accordance of the modernising policies with religiously shaped traditional values also need to be actually so in accordance to the values. Otherwise, only a cosmetic accordance of modernising policies with religiously shaped traditional values would cause the same kind of problems which the cosmetically modern policies seem to generate.

Cosmeticity, in short, in any way, does not seem to help. E have seen how the cosmetically "modern" policy of "secularism" as pursued in countries like Turkey and Bangladesh backfired due to the hidden gaps between the expectations of the policy-formulators and policy-implementers on the one hand, and the masses on the other, hidden away under the cosmetic veneer of modernity and claimed purposes of the policies. Let us examine here a converse case—that of where cosmetic "traditionality" of a policy also does not seem to work.

## Cosmetic "Commitment" to Traditional Values

In Pakistan, the modernising ruling elite have tried to sell to people a policy of "Islamising" the country's laws, ever since its inception as a modern nation-state in 1947. Most recently, a "Shariah" Law bill was passed in the lower house of the Pakistani parliament, clearing way for subjecting all laws and policies—as well as the entire political and social life of the nation—to the Islamic religious Law. However, this has provoked opposition from a wide cross-section of the nation, including—surprisingly for many, the fundamentalist religious parties most ardently demanding the establishment of the religious law as the supreme arbiter in the nations life right from the beginning. This, however, need not be that surprising. As a Pakistani lawyer put it, this establishment of the "Shari'ah" Law by a Muslim League-led government as nullifying any other law or policy found to be contradictory to the "Shari'ah" Law, was in fact, a ploy to bring about the dictatorship of individuals comprising the Muslim League elite.[1] In other words, the suspicion behind the rejection of the policy is that this Muslim League elite's commitment to "Shari'ah" Law was rather cosmetic, and hid motives other than what was proclaimed.

Such suspicions are aroused by both semiotic reading of the policy-formulators concerned, and a history of their own behaviour vis a vis religiously shaped traditional values. Just as much of human behaviour is rooted in the unconscious level of the mind, so is human perception. The unconscious mind

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[1] Dateline, SBS TV (Australia), 31 October, 7.30 pm.

perceives things, and in doings so sees through and beyond the superficial, cosmetic levels of phenomena. It seems that this capacity to unconsciously seeing through and beyond the professed into the actual is more of an instinctive tendency, and gradually decreases with the cultivation of the conscious use of consciously pursuable modes of communication, e.g. verbality. Hence, animals and children are more apt to instinctively read the body language more correctly than adults who tend to get their own unconscious reading of the "Other" by their own conscious acceptance of the "other"'s own projection of its own intentions etc. In other words, it is easier to mislead an adult than a child, or an animal, about the most basic, unconsciously pursued intentions and courses of action.

In a parallel, people in relatively "primitive" societies, used to a lesser or lower level of cultivation of the consciously pursued modes of communication e.g. verbalisation, writing, etc., are probably more likely be able to read the hidden, unconscious level of the "other"'s intentions and tendencies. In other words, reading the "other" by the deciphering of the unconsciously reveled clues is a capacity inversely related to the advancements in the arts of consciously pursued modes of communication.

Deciphering the unconscious involves semiotic reading of the unconsciously given away clues, e.g. in body language. This means, a person reading the unconscious of another, reads the unconsciously revealed clues by reading them as symbolic expressions of matters more than—and beyond—what the clues themselves seem to be on the surface. Psychoanalysts are very well aware of this method of deciphering. As members of societies given to an advanced level of the cultivation of the consciously pursued modes of communication, modern psychoanalysts are trained, through arduous years of training, to consciously pursue the deciphering of such unconsciously revealed clues to the hidden intentions and tendencies of people. But ordinary, relatively "primitive" people in traditional societies seem to retain a certain level of ability to read through the conscious protestations into the unconscious, by themselves unconsciously, and hence automatically, deciphering clues in the behaviour of the "other". This capacity is enhanced by the fact that each culture itself has its own entire network of automatically, semiotically read symbolic pieces of behaviour and expressions. Thus, for ordinary people in traditional societies, it is relatively easier to read into the unconscious real intentions of the elite arising out of the same culture, as they hand down a policy or other for the people, with consciously claimed purposes behind them.

Thus, for example, as the Muslim League elite promulgates its "supremacy of the Shari'ah" bill, the ordinary man in rural Pakistan wonders, why in the world, the Religious Affairs Minister propagating for the bill, himself does not have a beard on his face? Under the Shari'ah, the keeping of a beard has a much lower place in the hierarchy of required express behaviour. But, psycho-culturally, on the unconscious level of semiotic reading of each other's mind, the beard turns out to be a very potent symbol of one's willingness to totally identify with the model of the Prophet as the very source of the Shari'ah—and as such carries a whole array of meanings in terms of one's sincere and total

religiousity or otherwise. It was perhaps because of such unconsciously potent meaning-rendering that beard has been an object of test and attack, historically, in many a Muslim societies facing conflict with non-Muslim authorities.

There are many other similar "tell-tale" clues for the traditional masses by which they read into the actual intentions behind ostensibly "religious" policies of modernising elites. By a habitual, automatic, unconscious, semiotic reading of such clues, the traditional masses come to judge, whether or not the religious or tradition-upholding policies are actually so, or they are a simply cosmetic cover to sell a policy with other, unsaid real motives.

## Religion and Social Motivation

It is clear from the above discussion that, there are essential links between religion, social motivation in traditional societies. Political modernisation of such societies, as the empowering framework for their overall modernisation, therefore would need to be pursued in a manner as without provoking unnecessary religiously motivated opposition.

# Chapter 5

# Religion and Political Modernisation

In the last chapter we saw that political culture and religion are inescapably intertwined in traditional societies, undergoing modernisation. In the light of our findings in earlier chapter that political modernisation itself can not occur without being pursued in line with the demands of political culture. Taking the two sets of findings, we can see that political modernisation of traditional societies can not be successfully pursued without taking account of the religious values essentially shaping the political culture of a given traditional society in question. This, mainly through the workings of the religious values active at the unconscious level of motivation on the part of the very many individuals involved. The situation being so in politics in the modernising societies might not be even apparent to the individuals themselves. They themselves might like to think of their motivations to be "secular", "modern", but the fact would remain that, hidden at the unconscious level of the mind, the political motivations are largely traditional and religiously shaped.

So, the daunting task at hand for the ones intent upon bringing about political modernisation of a traditional society is that of, first and foremost, of cultural engineering. Goals of political modernisation would have to be clearly understood. Then elements similar to such goals would have to be found and isolated out of the mass of religious values active at the very basis of the given traditional culture. Then, the goals of modernisation would have to be both modified and presented in terms of the religious values so sifted out of the traditional culture. Finally, they would have to be pursued as such, with all due visible deference to the religious sensitivities of the people in the given culture. In the process, any aspects of the traditional thinking and life-pattern would be undermined in the name of religion. Matters of tradition that could not be opposed on any other excuse without provoking intense unconsciously motivated popular reaction and backlash—can be so undermined in the name of religion as the very spirit of the tradition in question. That is possibly the only way this can be done. And as such, that might as well be the only way modernisation can be brought about with the least of popular resistance and unnecessary political upheavals. A better understanding of this seemingly paradoxical situation would require a consideration of what I might call the hierarchy of

values in any value system—including the traditional.

## Values

Value-systems are made of hierarchically organised network of values. But what is a value? One easy way of conceiving a value is that, it is the standard in one's mind obout more than one phenomena within any one given category, by which he decides the relative desirability of any given phenomenon. For example, a value about a number of apples of differing colours might be that a red apple is better than a green one.

It is by values that economic or any other form of worldly values come to be attached to, or invested in any phenomenon, or anything. A diamond is more valuable to a person than a piece of glass, because, by the standard of desirability in the person's mind, diamond is—for whatever reason—more desirable than glass. It might as well be, in some person's mind, that glass is more desirable than diamond. In a society where in people's values glass happens to be more desirable than diamond, glass would be more valuable than diamond. The value of glass, in other words, would be higher than diamond.

Obviously, value is a matter of subjective belief rather than objective fact. The very belief itself is an objective fact—that it exists as a belief. But the substance of the belief itself is subjective. Vales are made up of such subjective beliefs. This has two important implications. One, being subjective, they can differ from person to person, or from a group of person to another group of persons. The second implication is that, being made of beliefs, values are inherently religious in nature. A religion is basically a belief system, expressed in various forms of behaviour centred on a system of symbolic rituals. Values as comprising beliefs, make up value-systems which are essentially belief systems. Value system and religion, thus, have a common substance of origin and existence. They are the same, essentially, except that religion is only a kind of value-system. All religions, by definition, are thus also value-systems—though all value-systems need not necessarily, in theory, be religions as well. For example, philosophy and ideology, too, are value-systems, but not religion.

In traditional societies, however, the normal socially prevalent value- system is always religiously shaped and coloured. That is why, in traditional society, the social value-system and religion are not only concentric and largely overlapping, but also usually synonymous. The reason for this lay largely in the acculturation pattern and process in the traditional society.

## Acculturation into a Religious Basic Value-system

We have noted in another chapter that, religiously shaped child-rearing patterns make it likely that most children in the same traditional culture end up having same kind of childhood experiences, acculturating them into more or less same kind of modalities of thought, emotions and behaviour. In an earlier chapter we have seen some of the earliest stages of such childhood experi-

ences and their corresponding modalities. The latest stage discussed there was that known in psdychoanalyticalature as the "anal" stage, wherein the child learns, amongst other things, the modalities of "holding back" and "releasing" things—material possessions, information, anger, affection etc.—in ways, and at times and places, seen as "appropriate". Usually that stage lasts through the years 2 to 4, or at points thereabouts.

A most important stage, in terms of value-formation, comes immediately after that. Through this stage, usually called the "Oedipal" stage in classical psychoanalytic literature, the child experiences an intense sense of both hostility and affinity towards the father-figure in the childs life. Without going into the details of the causes, the child eventually learns to resolve the problems caused by such a coexistence of the opposing emotions, causing what has been termed the "oedipal ambivalences". In the process of this resolution, the child, unconsciously absorbs much of the entire value-system of the father-figure, through subprocesses called "identification" with the father-figure and "introjection" of the same. Whereas until now, the child was developing a limited number of individual values through the modalities acquired through the oral and anal stages, now the child learns entire net work of values, which would normally stay with him his entire life as his own value-system.

Since this entire network of values—the person's "own" value system happens to be more or less the same as his father-figures whom the person came to identify with and whom he introjected through the "oedipal" stage, it turns out to be more or less the same as that of his father or father-figure of the preceding generation. Same had been the case with the father-figure himself—he would have absorbed the value-system of his own father-figure, and his father-figure too, would have absorbed the value-system of his own respective father-figure. Here lies the roots of the extraordinary resilience of traditional values. Ensuring through its own constituent values a particular pattern of childhood experience, the traditional value-system further ensures that each succeeding generation ends up absorbing—through introjection and identification of the corresponding father-figures—the same traditional value system across the succeeding generations. Since traditional values, as we have seen, are largely religious—this means that succeeding generations of traditional societies continue to retain the religious character of their value-systems, irrespective of the advance of calendar years through centuries. Traditional societies, irrespective of whether in the fifteenth century or in the twentieth—continue to be bound by religious value systems. Any "changes" in the value-system of any given traditional society, over the years, would usually be only of a cosmetic level. This would be as much true of the modernising tradition-bound societies as of any purely traditional one—for reasons already discussed earlier in this book.

People acculturated into such a religious value-system live by the religious values—unconsciously, if not always consciously. Consequently, judging the merits—and hence desirability or acceptability—of any policy, they judge it by the dictates of their originally religiously shaped values. This will apply to any modernising policies as well.

Every element of modernity has its roots in the past—premodern past itself

being always largely religiously shaped. So going back to the common root, there must be way to justify an element of modernity in the name of the past religious life.

Let us exemplify this by looking at a rather trivial aspect of modern life—shaving the beard, as a common piece of modern cultural practice.

## Greek Religion and Modern Life-style: An Example

According to ancient Greek beliefs, gods were the perfect beings as being perfectly reasonable, women were just the opposite, being perfectly unreasonable and emotional, and as more reasonable than emotional,

> "Man was more nearly perfect [than woman]. It followed [by the logic of such beliefs], therefore, that he could be a more nearly ideal love object, particularly for men of education and refinement who sought a mingling of minds as part of love. The adolescent boy, with half-girlish face and body, his unfolding mental powers, and his promise of ultimate manhood, could inspire the Greek man with an emotion ... more intense and passionate than that aroused by the hetaera [i.e. women] ... more usually felt by a romantic man for a beautiful young girl."[1]

In his Symposium, Xenophon, the ancient Greek writer, described the effect on a group of mature Athenian men when beautiful boy entered the room.

