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An Islamic Perspective

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〈特別寄稿〉

Communication and Cultural Settings: An Islamic Perspective

Hamid Mowlana

Introduction

The phenomenon of communication and culture has been the subject of many heated discussions and debates during the last several decades. Although numerous studies have been carried out in this somewhat general and prolific area, the comparative aspect of this concern has remained fairly underdeveloped, particularly by the students of communication theories. There are a number of distinct reasons for this neglect, among them, conceptual unclarity, epistemological rigidity, insufficient amount of skill in language and area studies, a high level of ethnocentrism and parochialism, and a good deal of ideological biases. Consequently, our knowledge of communication, culture, and social systems, are provincial rather than universal. There is not time and space in this paper to dwell on this issue, which requires a separate thesis of its own. Suffice it to say that if human communication as a discipline remains our focus of attention, we must strive to understand and study cultural and social systems in a comparative and universal context, and pay particular attention to those cultural and geo-social areas with which we are less familiar. In my own work as an international relations researcher and teacher, working at the level of the general theory of international communication, I have found this comparative perspective completely indispensable.

This paper is a study of a social system and a value system within an Islamic context. A social system is a process of interaction of individuals within a larger unit called society, which exhibits the property that Ibn Khaldūn, an Islamic thinker, called solidarity ("assabieh"), a term also employed later by Durkheim in his works. As Kroeber and Parsons have noted, a social system is not the value itself, but a system of values and actions of individuals which are associated in terms of symbolic meaning. On the other hand, values are instruments of maintaining the cultural integrity and cohesion of society, serving to legitimize the modes of more concrete actions.¹ Here, we are concerned with the question of cultural systems and how they interact with problems of conceptualization, theorization, and practices of information and communication. What impact do cultural settings have on the studies of communication? What communication theories and practices do they foster?

The Islamic World

The Islamic world consists of a vast and diverse geopolitical area stretching from Indonesia and the Pacific Ocean in the east to Morocco and the Atlantic coast in the west, from central Asia and the Himalayas in the north to the southern African nations and the Indian Ocean. As one of the major religions of the world, Islam encompasses one quarter of the world's population — over a billion people. From the death of the prophet Mohammad (572-632 A.D.) and the period of the first four Caliphs (632-661 A.D.) to the end of World War I and the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the Islamic community has been a major world power. In the context of decolonization and increasing numbers of sovereign nation-states, the Islamic world politically, economically, and often culturally began to integrate into the existing sphere of the Western-dominated modern world system. The contacts between the Islamic world and the West in the 19th and

20th centuries increased the absorption of many Islamic countries into quasi-secular political entities ranging from hereditary monarchies to modern Western and/or military style republics. This also resulted in pronounced conflicts between modern secularism and the Islamic tradition of *al shari'a*, the canonical law of Islam.

In order to understand the current social communication processes in the Islamic world and to assess their future directions, it is necessary to examine a number of the fundamental principles upon which the Islamic tabligh (propagation) framework has been built, and how the Islamic societies have come under constraints as a result of global political, economic, and cultural developments over the last century. In this paper the study of Islamic communication and ethics in general and the Islamic tabligh or propagation in particular, is not directed toward a single country or a geographical area, although a number of Islamic countries are mentioned. Rather, the central foci of analysis will be on the fundamental principles of Islamic ethical methods in communication and on the objectives and aims of tabligh. This understanding should help clarify the function of some of the modern institutions of communication in contemporary Islamic societies.

Definition of Terms

A distinction should be made between the Islamic term "tabligh" (propagation) and the general concepts of communication, propaganda, and agitation commonly used in contemporary literature. The word "communication" comes from the Latin *communico* - meaning "share," and it is essentially a social process referring to the act of imparting, conveying, or exchanging ideas, knowledge, or information. It is a process of access or means of access between two or more persons or places. Also implicit and explicit in this definition is a notion of some degree of trust without which communication cannot take

place. In its reductive approach (mathematical, technical, and some scientific analysis) communication is associated with the concept of information linking the process with chance events and various possible outcomes. This "atomic" view gives emphasis to quantitative and linear aspects of the process and not to its cultural and cognitive meanings.²

The term "propaganda" is a Western concept and was used for the first time by a committee of Cardinals (founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory) of the Roman Catholic Church having the care and oversight of foreign missions. Propaganda comes from the Latin word *propagare* and originally meant propagating the gospel and establishing the Church in non-Christian countries. The contemporary usage of the term propaganda in its political, sociological, and commercial contexts, however, dates back to the beginning of the 20th century. Since World War I, its definition has evolved to connote an instrument of persuasion and manipulation of individuals and collective behavior in national and international scenes.³