> The men were dinner guests at the house of an Athenian gentleman named Callius in 424 B.C., and had all taken their places on the banquet couches when the youth Autolycus entered with his father.[2]

Xenophon himself concluded from the beauty of the boy:

> ... beauty was naturally something kingly, especially if a person possessed it in conjunction with bashfulness and modesty, as Autolycus possessed it at that time ...[3]

The effect on the grown up men just at the appearance of the boy was quite revealing of the impact of the religious belief in the superiority of godly reason over supposedly devilish emotion, and supposed superiority of men as vessels of godly reason over women as vessels of devilish emotions:

> "as a brilliant light, when it appears in the darkness of the night, attracts the eyes of everyone towards it, so the beauty of Autolycus drew upon him the gaze of all [men present] on that occasion ... Some got silent, and others composed themselves into a settled

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[1] Natural History of Love, pg. 42.
[2] Natural History of Love, pg. 42.
[3] Xenophon, Symposium

> kind of attitude ... as are excited by the gentler influence of Love assume more affection in their looks, sink their voice in greater softness ... "[4]

It is important as a clue to prevailing attitudes that, in his very poetic and exuberant eulogy to the boy's beauty, Xenophon connects the beauty to him as he then—i.e. as a beardless boy—was. For all their intellectually conceived and pursued worship of divine Reason in a male body through love-making, the Greek men too, could not overcome the instinctive preference for the female form as the object of love-making, nor the instinctive abhorrence for the roughness of body hair in a love-making situation. Thus, in pursuit of love-making to men, men sought out beardless boys. However, it was believed that youth upto the age of twenty eight years were still good enough as the passive partner in the homosexual relationships, originally stemming from religious belief about the nature of gods, men and women. The problem was that body hair, including beard, appeared well before twenty years. A good many sixteen or so years of suitability as passive sexual partner threatened to be lost for such body hair. The problem was "solved" by beginning the custom of shaving off the beard and other body hair for men who were still below twenty nine, and hence otherwise suitable and desirable as passive sex-partners for bearded—and hence "full" men, beyond that age.

The practice was taken over by the roman when the conquered and absorbed Greece into their empire and civilisation. In the process the original age-limits of twenty eight and the like blurred away, as many a men continued to offer themselves as passive sexual partners in return for the pampering patronage of other, active partners—and, as a corollary to that, continued shaving well beyond the age of twenty eight. One such clean-shaved passive sexual partner who became very famous, was Julius Caesar.

As the upper classes continued with the practice of offering themselves for being pampered by other men, and as a preparation for that, continued shaving—the lower classes emulated. Shaving thus became a common practice amongst many in ancient Rome. As the Graec-Roman heritage was revived as a counterweight against the Judaeo-Christian one, in the wake of the Enlightenment, many customs of ancient Greece and Rome too, were revived as symbolic cultural gestures of modernity vis-a-vis the immediate religious past coloured by Judaeo-Christian traditions. In doing so, many might not have realised that such ancient Graeco-Roman customs too, had religious—albeit different—origins. The above description, rather in relative brief compared to its over two millenniums of history, of even a trivial element of modern lifestyle shows how even elements of modernity, eventually, go back to one or other aspects of religious values.

Shaving of beards is not a serious enough matter of substance to warrant its pursuing as a modernising policy. But, hypothetically speaking, if someone were to try to bring this about as a modernising policy, they could justify this in the name of such ancient Greek religious values as the worship of reason as the

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[4]Xenophon, Symposium

supreme divine quality—enhancing acceptability of the male body as the vessel of divine reason by shrouding in the beauty of feminine youthfulness, etc. It is besides the point in this hypothetical example setting to make a point—that beard shaving is not really a substantive element of modernity and needs not be so pursued.

## Protestant Ethics: Another Example

On a more serious level, Protestant ethics gives a good example of more serious aspects of modern life, like the work-culture behind modern capitalist economy, deriving from Protestant religious values of the past. Many an aspects of capitalism could be—and have been—justified in the name of various Protestant religious values.

Examples of beard-shaving out of ancient Greek paganism, or capitalistic mode of production out of Protestant ethics might be a little remote—by triviality or by geo-historical reasons, from the immediate concerns of this book: serious modernisation facing us now, more serious than the cosmetics of shaving, and taking place in societies hardly any of which have any deep rooted protestant traditions at the base of their traditional value-systems. To carry on our clarification of the matter at hand even closer to our immediate focus, now let us turn to yet another example. Let us take the example of popular consent as a basis of democratic governance—a crucial part of political modernisation. It might be interesting to find that sources of this aspect of modern democratic governance might as well have sources in certain globally dominant medieval religious ideals in certain societies undergoing modernisation now.

Government by consent is a democratic ideal, which needs to be popularised and established in modernising societies as a part of their political modernisation. Many societies across Africa, Asia and southern Europe experienced a type of governance, throughout the medieval period, which derived its ideals from the Islamic religious concept of *baiyah*. This type of governance, known as the caliphate, suffered gradual dilution and degeneration in practice into its mere shadow of a sort over the centuries since its original inception in the 7th century. But even then, it retained the ideals which it was built around, as ideals. People under this form of governance—even when it existed only in its diluted form, or was prominent more as its subordinate forms such as sultanate, *nawabate*, *khedivate*, etc.—continued to expect the governance to conform to those ideals. The rulers too, even when less than ideal, knew this and claimed to abide by those ideals. And, at least in form—if not always in substance—did abide by the ideals like that embodied in the concept of *baiyah*. This continued until the actual, forcible dissolution of the theoretically global caliphate in 1924.

Baiyah literally means "sale". Technically, it means the "sale" by a person, out of his free will, his own self, and all that he has, to a religiously acceptable ruler as the agent of God, in return for his practical commitment to rule over those who so sell themselves into allegiance to the ruler, in accord with

the religious values the people hold dear. No ruler, according to the doctrine of *baiyah*, can rule over anyone who has not given his *baiyah* to the ruler. In effect, it amounts to a principle that governance by rulers is acceptable only by consent of those who are subjected to the governance. As the caliphate as a form of governance declined over the centuries, *baiyah* came to be often reduced to a mere ritualistic formality whereby individual subjects—and their patrons as their representatives where groups of individuals could not themselves arrive—expressly declared their *baiyah* to a new ruler, the caliph as "the Shadow of God on Earth"—or his representative, e.g. a sultan (in the Middle East, the Subcontinent, and Southeast Asia), a *nawab* (mainly the Subcontinent) or a *khedive* (Egypt). But, at least, there was the pretense of the rulers' depending on popular consent for the validity of their rule. The pretense itself was important, as it indicated the strength of deeply held social religious value that governance must be by consent of the governed. Its hold on the unconscious psyche of the people—and even the rulers—was strong enough to force them both to at least keep paying some kind of symbolic deference to the doctrine.

As the caliphate was forcibly abolished, sultanates, *nawabates*, khedivates etc. seemed to have lost their validity as subordinate forms representing the caliphate. Having lost their validity in the minds of their subjects, such subordinate forms of the embodiment of the form of governance called the caliphate, also began to wither away. As the caliphate and its subordinate forms disappeared, the popular unconscious need to subject oneself to a superior authority through *baiyah* was projected onto non-political institutions like religious orders, through the psychological process called transference. For example, sufi shaykhs were taken as khalifah (caliph), and given *baiyah* to. Many a times, such shaykhs were literally referred to as sultan, or shah—another term for "sultan". It is through such developments that, for example, the Naqshbandi sufi order in Turkey came to acquire vast popular authority over people in measures and strength comparable to a political government. Indeed, the very fact that sufi disciples or affiliates of the order, such as Turgut Ozal and Necmettin Erbakan could be elected President by popular votes, defying the very strict, hostile secularist tendencies of the country's military-backed constitution and governmental system entrenched over seventy years—testifies to the strength of such religiously shaped popular values.

We have noted that, it is imperative for political modernisation that active commitment to government by popular consent be popularised and institutionalised as a part of democratisation as an aspect of political modernisation. Now, in societies with a historical experience with long standing popular, even if unconscious, commitment to *baiyah*, which essentially embodies the principle of government by popular consent—it would be much easier to "sell" a policy of establishing a form of government based on the principle governance by consent principle, by reference to the religious value of *baiyah* than to any Jeffersonian theory of democracy to which the ordinary people can hardly relate. The proposition here is precisely this: to sell the substance of modernity to the people by referring the elements of the substance to suitable elements of the people's own traditional value-system.

## Presenting Modern Values through Traditional Terms

We have seen elsewhere in this book that traditional values are expressed through traditionally accepted and preserved forms of expression. When we promote a modern value by referring to the same or similar value culled out from the people's own traditional religious value-system, we need to be careful about how we express the value. It needs to be expressed in traditional, religious terms through which the value has come to be expressed in popular usage over the generations. Over the generations, such expressions have become entrenched in the unconscious psyche of the people as referring to the traditional value, by reference to which we try to popularise the modern value at hand. Thus, for example, the modern democratic value that governance must be by popular consent—also underlying the traditional religious concept of *baiyah*—needs to be "sold" to the tradition-bound people under the rubric of *baiyah*, and not democracy. It is more likely to resonance with the unconsciously religiously guided unconscious psyche of the tradition-bound people, if we ask them to live by the value of governance by consent as a return to the institution of *baiyah*— than would it if we were to ask them them the same as a "step forward" to adopt the new ways of democracy. Stepping forward is an aspect of a modern way of thinking—tradition-bound people are still not used to it to the level as to feel the same level of passionate commitment to it, as they feel for rather stepping backward, returning to the ways of our ancestors, harking back on a golden past.

## Religiously Grounded Vanguards of Modernisation

One nagging problem with selling such modern values as can be found to be same or similar as certain traditional religious values, through religious expressions, is that the task of the selling ends up falling in the hands of the religious authorities. They are often neither modern in their outlook, nor committed to modernisation as a matter of policy. It will be hard to win their commitment to such a task if they knew that this is to eventually modernise their constituencies. Without a commitment, their involvement in such a task—even if any may come forth—will be mechanical, probably just as petty jobs, and without the zeal of a missionary required to carry the task on to actually bring about a cultural revolution of a sort as a prelude to modernity.

If they did not know the modernist outcomes expected of the task, then their commitment might come forth—but for the entire fabric of the traditional way, where from the values are culled out. They might indeed bring about a zealous, popular revolution of a sort—in favour of the values—but that will flow forward for the retention, reinforcement and consolidation of the traditional way as a whole. The task of modernisation will not succeed. It will be more like a Jesuit counter-reformation, rather than a modernising revolution in the minds of the tradition-bound masses.

There are two complementary ways out of this situation. First, to find and

expand upon a modernising section of the religious establishment. For this, we would need to first find, from amongst the religious authorities the rather rare elements who are enlightened enough to see the need for modernisation, and at the same time grounded well enough in the traditional religious learning to be able to find religious values in their own religious traditions which might be same or similar to modern or modernising values. They can be further familiarised with the dynamics of modernisation and modern values through various forms of academic association with the modern academia. This section of the religious establishment then would be further expanded through cooperation and training of disciples, students, affiliates, associates from amongst the rest of the religious establishment. This expanded modernising section of the religious establishment can serve as the leading section of the vanguard of the entire culturally consonant, religiously motivated and acceptable, modernising revolution.

The second of the complementary "ways out" would be to create a class of religiously trained and supervised modern intellectuals, mainly from the modern academia. I do not mean the creation of a class of religiously oriented lay preachers out of secular modern academia, who could neither grasp the essence of modernity, nor have undergone the thorough and rigorous supervised training in religious learning, which can be had only lengthy apprenticeships under traditional masters of religion. Their modernity is skin deep, only cosmetic; their religious learning is limited to self-taught religious quackery of a sort. They are good for nothing for our purposes here.

Instead, we would need genuinely modern graduates from the modern academia who have commitment enough to undergo the kind of lengthy and rigorous, supervised religious training required for the task. This category of intellectuals, complementing the category of the modernising religious authorities noted above, together would form the composite vanguard required for the kind of culturally consonant political modernisation proposed here.

## Rammohan Roy and Gandhi: Vanguard Examples

We do have illuminating examples of such modernising "clergy" and religiously well-grounded secular-educated modernising intellectual from recent history. We can note from the Hindu society of India, the examples of Raja Ram Muhun Roy and Mahatma Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Raja Ram Mohun was a Brahmin, born into the priestly caste, and as such taken by the society as one of the clergy. His modern outlook went a long way in bringing about many an aspects of modernising the Hindu society. One very important success was the abolishing of the custom of suttee, whereby a widow had to be willingly burnt alive with the dead body of her husband in the funeral rites. On the other hand, Gandhi, born into a caste which could never expect to be accepted as one with any religious authority, had, by diligent study and adoption of the saintly ways by Hindu traditions, was eventually elevated to the status of a mahatma—"great spirit"—the minds of the masses. Consequently, many of

his modernising ideas gained a kind of religious sanctity, giving them mass support, and thereby success. One such important success was the popularising of the concept of "harijan"—"God's own", or "godly"—as liberatingly referring to the hitherto outcaste untouchables. Until the popularisation of the perception of the untouchables as harijans, the untouchability of the "untouchables" was regarded as a matter of unquestionable religious dictate. With the Gandhian persuasion to see them as "harijan" brought about a modern outlook amongst a significant many, on this issue, opening the doors for a process of liberation for them.

While Gandhi and Rammohan Roy present examples of the categories that can comprise the religiously grounded vanguard for modernisation, unfortunately for Hindu India, neither did she produce enough in either category at the same time, nor did a combined group of both the categories emerged as a significantly large vanguard class to bring about the kind of culturally consonant modernising revolution we are talking about here. But we have an example of what could be—though was not, for other reasons, quite completely—achieved by the emergence of such a composite class of modernising clergy and religiously-grounded secular-educated modernisers—from neighbouring Iran.

## Iranian and Philippines Revolutions: Two Illustrative Cases

Iran had adopted a policy of modernisation under the regime of the Shah. However, the modernisation attempt under the Shah had two major drawbacks. First, it was largely cosmetic. The very political system whereby the Shah ruled, and expected to advance the cause of modernisation—was anything but modern. It was a feudalistic, autocratic, byzantinish empire. None of the elements of political modernisation existed. As we have seen in earlier chapters, no modernisation is possible without political modernisation. Hence, whatever superficial symptoms of modernisation the autocratic, feudal "emperor" introduced to his traditional society, could be nothing but cosmetic.

Secondly, his modernising policies were carried out in hostile, head-on collision with not only the religious sensibilities and traditions of his society, but also with both the clergy and the secular-educated reform-minded intellectuals. This was bound to bring about both a mass-resistance against his superficially "modernising" policies on the one hand, and an alliance between the clergy and the intellectuals, as a vanguard to the resistance. Circumstances brought about the emergence of a composite vanguard class of the kind we have alluded to above—united, at least temporarily, for a substantially modern enough cause as the dismantling of the autocratic, feudalistic political system in favour of a popular, democratically oriented one.

Even though the popular revolution brought about by the popular resistance with the composite class of relatively modernistic clergymen like Khomeini and religiously-grounded secular-educated intellectuals like 'Ali Shari'ati, started off on a modernising track—it soon degenerated along the lines of a

*Shii* theocracy. Notwithstanding this, the very event of a successful blood-less democratically popular revolution through mass-participation and leader-ship by a composite vanguard of modernising clergy and religiously grounded secular-educated modern intellectuals, suggest the potency which such a com-bination of forces hold for bringing about large-scale fundamental changes in a tradition-bound society. This potency can be used for modernising purposes as well—as it was, indeed, in the earlier phases of the Iranian Revolution. A parallel, though not as striking, can be found in the popular revolution in the Philippines where progressive clergy-men like Cardinal Sin, and intellectuals like Benigno Aquino combined forces in providing vanguard like support for popular resistance to the autocratic rule of President Marcos. The revolution had modernising effect in the sense of democratising the substance of politics under the leadership of Corazon Aquino.

How to create such categories of modernising clergy and religiously-grounded secular-educated intellectuals? We have briefly hinted on this above. Let us further elaborate on this here.

The minds of the religious authorities are shaped by the unconscious modal-ities acquired in childhood, and their refinement and elaboration through con-sciously acquired education—in subsequent life. To modernise them, we need to work through the unconsciously acquired, unconsciously active, often unno-ticed influences upon them, of the religious behaviour of their early-childhood parent- figures and peers, and the terms and terminologies of their religious ed-ucation. It is impossible to do this, without a thorough knowledge of these pat-terns of religiously guided social behaviour, and the terms and terminologies of the predominant religion concerned in a given society.For example, Bud-dhism in Thailand and Cambodia; Hinduism in India; Islam the Middle East, Northern Africa, Insular Southeast Asia, Eastern and Western Subcontinent; Catholic Christianity in Latin America, Southern Europe.

# Chapter 6

# Law as the Framework for Modernisation

If political culture is the context for modernisation, as we saw in an earlier chapter, then law is the framework whereby the process of modernisation is advanced and moves towards fruition. Where the context and framework come together, modernisation proceeds smoothly. Where they do not, modernisation as a policy is bound to falter well behind its optimal level, and might not even succeed. This is because of the very nature of the relationship between Law and Policy as in effect two interdependent dimensions of the same phenomenon—that of politics. Along the way, we shall later see that this need for the synchronisation of Law and political culture for the purpose of political modernisation makes a synchronisation of religion and law also essential. That in turn, makes the modernisation of religion itself necessary for political modernisation through necessary kind of law reforms. However, that we shall discuss later. For now, let us concentrate on the critical role of law as a framework of modernisation, via the essential relationship between law and policy as two aspects of the broader phenomenon of politics.

## Politics, Policy and Law

Politics, we have seen, is the acquisition, holding and use of power. The use of power materialises through the formulation and implementation of policies by those holding power. Such policies, when crystallised into relative permanence beyond the tenure of the holding of power by those who first formulate and implement the specific policies so crystallised—become law. As such, they provide continuity for the substance of politics across regimes and reigns. More importantly perhaps, they, as such, provide the limits within which subsequent policies are forced to be made, evaluated, implemented or discarded. Later policies become prisoners of such earlier policies which succeed into becoming crystallised into law.

Nothing is permanent, "except the Face of thy Lord", in absolute terms. So laws too can crumble, or amended, through extraordinarily powerful "subsequent policies". But such subsequent policies are rare, and rather exceptions than the general rule. And they too, excepting circumstances of absolute rev-

olutions, come about within the framework of—and are derived from—earlier crystallised policies amounting to specific laws on amendments or annulment of other crystallised policies called laws. In short, law generally provides the unavoidable framework for policies. That will be true for any modernising policies as well. It is this way that law is the framework for modernisation that we need to take account of in any attempt at modernisation—even more so, in case of political modernisation. Political modernisation will come by through legal manipulation of the very substance of politics.

Having law on the side of a policy—modernising policy, in this case—is greatly helpful, also because of yet another aspect of the essential connection between law and politics. Politics is pursued through two alternative, sometimes complementary forms of power—force, and persuasion. Law, being intrinsically enforceable, has force behind it. Furthermore, law, through popular acceptance, also serves to lend the power of persuasion as well, behind a policy that it supports. That is why, policies backed by law are likely to succeed more than those not so backed.

A major function of Law is to bring about, and maintain order,[1] and humankind is living now the most legally-bound life ever in its known history. Yet, humankind is, at the same time, facing perhaps the most extensive and continuous phase of chronic disorder across the globe. What is behind this anomalous, perplexing paradox? This paper intends to make at least preliminary probings into the puzzle.

A point of clarification is warranted here. While law is enforced by the government, and policies also are generally formulated by the government in conventional state-settings, there is nothing to prevent bodies other than government also formulating and implementing policies of their own choice. At such sub-national and supra-national levels of policy-formulation and policy-implementation, the bodies making policies and implementing them may act in competition with the state, may by-pass the state altogether, or in certain circumstances, may cooperate with the state, the two complementing each other's policies. It is because policies can and are made by bodies other than the government wielding the power of enforcing the law, that the need arises to take special notice of the fact that having law on the side of a specific policy lends it greater chances of success.

To understand this matter, let us examine the situation with sub-national and supra-national policy-formulation and policy-implementation in a little more depth.

Policy, as we saw earlier, is the use of power to achieve what a weilder of power wants to achieve in any given situation. Even though power is often associated with the government, it is not exclusively held by government. Every member in a polity has potential power to one degree or another. Ex-

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[1] Another function of Law, perhaps even more important, is establish social justice—though, the two functions of Law have a symbiotic relationship. Vide, for a limited treatment of social justice as a function of Law: AA Rahmân, "The Political Economy of Law for Social Justice: A Case Study from Middle Eastern Traditional Law" (forthcoming), in *Protocol/Journal of Law and Social Justice*, 1998.

cepting very rare cases, such potential power is actualised also to an extent or other. This happens to be so, often without even the consciousness of the person whose power is actualised. For example, when a person purchases a loaf of bread for a dollar, he exerts power which partially, and indirectly, shapes the fate of the loaf production forces in the economy, and thereby, contributes to the shaping of the economy as a whole. His contribution in so shaping things, taken in isolation, might be minuscule to the point of seeming to be insignificant. As such, the quantum of power involved here, too, would be on a minuscule scale. But, power it still is. The seemingly insignificant individual too, is exerting power in this case, and as such is engaging in politics at a micropolitical level.

Often the power actualised is much lesser than the potential power the person concerned holds. He has potential power much greater than he generally actualises and exerts—much greater, to extents often unbeknown to himself. Actualising and unleashing through desired channels towards desired goals, of such potential power of large numbers of such individuals—through mass-psychological manipulations—can achieve much by great force. This has been shown by mass-psychological manipulation of potential powers of the masses in many instances in recent history. More well-known examples are the circumstances of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, and the Gandhian Non-violent Civil Disobedience movement in India, in the earlier half of the century.

Only arguable exception to the general rule that every human being holds potential power which does get actualised to one extent or other, perhaps, would be case of the ascetics who have completely renounced the world. Even they, by their very act of withdrawl from the polity, seem to somehow end up exerting a kind of persuasive power which can, at times, achieve the same scales of politically relevant changes as can the political channeling of potential powers of the masses through involving them into active participation in the life of the polity. One can take the example of Prince Shakyamuni, who, renouncing his very political office of royalty, and the world in general, became the Buddha. And yet, by his example, brought about an intellectual revolution which brought about large scale conversions to Buddhism, which shook the very foundations of the Hindu political power of ancient Indian empires. Similarly, the early Christian ascetics, in a similar fashion, contributed greatly to the political forces that demolished the Roman Empire.

Potential power is there, unavoidably actualised to one degree or another, both within and outside the government. So, the potential for making and implementation of policies—the exertion of power to achieve desired goals—very much exists, both within and outside the government. Potentially speaking, then, policies can be made and implemented not only by the government, but also by individuals or groups of individuals, outside the government.

## Subnational and Supranational Policy

Making and implementing policies, however, require conscious and deliberate actualisation and use of power. Thus the vast potential for policy-making and policy-implementation by figures and bodies outside the government, despite unwitting actualisation of a substantial level of potential power outside the government, does not lead to extra-governmental policy-formulation and policy-implementation to as great an extent as the potential itself. This is because of the general lack amongst people outside the government, of conscious, deliberate, goal oriented actualisation and use of potential power.

But there may be, and are, bodies outside the government—albeit much lesser in number than there could be—which consciously, deliberately actualise and use their own potential power to achieve certain goals. In doing this, they do, in effect, formulate and implement policies outside, over and above the policies made and implemented by the government in the same milieu. Many a non- governmental organisations in Third World countries, for example, are very remarkably engaged in such policy-formulation and policy-implementation—sometimes in conflict with the governmental policies, sometimes complementing them. The Mafia and similar gangs also may be engaged in similar, actual policy-formulation and policy-implementation. The Colombian drug cartel, for example, may be a very powerful policy-formulator and policy-implementer in the area of Colombo's national economy—and yet, remain free of governmental policy-framework.

When such policy-making and policy-implementation is done by non-governmental bodies primarily based within the national boundaries, e might refer them as cases of sub-national non-governmental policy. But similar policy-making and policy-implementation might originate from bodies primarily outside the national boundaries. They might be referred to as cases of supra-national policy. Well-known examples of supra-national policy will include currency related policies handed down to national governments by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Or policies advanced by the World Bank, which puts pressure on national governments to adopt them as their own—and thereby actually proceeds to implement them. The UN might make policies which it tries to implement through various ways of using poor—including that of force, and persuasion. Specific examples of these would include the IMF's successful implementation of its currency related policy in Thailand in 1997; the World Bank's partially successful implementation of certain economic and political policies in Indonesia, despite strong—and failed—opposition from the-then national government led by President Soeharto; and the UN arms-inspection policy partially implemented in Iraq, through a mix of forcible and diplomatic use of power.

In short, then, there may be policies which may not automatically expect the support of the law in a given circumstance. Thus, it is important to consciously seek to get the law on the side of any modernising policy—if we are to enhance its chances of success. As it happens, many a modernising policies in contemporary Asia, might be primarily of sub-national and supra-national character,

and as such, might not have the support of the government in the correspond-ing case, neither of the law upheld by that government. It is in view of such a state of affairs that the need for having the support of law, as the very frame-work of modernisation, for any modernising policies, is specially emphasised.