Thus, according to French sociologist Jacques Ellul, "propaganda is a set of methods employed by an organized group that wants to bring about the active or passive participation in its action of a mass of individuals psychologically unified through psychological manipulations and incorporated in an organization."⁴ In a somewhat similar fashion, Harold D. Lasswell, an American political scientist, has defined propaganda as "the manipulation of symbols as a means of influencing attitudes on controversial matters."⁵ This follows the common definition of propaganda as spreading ideology, doctrine, or ideas, and of agitation as an instrument for arousing people to spontaneous action. The Communist position on propaganda and agitation differs methodologically from that of Lasswell. As defined by Vladimir I. Lenin, "A propagandist presents many ideas to one or a few persons; an agitator presents only one or a few ideas, but he

presents them to a mass of people."⁶

Note that contemporary propagandists, therefore, do not need to be believers in an ideology or doctrine. Here propagandists are people in the service of the State, the party, the political or commercial campaign, or any other organization that is ready to use their expertise. Propagandists are technicians, bureaucrats, and specialists who may eventually come to despise the ideology itself. The aim is the objective of propaganda, and the method is utilitarian.

Tabligh or propagation, on the other hand, is dissemination and diffusion of some principle, belief, or practice. It is increase or spread of a belief by natural reproduction; it is an extension in space and time. It is the action of branching out. Tabligh in an Islamic context has an ethical boundary and a set of guiding principles. In a broader sense, tabligh is a theory of communication and ethics. This theory of communication and global community integration is well stated by Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406 A.D., a great Islamic thinker and social philosopher) in *The Muqaddimah (An Introduction to History)*. Here he cites "truthful propagation" (tabligh) and group cohesion (assabieh) as two fundamental factors in the rise of world powers as States and large communities.⁷

Communication and Ethics: Their Boundaries and Frontiers

A study of tabligh in Islamic society in the early days and certainly before the rise of the modern nation-state system has a unique element to it.⁸ This was because it was rooted in oral and social traditions and the notion of "*ummah*" or greater Islamic community. Also the geographical entities now called Islamic countries were not heavily influenced by Western methods, conducts, and regimes in conflict with the major tenets of Islam. With the exception of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is founded on the Islamic notion of the state,

the remaining Islamic countries have state systems which are a mixture of the modern and traditional monarchial or republican systems. Thus their legal and ethical codes are heavily influenced by non-Islamic frames of reference. In many current analyses, great confusion arises from the failure to make a distinction between a nation-state and an Islamic state. It should be emphasized that while the nation-state is a *political* state, the Islamic state is a *mutlagi* or religio-political and "God fearing" state. The ecological terrain of tabligh in an Islamic state emphasizes intrapersonal/interpersonal communication over impersonal types, social communication over atomistic communication, and intercultural communication over nationalism.

Moving from the process of tabligh to the definition of ethics, it must be emphasized that the boundaries of the study called "ethics" vary from culture to culture. For the purpose of the present study a method of ethics is defined to mean any rational procedure by which we determine what an individual human being as a person and as a member of a community ought to do as a "right" action by voluntary means. By using the word "individual" as a member of community this definition does not make a distinction between ethics and politics. From an Islamic perspective, the study and conduct of politics cannot be separated from the methods of ethics; the need is to determine what ought to be and not to analyze what merely is. Consequently, the conception of ethics here essentially deals with the Islamic perceptions of conduct as an inquiry into the nature of "*tauhid*" — the unity of God, humankind, and nature — and the method of attaining it.⁹

Since the Enlightenment, the West gradually divorced religion from secular life. Ethical conduct of the everyday life was left to an individual's conscience as long as such actions did not conflict with the perceived public morality. In Islam, this separation of the reli-

gious from the secular sphere did not materialize, and if attempts were made by the late modernizers to do this the process was never completed. Thus, throughout the Islamic societies not only religion encompassed a person wholly but also the conduct of the individuals in general was shaped by Islamic socio-religious ethics. In short, whereas modern ethics in the West became predominately social in nature, in Islamic societies that power remained social as well as religious. As the Quran says: "The noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the best of you in conduct." (49:13) In the Islamic tradition the word "*adab*" means discipline of the mind or every praiseworthy conduct by which a person is excelled.