This is increasingly true in view of two relevant trends. One, increasingly, human life is permeated by the bindings of law—to the extent that now virtu-ally none can live or function beyond the claims of one or other legal regime. Two, modernising policies are increasingly becoming an area of primary in-terest of bodies other than the governments which control and use the legal frameworks of their respective societies.

## The Most Legally-bound Era

Law was there—always, at least from times prehistoric. But never was the case that man and his environment were so totally bound in Law—willingly, or unwillingly; wittingly, or unwittingly. With the advent and spread of the nation-state system all over the globe through the centuries since its inaugu-ration by the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, every single individual member of human species—nay, of all categories of all things living or dead—has been put under one or other legal regimen.

In fact, all people and things have been put under at least two legal reg-imens---one above another—if not more. Each one is under its own national legal jurisdiction, and then all are under the evolving regimen of International Law.[2] Then each or many of them might be under a third layer of law—traditional or indigenous law, e.g. the Malay under Shari'ah and Adat Law in Malaysia; the Torres Strait's Murray Islanders under Malo Traditional Law in Australia; Hindus in Bangladesh under Daybhaga Hindu Family Law[3] in Bangladesh.

Thus, we live today in the most legally bound world ever in known history. If the function of Law were to ensure order, which by definition of Law it is, then one certainly would expect the most stable global/ international order in the history of mankind in such an epoch of the most legally bound status of the world. If that is not the case—what is amiss? And yet, there is hardly any semblance of order—nationally, or globally—anywhere in much of the world. The reason must lie not in any lack of Law, but perhaps in the very functioning of Law vis-a-vis its subjects.

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[2] Arguments put forward some fifty years ago to emphasise that International Law is yet not "fully" Law—are less and less tenable now. International Law is now being even enforced—as in the case of Korea in 1950, and as recently as in the 1990s in Bosnia and Iraq. All Laws are evolving—and if one form of Law at its current stage of evolution does not seem to be exactly like another form at its current stage of evolution, that does not make one or the other non-Law. The deficiencies for which International Law may be relegated to the status of "yet-not-full" Law, characterised national Laws at earlier stages—and even then, they were regarded Law. In any case, this debate is rather peripheral and incidental to the main thrust of this paper—and the point being made here.

[3] K.C. Dhar, Daybhaga Hindu Law (in Bengali; Dhaka, 1993).

While law, controlled and used by national governments, has become such pervasively binding upon the lives and activities of human beings, in all societies, the initiative in the formulation and implementation of modernising policies for—and in—modernising societies seems to be increasingly passing away from the national governments to non-governmental agencies. There are reasons for this, which are built into the circumstances of these societies at a rather basic—and hence, unavoidable—level.

## Modernisation as a Primarily Nongovernmental Initiative

Modernising societies, by definition, are largely tradition-bound societies. This we have seen earlier in this book. Even though the colonial powers had installed relatively modernist elements of the native societies, in governments in their former colonies at the time of their departure, the general tendencies of these societies remained traditional. The "relatively modernist" elements the colonial powers had created s a class out of the native populations to takeover as post-colonial ruling elites, were more cosmetically westernist than really modernist. They were brought up as recreated, so to say, in the "image" of the Western Man, not into the substance of the Modern one. The difference between their seeming modernity and reality of modernity was that between the image of the West and the substance of the Modern. To use a metaphor from a modern Aesop's fable of a sort, the cannibal remained a cannibal; however, he now ate with knives and forks.

The result was that, as generations passed since the installation of the superficially westernised natives to power in the decolonised polities, the superficial, cosmetic, modern "image" gradually gave way to the deeper, real traditionally oriented "substance" of their attitudes and patterns of behaviour. The overpowering influence of the society at large, which they were to rule by legitimising their own rule over them by the societies' norms of acceptability, only reinforced this tendency towards reversal towards traditional patterns of politics and political behaviour. Thus, behind the veneer and trappings of parliamentary democracy, caste-based dynastism resurfaced in India; patronage-based autocracy in Malaysia. Similar fate was embraced by virtually all developing countries.

The result of all this was that, superficially modern urban classes in government in all these countries, generally tended to consolidate traditional patterns of politics. This, notwithstanding the veneer of modern political terminologies. It was all cannibalism with knives and forks, at places, perhaps further "civilised" with a serviette. Governments themselves became a major hindrance to real modernisation of the societies. For example, even in Turkey, which was perhaps the one non-Western country which was subjected to the most consciously and deliberately imposed and pursued modernisation attempt, the modernising elite became the main source of army intervention against any attempt at real democratisation of the nation's policy formulation process. In such a situation, it became absurd to expect the governments in

these countries to really pursue modernising policies. Champions of modernisation in the West, including such world bodies as the UN and the world Bank, however, continued to so expect. The nineties saw much pressuring of Third World governments by such world bodies, and other Western champions of modernisation of the rest of the world—including the USA—to bring about such modernisation goals as democratisation, liberalisation and human rights. Such pressures, while bringing about temporary and limited acquiescence on the part of a government or other, could not bring about any substantial change of heart amongst those wielding governmental powers in such tradition-bound societies. Gradually it began to be clear that the hope for real modernising initiative lay with, not the governments, but the conglomeration of non-governmental bodies and agencies often collectively referred to under the rubric of "civil society".

These multitude of miniature autonomous semi-governments within the broader framework of the national life, often formed and led by local counterparts of what in the West would be called the "Yuppie", began to emerge in the later parts of the century—almost always with handsome Western patronage—as a collective counterbalance to both the "renegade" governments, and the traditionally oriented societies in general. The governments were renegade to the cause of modernisation. The societies at large were not even yet inducted into the cause. The intermediate, "civil society" agencies became the main champions of modernising policies. Apart from intellectual commitment of many of their leaders, to enlightenment sentiments leading to modernising orientation, they in general also have a vested interest in pursuing such modernising policies. First, a continued commitment to such policies ensures a continued flow of Western funds, which, among other things, provide for a handsome salary for the leaders of these non-governmental organisations. Further, only by committing to such really modernising policies, they can justify their claim to power vis-a-vis the governments—whose claim to power also is based on lip service to such modernising policies. but the reality of whose performance belies their lip service.

## Law Reform for Law to Lend Support to Modernisation

It is due to such dynamics built into the circumstances of the modernising societies, that the championing of modernising policies has become the task of forces outside the governments which control the law and its workings. It is again, due to this state of affairs that, it has become of special import to note that law remains the essential framework for any long-run, successful implementation of modernising policies—and as such, modernisers must ensure to win the support of law for their modernising policies. In other words, there is a need for law reform in such a way that ensures that law supports the modernising policies, even when formulated and pursued by agencies outside the government as the normal controller and enforcer of law.

The suggestion of law reform to bring about a situation where law would

lend support to modernising policies—despite the government's intransigence in its anti-modernising tendencies—might sound a little paradoxical. For, after all, it is the government which makes and amends law. How is one going to reform laws circumventing the government?

The fact of the matter is that, law reform is much more complex than simply making new laws or amending old ones. Fortunately, it is this complexity that allows agencies other than the government also to play crucial parts in the overall process of law reform.

For example, the letter of the law may be given new meanings, even without changing the letter of the law. One might need governmental legislation to amend the letter of the law. But giving it a new shade of meaning may be done by judges—setting precedents, for example. Jurists and legal scholars, again outside the government, can do the same. Sometimes, a hitherto undeclared, dormant meaning of any portion of the letter of the law may be revived by judges, jurists or scholars. The celebrated Mabo case in Australia is a good example of this kind of "law reform".

Then, masses can be mobilised, through careful mass-psychological engineering, into demanding—and thereby forcing the ruling elite—to pass certain laws, amend others, and repeal yet others. How can a modernising "civil society" conglomerate motivate the tradition-bound masses to force a superficially modernist government to pass laws that would lend support to modernising policies—is a complex matter discussed in the next chapter. But this is possible.

# Chapter 7
# Relating Law to Modernisation

In the last chapter we saw that law reform is a necessary step towards bring about a situation where law would lend support to modernising policies. As things stand now in almost all modernising societies, the letter of the law does usually uphold such modern political values as democracy, human rights, gender equity, and the like. Yet, the law in reality seems to fail to bring about the kind of changes in society which such modern political goals stand for. For example, despite the most beautiful expressions of commitment to democracy in their constitutions, most modernising societies have failed to bring about real democracy in their political life.

The reason for this failure of law to really support modernising policies, despite its literal commitment to such policies, lies in the fact that, the societies in general, do not obey or respect the law they live under and are expected to live by. This applies to both the ruling elite, enforcing the law—and the masses, amongst whom it is enforced. As such, law in such societies, despite their apparent modernity and commitment to modern ideals, are malfunctioning in bringing about modernisation.

## Source of the Problem: The Decolonised

The point to start an exploration of the roots of the malfunctioning of law in such societies, might be the nature and functioning of law in the non-European societies, rather than any general theoretical construct applicable to law itself. These non-European societies seem to be the most prone, of all the contemporary world's societies, to lawlessness. A general atmosphere of lawlessness has become the norm across virtually all the decolonised societies of Asia and Africa. The failure of laws officially committed to support modernising policies to actually live upto this commitment, needs to be treated right from its roots— the malfunctionality of Law itself in these lawlessness-prone societies. If we can locate the probable causes of the malfunctionality of Law, and the resultant inability of the Law to support the modernising policies in such societies—we might be able to extrapolate from there a general theory for explaining this paradoxical co-existence of high levels of law-bindingness and the inability of

law to actually support the modernising policies it is committed to support. Such explanation can serve as our initial diagnosis, for a practical cure of the problem at large across the entire range of modernising societies.

## A General Lack of Loyalty to Law

Law per se, in the much of the non-European societies—now decolonised but still in the process of Europeanisation in the image of the former colonial metropolis---is basically one or other form of European Law. This European Law was superimposed by Western colonial/imperial regimens upon traditional societies in Asia and Africa. As such, it had not evolved out of their local, indigenous political culture. We have seen from earlier discussions in this book that law and political culture are so inseparably intertwined in the normal scenario, that law, normally, is but a crystallised expression of the corresponding political culture. In case of the decolonoised societies, however, the Law officially in force, had evolved out of the culture of the corresponding European metropolis—other than that of the local culture. Evolved out of European political culture, this law was simply grafted on to the body politic of the colonial society.

As the colonial powers receded back to the metropolis, the decolonised society was left with the European Law. The indigenous elite who were groomed for takeover, quite understandably continued with the European Law they inherited. They were more comfortable with it—they understood it, more or less, and felt a kind of psychologically alleviating affinity with it. Being able to wield the powers generated from this Law, they could feel some of the grandeur they had vicariously 'smelt' as the chosen native elite under the colonial regime. What was smelt, could now be tasted.

But Law—the one thus officially upheld and enforced by the Europeanised native elite—could not function satisfactorily in these societies. It still does not seem to. This, despite decades of Europeanisation of the Law—and the people—by colonial powers, and subsequently by the successor-elites drawn from the local societies themselves. That this Law is not working is obvious from the fact that, even from a random look at the day to day developments in these societies, one can see that there is no stable social in these societies. We already noted that a major function of Law is to maintain social order,[1] and, as noted, social order in these societies is chronically disrupted in general—despite the Law and its enforcement by normal and even supra-normal means of violence. I emphasis "in general", because there is difference between attempted disruption, even chronic, by marginal deviants in the society—as might be the case in most European societies, the US perhaps offering the extreme example—and a general social disregard—and occasionally

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[1] Another function of Law, perhaps even more important, is establish social justice—though, the two functions of Law have a symbiotic relationship. Vide, for a limited treatment of social justice as a function of Law: AA Rahmån, "The Political Economy of Law for Social Justice: A Case Study from Middle Eastern Traditional Law" (forthcoming), in *Protocol/Journal of Law and Social Justice*, 1998.

even jubilant celebration of the disregarding—of the legally sanctioned order of the day, which seems to be the norm in the Third World.

People in general, in the decolonised societies do not seem to respect the officially upheld Law, or accord to it the loyalty—let alone sacrosanctity—without which no Law can ever function over a large number of people over a long period of time. Law enforcement can work with marginal numbers of deviants, not against vast majorities, or entire societies in general.

What is then happening in these decolonised societies? What is causing this general disregard—or at best, apathy—towards the legal order in these societies?

## A Tentative Diagnosis

In understanding the problem at hand, we might do well keeping in mind that,

1. Law, to be satisfactorily functioning, needs to be grounded in and consonant with the unconscious psychological underpinning of legal culture of the society where the Law is expected to function;

2. this is not the case with Law in the decolonised societies of Asia and Africa and;

3. this is why Law does not function satisfactorily in these societies;

4. this causes a constant conflict between the state trying to maintain the Law and the populace, often unwilling or unable to accord it the loyalty and support it needs;

5. this renders Law largely ineffective in carrying out its functions, including that of supporting the policies formulated and implemented by the government supported by and supporting the law.

## Competing Laws, Traditional Loyalties

The reality of the situation in the decolonised societies is that, people are Law-abiding, in general. Just that it is a different Law they abide by, almost as a matter of unconscious habit—as a second nature. In fact, layers of Law are at work in these societies—even though, officially, Law is the state-sponsored, modern, European Law. Despite their modernising status, these societies are still largely tradition-bound, and on the unconscious level still seem to retain their loyalties towards the other layer of Law in these societies—that of the traditional, or indigenous Law.[2]

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[2] Even within the confines of a Western nation, Australia, the indigenous people still seem to continue to extend loyalties to their respective traditional/indigenous Law. The celebrated Mabo case brought this out in a rather dramatic fashion in relation to the Malo Traditional Law of the Torres Strait Islands—but this is true of other indigenous peoples in Australia and elsewhere. For the Mabo case, vide: ???

Asian and African societies, despite conscious and accelerated attempts at modernisation, are still largely traditional by culture. Even the Europeanised urbanised elites in these societies are steeply grounded, unconsciously, in their respective traditions. In a somewhat detailed psychoanalytical study of Kemal Ataturk, perhaps the boldest of modernising leaders in the Third World, and of Anwar al-Sadat, a relatively more contemporary moderniser, it was found that even they—despite their own conscious policies of radical modernisation of their own respective societies—remained utterly tradition-bound on their own individual subconscious levels of thought, feelings and behaviour.[3] This tenacity of tradition-binding seen at this micro-political level continues with equal strength on the macro-political level as well. Thus, for example, after over half a century of vigorous, rather brutal governmental policy of uprooting tradition in favour of forced Europeanisation[4] in Turkey, people remained as traditional as ever in their deeper senses. To understand the depth and breadth of this tradition- boundedness vis-a-vis modern, or European ways, including modern Law, we may read through the following very illustrative—if a little lengthy—quote from a report paraphrasing another report—both from the field:

"Since the [popular] animosity caused by these encroachments [by European ways, upon traditional life] could not be channeled into any [forceful] political opposition [due to the European Law, upheld and enforced by the Europeanised elite through the government,], it turned into silent suspicion of the [Europeanised and Europeanising] regime. ... A vivid example of this [is given in] a book by Mahmut Makal, a ... village teacher ..., who wrote his memoirs in a book ... He himself was born in a village, but educated in one of the ... [Europeanising] institutes ... Mahmut Makal found himself shut out by the people in the village to which he was appointed. His words, moulded by secularism and modernity [i.e. European ways], fell on deaf ears.

"In his book Mahmut Makal repeatedly tells about the villagers' hostility towards him [as an agent of Europeanisation]. He hardly gets a place to stay for himself, and the villagers are very reluctant to set aside space for a [Europeanising] schoolroom [as they were required by Law]. so, for some time he has to gather the children in the mosque [as the local tradition would require any educational activity to be mosque-centred], which [too, in turn,] leads to a lots of complaints and a state of tumult[—because what he was teaching at the mosque went against traditional learning!]

"One day a young man arrives in the village. He is in his early

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[3] AA Rahmãn, *Interpreting Moslem Political Behaviour: An Analytical Framework, and comparative Case-studies of the Leadership Styles of Kemal Ataturk of Turkey and Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1985).

[4] Elisabeth Ozdalga, *The Veiling Issue, Official Secularism and Popular Islam in Modern Turkey*, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Report Series No.33 (London: Curzon Press, 1998).

twenties, has studied to become a *hafiz* [someone who has mem-
orised the entire Koran—the canonical source of traditional Law]
...and he brings news and greetings from a venerated religious
leader[—symbol of traditional ways—]in a village not too far away.
Mahmut Makal can not hide his resentment and envy, when he sees
how this man, younger than he, is treated by the men in the village.
they give him all the best they have to eat and drink, they rejoice
and gather around him with great curiosity and sincerity. The con-
trast between how the man of religion[ or tradition,] and the man of
secular [European] education are received by the villagers speaks
for itself. Mahmut Makal, with his ...[European] ideals, was left
feeling crushed [by total societal rejection,] and puzzled."[5]

This report is on the situation in Turkey, perhaps the most vigorously Eu-
ropeanised of the non-European societies of all. What transpires here applies
to all non-European societies experiencing encounters with officially upheld
policies of Europeanisation, and European Law.

## Acculturation into Tradition-boundedness

The tradition-boundedness of these societies are structurally ingrained, thr-
ough the layers of their unconscious psyche. This, in turn, has been ensured
by acculturation patterns structurally built-in in their respective familial struc-
tures and child-rearing practices. It is only in the twentieth century that we are
becoming aware of the extent childhood experiences affect and shape almost
all the basic modalities of adult thought, feeling and behaviour. And even
now, it is only a rather a narrow expert domain, leaving not only the lay—
but also expert in other fields—largely unaware of this crucial and vast role of
childhood experience and acculturation through child rearing practices play in
latter adult thought, feeling, and behavioural pattern.[6]

We have discussed this at greater length in earlier portions of this book.As
noted earlier, child-rearing, and thereby acculturation in tradition-bound soci-
eties have patterns which ensure the child's internalisation of, and identifica-
tion with values of the past generations.[7] Such internalisation and identifica-
tion ensures unconscious, but very strong and deeply rooted affiliation with
the values of the past generations—the traditions. This affiliation goes well
beyond the mere affiliation we know in the mechanised alienated urban indus-
trial societies of the West. It amounts to zealously guarded sense of loyalty
to all that relates to those traditional values—on the unconscious level, if not
always on the surface.[8]

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[5]Ozdalga, op.cit. Emphases added.

[6]For an excellent and lucid, yet scientific description of this, vide: Erik H. Eriksen, *Childhood and
Society.*

[7]AA Rahmân, Interpreting Moslem Political Behavior, op.cit.; Eriksen, Childhood and Society,
op.cit.

[8]For an example of this in the area of one's sense of purity and defilement, and also vis-a-vis

## Sacrosanctity, Traditional Culture, and Loyalty to Law

People in such deeply tradition-bound societies neither relate nor accord the sacrosanctity expected to the Law they currently live under. The Law they live under, since the colonial era,[9] happens to be, as we saw, basically, one or other form of European Law—evolved out of European traditions and superimposed upon the traditional Asian societies by European colonial powers and/or their Europeanised local successor-elites.[10] Sacrosanctity is a function of affiliation through a sense of the sacred—something which the unconscious derives from religion, as a part of the value-system of a traditional society. Ass such, it is the very basis of traditional culture—including traditional legal and political culture.[11]

A word of clarification is needed here between the relationship between religion and sacrosanctity, within the context of culture. While the sense of sacrosanctity invariably derives from religion, the causal relationship is not always direct. In the case of the industrialised, secularised Western societies, sacrosanctity arrives via a metamorphosis of its religious origins through philosophy, ethics, secular enlightenment, to the very secular civic sense.[12] Such metamorphosis is the function of structural changes of the society involved in its transition from the pre-industrial to the industrial stage. The societies of Asia and Africa have remained still in the pre-industrial stage. While this is very obvious for virtually all the societies of Asia and Africa—this is true also for such apparent exceptions as the high-tech heavens of Singapore or South Korea. Even Singapore, South Korea, and their likes remain pre-industrial in their ethos, if not in their immediate material structures and circumstances. Their is time-lag between the structural changes in the material shape and circumstances of society, and their cultural outcomes. This was true for the West also.[13]

## Law and Religion: The Traditional Nexus

Then, the societies of Asia and Africa, largely derive their sense of sacrosanctity more directly from religion than do those of the West. As a result, what

the sense of private territory, vide: AA Rahmån, "Urban Housing and Political Tension: Some Insights from the Psychology of Culture", Proceedings of the Eighth International Planning History Conference, Sydney, 1998; also, Life Patterns of Islam—on ihram (sense of purity/defilement).

[9]This applies also to countries like Turkey and pre-revolutionary Iran, for example, which did not experience direct colonial occupation—yet were kind-of-colonised—by—proxy, through westernising leaderships like that of Kemal Ataturk and the Shah.

[10]For a look into how alienated the conscious and/or unconscious ideas and ideological orientation of the Europeanised elites of the developing world can be, vide: AA Rahmån, *Elite Ideology Across Developing Societies: The Psychopathology of an International Phenomenon* (Harvard, Cambridge, Mass.: South Asia Press, 1988).

[11]Rahmån, *Interpreting Moslem Political Behavior*, op.cit.

[12]AA Rahmån, *Elite Ideology Across Developing Societies*, op.cit. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethics*.

[13]Vide: Dagmar Freist, *Governed by Opinion: politics, Religion and the Dynamics of Communication* in Stuart London 1637–1645 (London, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997); Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethics*.

norms are to be abided by with seriousness, and sincere loyalty—rather than obeyed only for fear of penalties, in such societies are largely decided by where do any given set of norms fall in relation to their proximity in content, expression and appearance—to the dominant religion of the society. For example, norms closer to Hinduism would be given willing loyalty and obedience than any other—in India. This, despite the fact that India, officially and legally is not only secular but also actively secularist. This, because, despite her secularist policy introduced by her Europeanised elite, Hinduism remains her predominant religion. No wonder, as populism gains grounds in India with the passing away of the Europeanised generation of politicians who imbibed European colonial India—parties promoting Hindu values or values packaged in Hindu terminology are on the rise.[14] Lest we think this is only a peculiarly Indian or Hindu phenomenon, we can compare and find commonalities with cases from Turkey and Indonesia—from two extremities of Asia, both predominantly Moslem, but officially secular and secularist like India.

In Turkey, the Refah Party, with close links with the *Naqshbandiyyah* Order of Islam and advocating Islamic values came to power in 1996, despite strong opposition from the secularist Army. In Indonesia, despite almost half a century of official secularisation policy, the government of President Soeharto was swept away, almost peacefully, in the wave of student-led revolution guided by Islamic scholars. Similar examples abound in Africa. Algeria and Somalia, for example, had been extreme cases of westernisation and secularisation respectively, in Africa. the rise of the Islamic Party in Algeria through popular elections in 1995, and actual formation in remote southern parts of Somalia, of a territorially limited but tell-tale theocratic government amidst the chaos of the Somali civil war of the mid-nineties in stark contrast to the Francophone development of Algeria and extreme Marxist policies in Somalia in the preceding decades—all go to emphasis the same point. Superimposed secular or secularist policies, and/or even certain degree of structural societal change are not enough to uproot the role of religion as a basic factor of behaviour-shaping traditional value system in these pre-industrial nomadic or agrarian societies.

## Decolonising the Law

The conclusion one derives from this continuing strength of religion in the traditional cultures, despite their vigorous modernisation—is that, religion as the mediator of tradition in the traditional cultures still retains a role in defining allegiance, loyalty, affiliation and respect, vis-a-vis Law, in such cultures. If we are to save Law from chronic disregard or general public apathy, in these societies, we need to couch the Law in corresponding religious terminology, to start with. More importantly, we need to synchronise the Law with the basic universal values and concepts of order, power, allegiance, and loyalty as found in such corresponding culture-specific religions. No, not a theocracy. But sim-

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[14]Thus, note the rise of the Hindu fundamentalists to power in India in 1997's democratic elections.

ply bringing in a resonance between what people are expected to affiliate with, and what people are conditioned to affiliate with.

That might be considered as the thrust of Law Reforms in the decolonised societies, as the very first next major step towards decolonising the Law itself in their particular legal-cultural context. Once we can reform the laws in the modernising societies along the lines suggested here, we shall be able to draw upon mass participation in the implementation of modernising policies presented in resonance with, and supported by, the reformed law.

# Chapter 8
# Family, Home and Modernisation The Religious Factor

In the preceding chapters we have been detailing the interconnection between the political, cultural ad legal context of modernisation as a process, and have also seen how religion is an essential ingredient of the overall context in which modernisation does and must take place. Since religion is generally conservative, traditionally oriented and backward looking, this essentiality of religion as an ingredient in the overall context of modernisation across its political, legal and cultural dimensions, has usually been seen as as an obstruction to modernisation itself. As such, this has been seen as a problem. Solution to the perceived problem has generally been conceived either as a total, active negation of religion, or ignoring and bypassing it in the modernisation process. Modernisation efforts in Turkey, for example, was carried on in the spirit of negating religion. Modernisation in most other post-colonial states has generally been carried on in the spirit of simply bypassing religion as a factor. In the preceding chapters we have also seen, time to time and place to place, that the forces of religion are so deeply entrenched in the unconscious, specially in traditional societies that no policies including those aimed at modernisation—can succeed without presenting and carrying such policies through religious terms, terminologies and values. We also saw in some places in earlier chapters that much of these religious values, terms and terminologies are acquired and absorbed, often unconsciously, through childhood circumstances. These circumstances are always bound with the home environment. It is thus of paramount import that the details of the home circumstances of the masses concerned, be kept in mind while formulating any policies to be implemented amongst the masses. This is as much true of modernising policies as of any other.