Until the 19th century Islamic canonical law, *al shari'a* provided the main if not the complete legal underpinnings of social and economic conduct in Muslim societies. The intimate contact between Islam and modern Western industrial countries, coupled with the process of colonization of substantial parts of Asia and Africa, introduced a number of Western standards and values to these societies. Thus at the beginning of the 20th century and with the introduction of modern means of communication, transportation, and technologies, the fields of civil and commercial transactions proved particularly prominent for change and new methods of conduct. The first foothold of European law, criminal and commercial, in the Islamic countries (particularly in the Ottoman empire) was advanced as a result of the systems of Capitulations, which ensured that the European citizens residing in the Middle East and a large part of Africa would not be governed by the Islamic laws and conduct of ethics but by their own laws and traditions. Furthermore, the reform movements such as the Tanzimat in the Ottoman (1839-1876) and the Constitutional reform in Iran (1906-1911) were indeed direct translations of French and other European codes which tended to establish secularism and injected the kinds of rules of conduct that were particularly Europe-

an. In Egypt that process, from 1875 onward, went even further in the adaptation of European laws in such fields as commerce, and maritime, and included the enactment of civil codes which were basically modelled on French laws and contained only a few provisions drawn from *shari'a*.

Tabligh and Ethical Thinking and Practices in Islamic Societies

The current ethical thinking and practices in Islamic societies, especially as they might relate to tabligh, communication, and social interactions, are usually based on two different but important dimensions: (1) normative religious ethics as explained in the primary source of Islam, the Quran and the traditions (*al-sunna*) of the Prophet and the *Imams*; and (2) normative secular ethics ranging from Greek tradition of popular Platonism, to the Persian tradition of giving advice to sultans and wazirs about government and politics, to the more contemporary ethical frameworks introduced by the West through "modernization," "development," "industrialization," and "secular humanism."

In the first category, the study of ethical principles in the religious tradition dates back to the eighth and ninth centuries during which two lines of argument were developed: the rationalist, those who subscribed to rational opinion (*ra'y*), argued that where there is no clear guidance from the Quran or tradition, the Islamic judges and lawyers might make their own rational judgments on moral and ethical questions. The traditionalist insisted that ethical and moral judgments can be based only on the Quran and tradition. This led to major debates among and between the various groups which are well-known in the study of the Mu'tazilites, the Asharis, the Shafi'is, and the Hanbalis who took different positions on the questions of ethics in classical Islam.

In addition to these varied schools of thought, there is also a strong tradition in the mainstream of Islamic philosophy, mainly the contribution of Islamic philosophers on *akhlak* (character) in the works of such philosophers as Farabi (870-950), Ibn Sina or Avicenna (980-1037), and Ibn Rushd or Averroes (1126-98) who have contributed significantly to our knowledge about the sources of mystical as well as Sufi and Hellenic traditions in the classical Islamic system of ethics.

Indeed, ethics occupied an important field in the system of knowledge among the early philosophers of Islam. For example, the Ikhwan al-Safa group which was composed of an association of scientists and philosophers at Basra (Iraq) around 983 A.D. had three main areas in their teaching: Theory of Knowledge, Cosmology, and Ethics. In fact, the whole system of this group—the so-called Brethren—was around their methods of ethics which was spiritual and ascetic in nature. This group had leanings toward the rational philosophy of Mu'tazilism and Shi'ism and toward a very extensive eclecticism. Abubakr Mohammad Ibn Zakariya Razi (864-924 A.D.), an Iranian Muslim philosopher and scientist, was against all forms of asceticism, but he believed that philosophy was not a mere learning but a way of life, a way of knowing and acting together. On the other hand Abubakr Ibn Bajjah, a prominent Spanish Muslim philosopher known as Avenpace or Avenpace both in Latin and in English (1106-38 A.D.), believed that moral action is the action which belongs to the nature of man and his study of ethics was concerned mainly with the problem of the relation of humankind to society. He believed in the capabilities of people to associate among themselves with mutual advantage. Like Hegel he believed that thought is a human being's highest function and like Plato he saw that our perceptual experience of the particular as compared with those of conceptual experiences of this world are deceptive.