The home—or, rather, the house "housing" the home—as the prime genre of built environment, is not just a space. It is the very embodiment of specific—if often unsaid and even coconscious—"architectural logic" by which its inhabitants like to, or are forced to, live.[1] The home—or the house—is also

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[1] Denis Wood and Robert J. Beck, *Home Rules* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1994); p.xi in particular for the phrase "architectural logic". Also, for examples of how "architectural logic" works, vide: Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis*

the crucible where the basic attitudes, including those of political relevance, are formed through the interplay of the triadic forces of the father-figure, the mother- figure and the evolving child.[2]

## Home, Health and Political Perversion

When there is a conflict between the unsaid architectural logic one likes to live by, and that by which he is forced to live, because of the design of the house where he is living—this results in a chronic tension in the person's inner life. Such chronic tension may result in various kinds of neurotic and psychotic behaviour on both individual and mass-behavioural levels.[3] This, in turn, given the "right" impetus and context, can degenerate into political violence, aggression, witch-hunt, xenophobia, fascism, mass hysteria—all of which contribute to political instability and disorder. One most dreaded contemporary form of such political release of aggression is terrorism. Substantial literature has already been produced in political science on the effect, manipulation, use and/or abuse of pent-up psychological tension and resultant aggression for political purposes.[4]

This is neither a mere theoretical conjecture, nor a conclusion arrived at by deductive logic alone. "The importance of environmental factors in the etiology of chronic illness ... has been clearly demonstrated" in reports from empirical clinical work.[5] For example,

> "environmental stressors ... clearly have causal significance in the development of the two major chronic illnesses in [the US] ... , coronary heart disease and cancer."[6]

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*of Historical Artifacts* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, c. 1972).

[2]Lucian Pye and Sidney Verba (Eds.), *Political Culture* and *Political Development* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965); also: Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (c.1963; Vintage, 1995); Erik H. erikseon and Joan M. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed* (N.Y.: W.W. Norton, c. 1997). Alan C. Elms, *Personality and Politics* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, c.1976); Andrew Samuels, *The Political Psyche* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993); Steven A. Peterson, *Political Behavior: Patterns in Everyday Life* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publishers, 1990).

[3]Vide, for example: Michael J. Colligan, James W. Pennebaker and Lawrence R. Murphy, *Mass Psychogenic Illness: A Social Psychological Analysis* (Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1982). Also, more on this, infra.

[4]One notable pioneer in the analysis of such manipulation or effect of suppressed, unconscious tension, would be Wilhelm Reich . One of the more well-known works in this area is the now classic, Theodor W. Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Wiley, 1964). Vide, also: Jerome Braun, *Social pathology in comparative perspective: the nature and psychology of civil society* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995); Orrin E. Klapp, *Collective Search for Identity* (New York, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969).

[5]Rosemary R. Lichtman, Shelley E. Taylor and Joan V. Wood, "Research on the Chronically Ill: Conceptual and Methodological Perspectives" in Andrew Baum and Jerome E. Singer (Eds.), Advances in Environmental Psychology Vol. 5: Methods and Environmental Psychology (London: Laurence Erlbaum, Associates, Publishers, 1985), pg. 43–74; pg. 43. S. Graham and L.G. Reeder, "Social epidemiology of chronic illness", in H.E. Freeman, S. Levine, and L.G. Reeder (Eds.), Handbook of Medical sociology (3rd ed.), (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1979).

[6]S.Cohen, D.C. Glass and S. Phillips, "Environment and health", in H.E. Freeman et.al (Eds.), op.cit.

If environment-related psychological stresses can evidently cause major chronic physical illnesses like coronary heart diseases and cancer, then one can hardly too much emphasis the possibility of chronic psychological diseases resulting from such stressors, e.g. the tension between "architectural logic" by which one unconsciously likes to live, and that by which he is forced to live by simply for being trapped into a house built by the "architectural logic" of architects and designers unaware of, or unsympathetic to the house-dwellers' conscious or unconscious requirements of his own living quarters. Allowing for such chronic psychological unwellness in crowded cities is potential source of political agitation and instability, of which we already see much in the rapidly westernising traditional societies, e.g. in Asia and the Middle East.

I would forward the hypothesis that, much of the extraordinary levels of urban political agitation we see today in the fast westernising societies, e.g. those in the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia, might have to do in part, with the conflict between the architectural logic of the modern housing designs which are fast becoming in vogue in these societies, and the traditional architectural logic yearned for—albeit unconsciously—by their inhabitants of the houses built by such modern designs. To clarify the matter, and to bring some of its aspects to sharper relief, we might focus here on the culturally conditioned psychological requirements regarding the living space of one particular set of such westernising but still tradition-bound societies: those of the Muslims. I hope to later do a similar study of Chinese and Hindu societies. Findings and insights from the study these various sets of societies, put in a comparative framework, should help clarify the matter even further. More studies of other societies in similar situations—e.g., various African and Oceanian societies—might be carried out to further supplement this rather preliminary, groundbreaking beginnings of a study.

## Proliferation of Western-style Housing

The fastest growing areas of urban development in the housing sector, globally speaking, seems to lie at present in predominantly Muslim countries of Southeast Asia and the Middle East—at the two horizontal extremities of the Asian continent. In this housing construction boom, architectural designing expertise employed, almost always, is derived from Western sources. In some cases, western architects and designers are employed. In other, local architects with western education make the designs. In both cases, the end result is a rapid proliferation of 'western-style' dwellings in basically predominantly traditional Muslim societies.

·     My own work at the Harvard University,[7] some time back, had found among other things that, such rapid superficial restructuring of the living space of tradition-bound Muslims might create psychological tensions, and resultant mental health problems—whose impact, while yet not fully understood, could

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[7]Much of the findings were presented in a Workshop/Seminar Series I presented during my stay as a Fellow at Harvard University Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, during 1988–'90.

be seriously harmful.

Despite wide varieties of living practices,[8] Muslims from varied societies still seem to have generally experienced certain common elements of living-space structuring and housing designs, throughout history until the recent changes. This commonality is rooted in there common adherence to certain religious requirements, applied to all Muslims irrespective of cultural variation.[9] A violation of such "sacrosanct" requirements in housing situation may result in unconscious psychological sense of guilt, dread, discomfort or a general sense of unwellness. On the other hand, adherence to such requirements would need to modify current housing designing in culturally sensitive ways. The visible result would be the evolution of what might be called Islamicised Western—or modernised Islamic—housing patterns.

## *Ihram*: The Core of the Muslim's Being

As Van Nieuwenhuijze says, "post-modern West and contemporary Islam . . . find . . . several points of converging."[10] Laroui enumerates many such points of convergence.[11] One such points of convergence between post-modern West and Islam, is the phenomenon of "witnessing".[12] Perhaps, this might be a good starting point for an Western audience to start understanding the deep psychological needs of Muslims which require to be taken care of when building a "built environment" for their daily living.

This, not only because it is a point of convergence between most-modern West and Islam, but also because it is one which is the central point in the Muslims' daily living consciousness:

> "[In Islam,] man's [i.e. Man's] posture in life as reflecting his basic orientation, is summed up in the centrally important notion of shahid: witness. Perhaps there is no concept . . . is more symptomatic of the Islamic lifestyle. The Muslim is[: is supposed to be, he constantly feels,] witness in proper conduct of life, consciously and purposively. This shows . . . in the pervasive practical . . . significance of *niya* [i.e.] intention[13] . . . [and] the requirement of a state of ritual purity"[14]

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[8]The variedness of Islam and Muslim lifestyles have been emphasised by many writers. Vide, e.g., for one of the most celebrated of such pieces of serious work: Geertz, *Islam Observed*. Also, C.A.O. Van Nieuwenhuijze, *The Lifestyles of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985).

[9]Cf.: the concept of a "Core" Islamic Culture, which underlies as the crux of all varied Islamic cultures, as developed by myself; vide: AA Rahmân, *Interpreting Moslem Political Behavior: An Analytical Framework and Comparative Case-studies of Leadership Styles of Kemal Ataturk in Turkey and Anwar el-Sadat in Egypt*, Ph.D. Dissertation, MIT (Cambridge, Mass.), 1985.

[10]C.A.O. Van Nieuwenhuijze, *The Lifestyles of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), pg. 59, ff.

[11]Abdallah Laroui, *La crise des intellectuels arabes: Traditionalisme ou historicisme?*, pg. 10–13.

[12]Van Nieuwenhuijze, op.cit., pg. 59, ff.; Laroui, op.cit.

[13]"It is not enough to abide by the rule: it has to be intentionally, and the intention has to be stated [even if to his own self, in front of God,] explicitly for the act [i.e. any and all acts of life,] to be valid." Van Nieuwenhuijze, op. cit., pg. 58.

[14]Nieuwenhuijze, pg. 58.

known as "*ihram*".[15] By being an extension of the phenomenon of *shahadah*—or the condition of being shahid—*ihram* itself, too, becomes a central aspect of the Muslims' being:

> "Another notion, or rather practice, deserving to be mentioned as a descriptor [in Islam] of human posture is purity[: *ihram*] Islam ... is quite explicit about man's need to condition himself properly for occasions of ... addressing the divine,"[16]

which is required to be at all times—"standing, sitting [and even when] on their sides [i.e. laying down or sleeping", in the words of the Qur'an.[17]

For such a constantly maintained *ihram*'s "rules and provisions are remarkably detailed and meticulous",[18] though differing in form for different times and circumstances.

> "One may trace here ... in the term *haram* [derived from the same word-root as *ihram*—*hrm*,] ... sacred in the sense of sacrosanct, forbidden. It is used [in a number of contexts, ranging from] the Meccan sanctum, ... to woman's special status. *Ihram* is the state of ritual consecration, by purity and dress, of the Mecca pilgrim,"[19]

*harim* is the distinguishing word for "woman", seen as specially sacred and sacrosanct by purity and hence forbidden for the very sight, let alone touch, of anyone who is not in one of the enumerated possibilities of a ritually consecrated pure relationship with her, e.g. husband-wife, mother-child, sibling, mother-in-law, sister-in-law etc. These ritually sanctified relationships are called "*mahram*"—that which has been bestowed with *ihram*, elevating the woman to the sacramental status of *harim*.[20]

## *Harem*: The Core of the Muslim Home

We have seen that the ritually sanctified sanctum of Mecca is called *haram*.[21] This is so, because, the sanctum—the *Ka'ba*[: literally, "Cube"—perhaps because of its cubical shape]—was built as "the first house for Man", and ritually

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[15]Nieuwenhuijze, p. 250

[16]Nieuwenhuijze, p. 60

[17]Qur'an, Al Imran, last *ruku'*

[18]Nieuwenhuijze, p. 60; G.H. Bousquet, *Les grandes prtatiques rituelles de l'Islam*, ch. II; Abdelwahab Boudhiba, *La sexualite en Islam* (Paris:PUF, 1975), ch. 7.

[19]Niewenhuijze, op. cit., pg. 60.

[20]For an enumeration of the *mahram* relationships, vide: Qur'an: Light, 31:

> "... their husbands, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers, or the sons of their brothers, or their womenfolk, or those their right hand possesses, or their subordinates from amongst men who do not have any sense of sexuality, or the child who has not yet acquired any consciousness about femininity of women."

[21]Vide: Supra; Niewenhuijze, pg. 60.

consecrated by Abraham and his first-born, Ishmael, who were then ordered by God to keep it pure for those who come to circumbulate it, and to stay:

"Indeed, the first house/home built for the people is the one at Mecca, the blessed and guidance for the worlds,"[22]

"...and I commanded Abraham and Ishmael to purify and keep pure my House for those who circumbulate it and stay [there] and bow and prostrate [in God's worship]."[23]

Not without significance, the inner quarters of the Islamic home—or house[24]-also is called *haram*, the very term used to designate and distinguish the Meccan sanctum, the *Ka'bah*. The English word harem—to denote the inner quarters of the Muslim home, and later, much more from the world of fantasy—is actually the same as this Arabic "*haram*". This practice is very significant for the Muslims' psyche, and seems to originate from two lines of unconscious reasoning.

First, if the Meccan sanctum was "first house built for Man[25]", which was to be kept pure for those who came to "stay" at it, then this seems to mean that the Meccan sanctum is the original home which God permitted man to stay at—and as such, is the model par-excellence for any other, lesser houses/homes which might be felt as ritually consecrated enough for Man to stay at. As such, any other house/home is but an extension, or reflection of the Mecaan sanctum, the *haram al-sharif*, the "Noble" or "Notable"[26] *haram*. The less notable of the *harams* ought to be like, as much as possible, the Notable *haram* at Mecca: an abode of life—"stay"—dedicated to the worship of God at all times in all acts, kept in purity, i.e. *ihram* for such a stay and such constant continuum of divinely condoned acts which ought to make up in sum total the whole of the Muslim's life. Less notable though it is, it too, is a *haram*, as an extension and reflection of the purer and the more notable original and ideal *haram* at Mecca. Secondly, the inner quarters of the Muslim home is specially centred on the Muslim women of the home. The Muslim home is more a woman's domain, rather than a family home where both men and women have equal or balanced shares of domination. This might come as a shock to many Western observers with only little or superficial knowledge of the intricacies of the workings of gender-relationships in the Muslim society. I have discussed this in greater detail elsewhere,[27] and Myron Weiner and other have discussed partially similar situation in Hindu society.[28] As such this the world centred on

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[22]Qur'an: The Family of Imran, 96.

[23]Qur'an: The Cow, 125.

[24]Because, the same word, Bayt, is used for both home and house in Arabic. Vide: Hasan S. Karami, Al-Manar English-Arabic Dictionary (London: Longman Group, 1970), pg. 300, 303.

[25]The Arabic original—*Naas*, the plural of *ins*, which means human. *Al-Naas*, thus, can be understood as "Man" and "the people".

[26]*Sharif* means both "Noble" and "Notable"—nobility lending to notability.

[27]A A Rahmân, *Interpreting Moslem Political Behaviour*, op.cit.

[28]Myron Weiner, in Pye and Verba, *Political Culture and Political Development*, op.cit.

the *harim*—protected out of the anxieties of earning a livelihood[29] in the hostile world outside, into her sanctum by the network of *mahram* relationships. As such this domain is the very embodiment of *ihram*—sanctified purity: it is the *haram*, sanctuary, for the *harim* like the sanctuary of Mary, the ideal woman by Islam, who was provided her livelihood in abundance at her sanctum where she engaged in a life of worship, shielded in from the anxieties and distractions of the world outside the sanctum.[30]

## A Sacred Geography: Layout and the Law

Now that we have had a brief understanding of the notion of *haram* as embodying the very centre of the Muslim understanding of his/her "home"—we may proceed on to what are his religiously conditioned expectations of the layout of this home. The *haram*, or the inner quarter is not only the central but also the predominant aspect of the Muslim home. The rest, for example the *diwan*—the outer quarters—is but only peripheral adjunct to that predominant aspect of the home. This is clear even from the nomenclature: the term *diwan* originally referred to a veranda outside the door. The English term "divan" comes from this *diwan*—the couch the host would recline on or offer the visitor to sit on at the veranda. The shape and size of the divan may give some idea of what the Muslim home's outer quarters, the *diwan*, might ought to be in comparison to the rest of the home, the harem, which, among other things, would include a whole courtyard and ideally at least one spacious garden—the hidden garden, somewhat in the image of the heavenly Garden of Paradise, the *jannah* [literally "hidden"].

Muslims, both individually and collectively, have to both live by, and enforce a

> "religiously ordained social control. Every Muslim has an obligation towards any fellow Muslim, to help him/her stay on the right path, known as *al-amr bi'l ma'ruf wa 'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*: adhortation to what is proper, and dissuasion from what is objectionable. This duty implies at once a rationale of and an inducement to social control ... intentionally of a benevolent kind. ... it suggests clear limits to privacy in the sense of individualistic idiosyncrasies and freedoms."[31]

One such "religiously ordained ... obligation to ... [a] fellow Muslim, to help him/her to stay on the right path" is to provide for and respect "limits of privacy"—limits beyond which none other than those permitted, are to ever violate the privacy of the person concerned. This is to help the Muslim man

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[29]By Islamic Law, a woman, while may earn and spend as she likes, as long as within the bounds of the Law, may not be required to earn her or any one else's livelihood: it is the responsibility of her male *mahram* relatives, in succession. Vide: *Hidaya*. Other books on *nafaqa*.

[30]Vide: Qur'an, the chapter on Mary.

[31]Niewenhuijze, pg. 89.

and the Muslim woman to observe and help each other observe various de-
tailed rules of modesty, enjoined in the canonical scriptures—the Qur'an and
the *Hadith*. One aspect of setting and guarding the limits of one's private do-
main is to provide for a house, or a portion of a house where the husband and
the wife can freely carry on their daily activities, including those of conjugal re-
lationship, in complete privacy—a house or portion of a house where not even
the husband's, who in Islam is regarded the worthiest of a man's best com-
pany,[32] is to normally enter.[33] Neither is the wife's mother to normally enter
there either:[34]

> "Description of the Wife's Home ...
>
> "... It also is obligatory for the husband to provide the wife with a
> separate home. That is, such a house or [even just] an apartment
> must be provided for [the wife], where not [even] the husband's
> father [or] mother, brothers or sisters or any other relatives or near
> ones may stay ...
>
> "... or [even] enter ... In [this] wife's home no relatives or near ones
> of the wife, not even her mother or father may enter or stay ei-
> ther."[35]

The home so provided for the wife shall be such that, therein,

> "the husband and the wife may live, carry on their activities [of
> daily living and conjugal relationship], and relax in complete free-
> dom"

from any of the religiously ordained restrictions which a man or a woman has
to observe when in the presence of others in successive degrees of *ihram* (sacro-
sanctity) of relationship, bestowing differing levels of *mahram* (sacrosanct) sta-
tus upon other people vis-a-vis a man or a woman.[36]

This, then bars virtually everyone else, except the husband, the wife, their
children below the age of any consciousness of sexuality, and any servants
without such consciousness—from such a house or portion of house.  This
house, or portion of a house is the *haram*—or harem, to use the English term—
without which a Muslim house loses the very rationale and essence of its exis-
tence.

Further extensions to this basic home—or house—with decreasing layers of
restrictivity, may make the world of the Muslim's home more accessible to vis-
itors from outside the nuclear family. Thus, an extension to the core *haram* may
be corollary of a secondary *haram* where such women relatives—or perhaps

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[32] *Hadith*, to the effect that the highest right of anyone to the best company of a man, is that of his
mother—three times that of his father; then, his father's; then others in successive degrees.

[33] Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi, *Beheshti Zewar* (Bengali tr.; tr.: Shamsul Haque Faridpuri; Dhaka: The Taj
Printers, 1991, 1992), vol. 2, Section on Wife's Rights, clauses 1 and 3; pg. 57.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., clauses 1 and 3, pg. 57.

[36] Ibid., clause 1, pg. 57.

even male relatives of the couple, who are *mahram* to both the partners, may live: the husband's mother, the wife's mother etc. Generally this too would be regarded as a part of the *haram*, and would not be visited or violated by anyone who is not *mahram* to all its inhabitants. Together, the inner *haram* and the outer *haram* will constitute The *haram*—the total harem—of the Muslim home. A further extension, the Diwan—or the outer quarters, often called the "Reception Room" (*Istqbal*), or the "Sitting Room" (*Baithak*)—will be a corollary to the harem. If possible, outer gardens, surrounding the entire complex, will complete the totality of a Muslim's home. One may remember, there will be an inner garden, most likely much richer and wider than the outer gardens, at the very heart of the harem itself. The richness and width of the inner garden and courtyard would compensate the women—the *harim*—for their virtue of "not going out about like the going out about of Ignorance", in Qur'anic terms—and of staying in the "innermost quarter of their homes", in those of the *Hadith*.

The Diwan itself might have a private portion assigned for such female visitors as are permissible to visit the home.

## Healthier Homes, Happier Political Results

One can not emphasis too much the need for modifying the housing designs currently translated into actual houses for Muslims to live in—even if for the very health of its occupiers and inhabitants. This, I suspect, would apply to many other situations where western-style housing is rapidly proliferating in non-western tradition-bound societies, e.g. that of the Hindus, or rural Chinese, African, or the indigenous peoples of Oceania.

The concept of sick building syndrome is already well-known in the West—and measure are being suggested and taken to rectify the problems in housing designs which, unbeknown to its dwellers—and often, even its designers and builders—cause chronic health problems.[37] However the concern with the sick building syndrome has been so far limited to mainly problems caused by building designs to physical health of its inhabitants. But, problems caused to the mental health could be arguably a greater matter for concern. In the case of the Muslim homes, a substantial alleviation of the mental problems caused by the

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[37] Vide: Reinhard Kanuka-Fuchs, *Healthy Home and Healthy Office: Sick Building Syndrome, Indoor Pollution and Solutions* (Bermagui, NSW: W. Tietze, 1996); Ivan Vince, *The Sick Building Syndrome: An Intelligence Report* (London: IBC Technical Services, 1987); I.N. Potte, *The Sick Building Syndrome: Symptoms, Risk Factors, and Practical Design Guidance* (Bracknell, England: Building Services Research and Information Association, 1987); Sheena Wilson, *Sick Building Syndrome and Environmental Conditions: Case studies of nine buildings* (London: Building Use Studies Ltd., 1987); Jack Rostron, *Sick Building Syndrome: Concepts, Issues and Practice* (London: E & FN Spon, 1997); Mike Tomlinson and Martin Jarvis, *Why Buildings Make You Sick* (London:, Boston: BBC-TV and WGBH-TV, 1989); M. Sykes, *Sick Building Syndrome: A Review* (London: Health & Safety Executive, Technology Division, 1988); London Hazards Centre, *Sick Building Syndrome: Causes, Effects and Control* (London: London Hazards Centre Trust, 1990); M.C. Baechler, *Sick Building Syndrome: Sources, Health Effects, Mitigation* (Park Ridge, N.J.: Noyespata Corp., c. 1990); Claude Molina,*Sick Building Syndrome: A Practical Guide* (Luxembourg: Commission of The European Community, 1989).

housing design could be brought about by simple modifications of the design by providing for the basic religiously ordained habitat-related requirements in the designing of housing projects.

This will further the rewards by helping minimise the sources of political tension and all its multifarious fallouts, including terrorism and mass disorder in these societies, to the relief of the whole world at large. And, important, from the viewpoint of our present concern here with modernisation—this will help carry out modernisation with minimum of unwanted and disrupting up-heavals.

# Chapter 9
# Modernising Religion—Why and How?

In the preceding parts of this book we focused on the religious context of modernisation—showing, through stages, how it is essential that all modernising policies need to be brought in line with the religious sensibilities and religiously shaped sensitivities of the people concerned. This is essential, we have tried to show, for a successful pursuance of the modernising policies. We have seen that political modernisation is essential for any real, sustained social or economic development; that political culture, in turn, is the invariable context for this political modernisation and hence, political modernisation needs to be pursued in consonance with the political culture of the society concerned. We have further seen that, political culture of modernising societies is inescapably religiously shaped, and hence, political modernisation, to be consonant with political culture, need to be in line with the religious underpinnings of the political culture of the given society. We have then seen how political modernisation, pursued through modernising policies, need to be supported by the law in force in the given polity, and that too is not possible with reforming the law in line with the same religious underpinnings of the society's own political culture. In short, through all these stages, we have shown that, social and economic development are essentially dependent on political modernisation supported by legal reform—and that none of these are possible without bringing them in line with the religious sensitivities of the modernising society in question. Modernisation, to be successfully accomplished, has to be synchronised with religion. In the immediately preceding chapter, we have shown, by way of an example of day to day living, how any element of social and economic modernisation, if brought about without such congruence with the unconscious religious sensibilities, turns out to be counterproductive for modernisation itself.

## Modernising Religion Needed

Now we turn to the other side of the coin. In an apparent paradox, such a synchronisation of modernising policies for social and economic development via political modernisation, with religiously shaped political culture, would in

turn, require, a certain extent and form of modernisation of the religion concerned itself. Religion, despite its often ancient or medieval roots and origins, itself would need to be modernised enough to be relevant and relateable to contemporary social, economic and political circumstances. Unless this is done, then bringing about of modernist policies in line with the demands of the corresponding religion would simply mean rendering such policies unworkable due to their irrelevance to the contemporary circumstances. Similarly, bringing about law reforms in line with the religious underpinnings of the political culture of a given society—without at the same time modernising the corresponding religion—would render the law not only unworkable, but also an excuse to bring about an unworkable oppressive theocracy. Without naming any particular nation, we can mention that this is happening right now in certain Asian countries.

Putting this realisation against the thrust of our earlier discussion throughout the preceding chapters, we can see that modernising policies, including any law reforms for modernisation, are in a double bind. They are rendered unworkable, if they are not syncronised with the often unconscious, but vastly popular religious sensibilities built into the political culture of any given modernising society. At the same time, they are rendered unworkable, also if they are synchronised with such religious sensibilities without, at the same time, reforming the corresponding religion itself to keep it relevant to the modern times and circumstances.