It was Ibn Khaldun, the father of sociology, however, who theo-

rized about *tabligh* as a social institution which grew according to the need of the community. *Tabligh* provided for a vast number of people from diverse races, languages, and histories a common forum for participation in a shared culture which was Islam. According to Ibn Khaldun, the states, governments and political systems of wide power and large authority have their origin in religious principles based either on prophethood and propagation or on a "truthful *tabligh*" carried out by "khatibis" (orators/communicators).¹⁰ Ibn Khaldun was one of the first thinkers to point out that communication based on ethics is the web of human society and that the flow of such communication determines the direction and the pace of dynamic social development. To him combinations of the "assabieh" (group feelings and cohesion) and "*tabligh*" (propagation) approach provided a more dynamic view of organizational behavior than can be readily derived from the more conventional concepts of states, of hierarchical position, and of role which usually had been used in the discussion of politics, government, and large social organization. He thus concluded that propagation cannot materialize without group feeling. The relationship of *tabligh* and Islam, therefore, emerges from the very nature of these two institutions. One is the source of society's values; the other propagates, disseminates, and maintains the value system of society, the "ummah" or community.

In the Islamic tradition of epistemology, the sustained discussion on ethics in Islam has been discussed in the "*kalam*" literature, the theologian's discussion and debate on the sources of right. The review of this development and other factors' contribution to the literature are outside the scope of this paper; however, an attempt will be made here to outline a number of fundamental Islamic concepts that have been the basis of Islamic *tabligh* and ethics and are the sources of much of the contemporary social, political, and economic debates in the Muslim world, especially in regard to normative secular ethics

and in relation to the influences and values coming from the West and the non-Islamic traditions.

The Theory of Tawhid

The first and most fundamental outlook regarding man and universe in Islam is the theory of "*tawhid*," which implies the unity, coherence, and harmony between all parts of the universe. Thus one of the most basic ethical pillars of the Islamic world is born: the existence of purpose in the creation and the liberation and freedom of humankind from bondage and servitude to multiple varieties of non-Gods. It stands for the necessity of exclusive servitude to God, and it negates any communication and messages, intellectual, cultural, economic, or political, that subjugates humankind to creatures. The principle of *tawhid* also negates any right of sovereignty and guardianship of anyone over human society except God. Only when the affairs of society are delegated by a Power Transcendental to an individual or a council of rulers, with a power commensurate with responsibilities within the Islamic legal framework, can society be expected to be free from all deviations and excesses.

Thus, all man-made laws and ethical codes that arrogate judgment to themselves, or to any authority or institution other than in obedience or enforcement of "Allah's Own Judgment" are void. Therefore, all man-made laws, communication contents, mass media and public fora that attempt to put restraints upon Allah's sovereignty must be void. Thus, the concept of *tawhid*, if exercised, provides the principal guide in drawing the boundaries of political, social, and cultural legitimation by a given communication system. The content of *tabligh* must, therefore, not be in the direction to create and perpetuate political, social, economic, and cultural idols; nor are they allowed under this principle to promote the cult of personality.

Under the principle of *tawhid* another fundamental ethical consid-

eration in *tabligh* becomes clear: the destruction of thought structures based on dualism, racialism, tribalism, and familial superiority. The function of communication order in Islamic society, according to the principle, is to break idols, to break the dependence on the outsiders, and to set the *ummah* or community in motion toward the future. Thus, one of the important functions of *tabligh* is to destroy myths. In our contemporary world these myths may include "power," "progress," and "modernization." Personalities as they represent these must not be superhumanized and superdefined. One of these dualisms, according to this principle, is the secular notion of the separation of religion and politics.

The principle of *tawhid* also requires the absence of any economic, political, intellectual, or other centers, including the media, in which power can be amassed. Therefore, the freedoms of expression, assembly, and that of the media of communication do not have meaning when there is no social accountability on the part of the individual and institutions. The fight against the cult of personality and that of any social institutions associated with it is the fight against the communication systems which attempt to propagate it.

Additional consideration under the ethical framework of *tawhid* is to campaign against the material foundations of dualism. Since among the characteristics of dualism is a desire for superiority through wealth, the content of *tabligh* must not stress the value of wealth over spiritual growth and elimination of dividing lines and forms.

The Doctrine of Responsibility, Guidance, and Action

A second principle guiding the ethical boundaries of *tabligh* in Islam is the doctrine of "*amr bi al-ma'ruf wa nahy'an al munkar*" or "commanding to the right and prohibiting from the wrong." Implicit and explicit in this principle is the notion of individual and group re-

sponsibility for preparing the succeeding generation to accept the Islamic precepts and make use of them. Muslims have the responsibility of guiding one another, and each generation has the responsibility of guiding the next. The Quranic verse explains this: "Call people to the path of your Lord with wisdom and mild exhortation. Reason with them in the most courteous manner. Your Lord best knows those who stray from His path and best knows those who are rightly guided." (16:125) This points out the responsibilities of Muslims in guiding each other, especially those individuals and institutions who are charged with the responsibilities of leadership and propagation of Islamic ideals. This includes all the institutions of social communication such as the press, radio, television, and cinema as well as the individual citizens of each community.

Thus, a special concept of social responsibility theory is designed around the ethical doctrine of "commanding to the right and prohibiting from the wrong." This concept has taken on an extra dimension of its own in the Islamic societies through history since Islam as an all inclusive systematic religion is an interrelated set of ideas and realities covering the entire area of human notion and action, beliefs and practices, thought, word, and deed. This is particularly important in light of the fact that Islam is not only a set of theological propositions as are many other religions, but it is also a set of comprehensive legal frameworks that govern every action of the individual in society and in the world at large.

For example, on the social and collective level the doctrine has been practiced systematically in the mosque in the Islamic societies. The mosque as a major channel of social and public communication has always been a pivot of spiritual and cultural movements since the days of the Prophet. It has fulfilled not only the role of purification of the soul but also the acquisition of knowledge and public affairs information. Many mosques and major universities existed side

by side or within one another for many years in Egypt, Iran, Spain, and many parts of central Asia and other Islamic areas. In fact, many mosques were the centers of higher education in the Islamic tradition. Today in a number of Islamic societies the systems of "mass communication" have been well integrated within the classical and traditional systems of social communication of the mosque, especially the Friday prayers.¹¹ The result has been a high level of organization and mobilization, making the process of political, cultural, economic, and military participation extremely effective.

It is here that the concept of martyrdom (*shahadat*) in Islam and the concept of Holy Struggle (*jihad*) may only be understood if the doctrine of enjoying good and forbidding evil outlined here is properly appreciated. The term Islam is derived from the Arabic root "*salama*" meaning surrender and peace or peaceful submission to the Will of Allah. Thus the concept of martyrdom, like all other Islamic concepts, is fully related to the concept of *tawhid*, or the absolute unity of God, humankind, and universe. In this sense, under the social responsibility theory of "commanding to the right and prohibiting from the wrong," the concept of *jihad* is no exception. Thus, from an Islamic perspective and ethical framework, martyrdom and struggle cannot be explained purely in terms of intercession and mediation; they should be understood within the framework of the principle of causality and not solely as spiritual mediation. In short, according to Islam, there is no martyrdom without struggle and tabligh in the course of Allah.

Tabligh and the Concept of Community

A third fundamental concept in determining the nature and boundaries of tabligh and that of social ethics, particularly as it might relate to the political life of the individual and Islamic society, is "*ummah*" or community. The concept of *ummah* transcends national

borders and political boundaries. Islamic community transcends the notion of the modern nation-state system: an Islamic community is a religio-economic concept and is only present when it is nourished and governed by Islam. The notion of community in Islam makes no sharp distinction between public and private; therefore, what is required of the community at large is likewise required of every individual member. Accordingly, the *ummah* must be exemplary, setting the highest standards of performance and be the reference point for others. It must avoid excesses and extravagances, be steadfast and consistent, know what to accept and what to reject, have principles and at the same time remain adaptable to the changing aspect of human life.

Under the concept of *ummah*, race is not accepted as a foundation of the state. Values follow piety and the social system of Islam is based on equity, justice, and ownership of the people. There is no individual or class of individuals to dominate, exploit, or corrupt the state. Intercultural and international communication (the emphasis here is on nationality and not the nation-state) are the necessary ingredients of Islamic *ummah*. The Quran says: "... We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verify the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you." (Sura 49, 13)

In the Islamic *ummah* the sovereignty of the "state" belongs to God, and not to the ruler nor even to the people themselves. The ruler or leaders are only acting executives chosen by the people to serve them according to the Law of Islam and the concept of *tawhid*. Every citizen in the Islamic "state" is required to offer his best advice on common matters and must be entitled to do so. Thus consultative methods in politics are not only recognized but are a moral and ethical duty of the people and the ruler. Furthermore, man, ac-

ording to Islam, possesses liberty and free will, so that by intervening in the operation of the norms of society, and by manipulating them creatively in accordance with the Quran and tradition, he may plan and lay foundations for a better future for both the individual and society.