## Avoiding Heresy!

This is a potentially highly inflammable state of affairs. Religion, by definition, is backward looking, deriving its validity from its purity, which in term is derived from its claimed antiquity. A religion is as authentic as pure, i.e. as faithfully close to its ancient original form. Any suggestion of "modernising" it—bringing it in line with modern circumstances well removed from the ancient golden age which religion seeks to retain, preserve, or restore as the pristine "Kingdom of God", "the Paradise Lost"—may seem heretical. And if it indeed does so appear to be heretical, then it would be rejected by the masses, largely unconsciously but violently. The matter will end right then and there, so to speak. All hopes of bringing about real modernisation through packaging the modernising policies in religious terms, also will end therewith. That was the situation with Europe's, protypical, experience with religious reformation as a precursor of political modernisation and socio-economic development. The Protestant Reformation had indeed provoked widespread and violent reaction and rejection. The Jesuit counter-reformation, with all its virility and virulence was but only one example of what length could things go in hostility towards any attempts to "tamper" with religion, seen as heretical. Witchhunts, very eagerly and passionately participated in by the ordinary populace, also suggest the same.

# Regaining the Paradise

But interestingly enough, the way out, too, is exemplified, partially, by the experience of the European Protestant Reformation. Despite the violent, popular opposition, despite the Jesuit counter-reformation and the witch-hunt, the Protestant Reformation did win through amongst the people—at least in Nordic and North-Germanic Europe, including Britain, and in their extension in the New World—and, thereby, prepared the way for political, social and economic modernisation of the Western world. How could this happen—despite the apparently heretic attempt by the Reformists to bring about in religion things which seemed antithetical to ancient sancrosact elements? This was done by showing, convincingly at least to the Nordic and North-Germanic populace, that what the reformation stood for was not going away from the ancient roots of the Christian religion, but, to the contrary, a "re" "formation"—recreation—of the Christian religion on the model of the very ancient original form of the religion. The Reformist outdid, at least amongst the people who eventually were convinced by them, in claiming to be even more closer than the the-then religious establishment, to the older version of the religion; even purer than those claiming to be pure enough to blame the reformists of bringing about new, heretical elements in religion. Indeed, the Protestants portrayed themselves, in the extreme, as "Puritans", re-establishing the purest original form of the religion. Thus, it was not as modernists justifying their reforms in the name of modern times, but rather as purists, harking back to religious precedents and authority of the oldest times, that the Reformist won the battles for the minds and hearts of masses in the countries where they won. Once the battle was won, it indeed did pave the path for the reforms in other areas of life which brought about modernisation to suit modern times and move forward into the future.

The same is needed to be done today also, in societies other than Europe, in times other than those of the Protestant Reformation, to achieve the same results. Religious reformation needs to be couched in purist terms, harking back to the "golden" ancient or medieval past, referring back to the pristine original model of the religion, and deriving authority for relating religion to contemporary circumstances from canonical formulations handed down by the earlier generations of the religious authorities. For example, in case of Islam, any reformation of religious practice would have to be done by reference to the Medinan model and the practice and pronouncement of what has been referred to in the Prophetic traditions as the "best" three earliest generations of Muslim authorities. In case of Hinduism, it would have to be by reference to the ideals of the "Ram Rajya", and the Vedic scriptures—earlier, the better.

## A Case-study: The Example of Islam

This point may be further elaborated with an example from the situation with Islam. Through the past chapters, we have seen a general theory developed

about the relevance, and indeed, essentiality of both a role for religion in the processes of political modernisation, and modernisation of religion itself for the optimal success of any overall modernisation of traditional societies. From here on, we will now engage in further clarify that general theoretical construct through selected case-studies. This exercise in case study-based analysis will proceed with progressively narrowed down thematic specialisation in choice of cases for scrutiny. First we will study Islam in general as a case of a particular religion which might be related to the points raised in the general theorising in the preceding nine chapters. Then further narrowing down will occur, focusing on very specific areas within Islam—such as banking, education, criminal justice etc.—to further highlight aspects of the relevance of religion to modernisation and ways in which religion might, ought and could be modernised without compromising its essentials.

The choice of Islam for the generalised case-study to start with, is due to a number of reasons. One, simple logistic convenience. In the circumstances this book is being written, we happen to have more and easier access to expertise and resource material on Islam, than any other religion. But more important is the fact that in contemporary circumstances, Islam—seemingly more than any other religion—lends itself for a critical study as an ideal type of religion inevitably interfaced with modernisation processes.

## Bid'ah and Tajdid

Any "innovation" in Islam, is regarded heresy. The Prophetic Tradition, as a basic source of Islam, clearly states, "Every innovation is misguidance, every misguidance [leads to] the Fire [of Hell]". The technical term in Islam for such innovations is *bid'ah*, which none dare to bring about without being blameworthy for heresy. But at the same time, *tajdid*, i.e. "renewal"—perhaps one can translate the term also as "reformation"—is not only permissible, as long as done in accord with the prescribed method and within the prescribed limits, but is also seen as essential and inevitable. Thus, another narration from the Prophetic Tradition says that the Prophet said that at the head of every century, a *mujaddid*, i.e. renewer—perhaps, "reformer"—would appear amongst his followers to renew and reform the practice of his religion.

If a meticulously careful vigil could be kept not to cross or tread the line between *bid'ah* as innovation, and *tajdid* as reformation, then, perhaps much required reformation can be brought about in the practice of religion in Muslim societies. Such reformation would certainly help real modernisation of such societies at all levels.

The crucial point here is not to cross the sharp line between *bid'ah* and *tajdid*. *Bid'ah* is introducing something entirely new. For example, introducing a fifth cycle in the originally four-cycled obligatory ritual prayers for the afternoon. *Tajdid* is introducing some substantially pre-existing matter of the religion in a new form as long as that is not specifically forbidden by any pre-existing religious instruction of a binding nature. For example, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi,

known as the *Mujaddid* of the Second Millennium, did a *tajdid* in the area of non-obligatory ritual regimen for spiritual development—whereby the practitioners were now trained to "cleanse" their "hearts" before "cleansing" their "soul"—as used to be the practice before him. This was to bring the practice of cleansing the desires in line with practicality in terms of the contemporary circumstances of his millennium.

The substance of the matter is the cleansing of the "soul" as instructed by the Qur'an, and that of the "heart" as instructed by the *Hadith*. The Qur'an tells that successful, by religion, is he who cleansed his soul. The relevant *hadith* tells that whosoever cleanses his heart has everything going well for him. Putting the two together, it seems that the religion requires people to cleanse both their hearts and souls. Until the *Mujaddid* of the Second millennium, the practice was to have the practitioners engaged in various ritual practices aimed at cleansing the soul, whereupon it became easy for them to cleanse the heart. The soul, according to Islamic understanding, is the seat of desires—and hence, once the soul is cleansed, the persons ends up with no desire except the righteous ones. With such righteous desires only to work on his heart—the seat of emotions—the person then finds it rather relatively easy to cleanse his hearts of any negative emotions. For example, if one did not have any desire for another's wealth, it would be rather easy for him to cleanse his heart of any traces of emotions like jealousy, caprice or envy. Based on such an understanding, the practice until the sixteenth century CE used to be that, practitioners were trained through arduous rituals and life-style over a long period—sometimes stretching beyond even forty years—to cleanse their souls of all negative desires. It was only after that, that their hearts were put through training techniques to cleanse them of negative emotions.

By the time of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, circumstances had so changed that he found most people did not have the tenacity or capacity to go through the lengthy, arduous regime of self-denying ritual and life-style involved in the cleansing of the soul. The choice, it seemed, was between sticking to the old method of trying to put the practitioners through those long, difficult years of self-denial, or let most people slip by into the life of base desires and sick hearts. The *Mujaddid*, in his attempt to retain the substance of the matter—cleansing the souls and hearts of people as commanded in the Qur'an and the *Hadith*—brought about a reformation in the training process. Instead of putting the practitioners first through the lengthy and arduous phase of self-denying life-style and rituals involved in the soul-cleansing portion of the process, he began to put the practitioners first through relatively easier regime of heart-cleansing, involving rituals and life-style focusing on such positive and yet easy emotions as love. Love being an innate human emotion which humans naturally enjoy, it became easier for the practitioners to keep engaged in ritual and life-style regimen. As love intensified, it became easier for them to give up negative emotions in the heart for the sake of love, as God as the beloved demanded such shows of love for him. As baser emotions disappeared from the heart, it became easier to give up baser desires. For a heart trained in the heart-cleansing phase to eventually desire nothing but God, it became easier to desire nothing

but God Alone. When that happened, the practitioner could pass through the soul-cleansing phase with relative ease and in relatively shorter period than possible before this "reformation" of the heart-and-soul cleansing method by the *Mujaddid*.

As we can see from this example, the *Mujaddid* did not introduce anything entirely new to the religion. So, he could not be blamed for any *bid'ah*. But he renewed—reformed—something of the non-obligatory form of the practice of religion to continue and reinforce something of the substance of religion. This was *tajdid*. Even though he did much more by way of renewing, reforming, restoring and reinforcing of the practice of the religion, incidentally, it was this particular piece of *tajdid* noted above, which is said to have caused him being referred to as the *Mujaddid* of his time.

## Ijtihad—The Instrument for *Tajdid*

An essential corollary to the sharp distinction between *bid'ah* and *tajdid* is the condition that *tajdid* be done only by a *mujtahid* with a capacity and authority for *tajdid*. A *mujtahid* is a religious scholar trained, qualified, and authorised to carry out *ijtihad*—religiously guided reasoning in matters in a given contemporary circumstance, about which no direct clear instruction appears to be available in the canonical scriptures.

That *tajdid* be done by a *mujtahid* of such a standing is an essential requirement for *tajdid* as an avenue for religious reformation as an incidental aide to modernisation, not only for theological—but also for practical, social-scientific reasons. Theologically, the very fact that the Prophet indicated that a *mujaddid* will appear at the head of every century, clarifies that *tajdid* is neither a collective social activity, nor a domain open for all and sundry. Practically, a task requiring such a high degree of precision in keeping the distinction between *bid'ah* and *tajdid*, similar to a precision required on a heart surgeon—and the depth and width of both religious knowledge of all that is of substance and of form, of obligatory nature and of the non-obligatory, but also a deep and profound understanding of the multifarious dimensions of contemporary circumstances and their projected future implications—simply can not be done by the ordinary, lay or scholar. This would require a man of extraordinary gift. Finally, social scientifically speaking, any claimed *tajdid* by anyone less than a *mujtahid* of a standing of *mujaddid*, would simply not win the kind of popular acceptance and credibility required to carry its positive implications through. This will be so, simply because, ordinary people, consciously or unconsciously bound by long-standing traditional understanding of the matter, will not simply accept any *tajdid* by anyone not accepted as qualified as a *mujaddid* by traditional norms of theology.

# Chapter 10

# Conclusion: The Unfashionable Scientific Finding

We set out with an intention to fashion a modern society. Through the past nine chapters we covered a rather wide range of grounds, to understand, scientifically, how this really can be done. Our scientific findings through these chapters, as we came through them, turn out to be something, which might not be quite fashionable with the lay modernists—both amongst the westernised elites and policy-makers.

. Fashioning a modern society and being fashionable are neither the same thing, nor always mutually consonant. Fashioning a modern society is a matter of social engineering, which need to be carried through a dispassionate understanding of the facts, factors, trends and forces involved in the social situation at hand. This is a scientific venture, requiring firm, relatively permanent foundations well rooted in long standing value-systemic foundations of the given societies.

On the other hand, fashionability is a cultural—rather pseudo-cultural—matter of following passing fads and fashions. In the wake of colonisation and post-colonial westernisation, a miniscular economic upper crust of most decolonised societies have come to absorb some fads, peddled to the colonial and decolonised societies by the colonial powers—as a part of their psychological warfare against the colonial societies.[1] One of these is to resist and abhor own traditions and religion. In scientific terms, this is tantamount to socio-cultural suicide. In terms of pure individual psychology, this amounts to anti-libidinal latent aggression, which again, is slow suicide at best. Legally speaking, this is participating in the cultural genocide of one's own people. Obviously, and particularly in the light of our findings in the past chapters, this can be anything but conducive to sustaining, let alone development and modernisation of these societies. That is why, the reality of fashioning a modern society directly clashes with the rather sad and sickening fashionable fad of trying to appear "modern" by discarding one's own traditional values and cultural artifacts, which, as seen earlier, usually emanate from the society's own prevalent

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[1] For a detailed discussion of this phenomenon, vide: A A Rahmån, *Elite Ideology Across Developing Societies: The Psychopathology of an International Phenomenon* (Harvard, Cambridge, Mass: South Asia, 1988)

religion.

Let science prevail over bigotry, let modernisation bloom across the traditional societies, drawing strength from their own traditions, reaching out for the newest light of the new times.

## The Author

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