It is in this political, spiritual, and ethical framework that tabligh must play a pervasive role in preservation and maintenance of the unity of the Islamic community. Thus, tabligh on both interpersonal and social levels becomes both basic and vital to the functioning of the *ummah*, for it sustains and encourages the integral and harmonious relationship between God, the individual, and society.

The Principle of Taqwa

A fourth and a final principle outlined in this paper to explain the ethical framework of tabligh in Islamic societies is the concept of "*taqwa*" or, roughly translated, piety. In Islamic societies *taqwa* is commonly used in reference to individual "fear of God" and the ability to guard oneself against the unethical forces which might surrender the environment; however, the concept of *taqwa* goes beyond this common notion of piety. It is the individual, spiritual, moral, ethical, and psychological capacity to raise oneself to that higher level which makes a person almost immune from the excessive material desires of the world, elevating the individual to a higher level of prophetic self-consciousness.

The assumption is that human beings possess in their nature a set of divine elements which are other than the material constituents that exist in animals, plants, and inanimate objects. Human beings are endowed with innate greatness and dignity. Recognizing that freedom of choice is a condition for the fulfillment of obligation, the person is held responsible to perform his or her obligations within the Islamic framework of ethics. In short, it is recognized that human be-

ings perform some of their actions only under the influence of a series of ethical emotions rather than with an intention of gaining a benefit or of repelling a harm. Thus, as a virtue and as an important element in the ethical framework of Islamic tabligh, both on the individual and community levels, *taqwa* should be the underpinning ingredient in almost every action of a Muslim.

For example, fasting is an institution which has been practiced by different peoples in different times and places. In modern times fasting has taken the two extreme forms of either ritualism and hunger strikes or dieting. Islamic fasting, however, is different in the sense that if it does not emanate from and lead to *taqwa* it cannot be regarded as fasting. The Quran says: "O, you believers and faithful, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you in order that you may develop *taqwa* (piety)." (2:183) on the leadership level of the *ummah* and community, it is the high level of *taqwa* that must be valued and counted the most. Technical knowledge, managerial ability, scientific know-how, communication skills, etc., if not associated with *taqwa*, cannot and should not be the sole criteria for promotion in an Islamic context. In the Islamic tradition, the conduct of politics and journalism is associated with "taqwa" and those who do not possess a degree of *taqwa* have faced the crisis of legitimacy.

Conclusion

This paper represents an attempt to evaluate the Islamic implications of our knowledge of the dynamics of communication ecology. A number of concepts have been introduced and examined in order to understand the phenomenon of communication and ethics in an Islamic context. It was shown that Muslim thinkers and philosophers throughout history not only recognized the importance of tabligh and ethics in determining the cultural profile of the Islamic civilization.

but also regarded the propitious equilibrium of spatial and temporal biases in Islam as an established fact. Over the last century, however, and especially during the last four decades, a dualism and contradiction has been created within the Islamic countries as a result of the introduction of the secular nationalist framework and the accompanying new concepts and methods of tabligh and ethics. A crisis of legitimacy has been created as a result of a conflict between the "official culture" of the ruling elites, which in many cases now represents and promotes Western influence, and the "traditional Islamic culture" of the masses rooted in centuries of religio-political and socio-ethical experience.

Nowhere is this communication and ethical conflict better illustrated than in the structure and use of the means of communication at the disposal of both cultures. The overwhelming evidence appears to suggest that Muslim societies have, by and large, not responded positively to modern communication ethics coming from outside their own culture; nor in the post-colonial Muslim world has the political and communication system acquired from the West gained a broad popular base. On the contrary, such political and communication systems have become increasingly authoritarian, dictatorial, and military. Thus, as stated earlier, in Muslim societies today there exists two competing and mutually exclusive ethical methods and frameworks: the imported political culture of the ruling classes, and the indigenous political culture of the Muslim masses.

A look at the pre-modernist reform movements of the 18th and 19th centuries which swept over a large part of the Muslim world might offer some lessons. These movements were generated from the heart of the Islamic world itself and were directed toward correcting social evils and raising the moral standards of the community. Such movements appealed to the Muslims to awaken and liberate themselves from Western economic, political, military, and cultural domina-

tion, and to carry out the necessary internal reforms that would make for ethical and moral regeneration and strength. It would be a mistake to consider these movements as being primarily the result of Western influence on the Muslim world. All of these movements, without exception, emphasized a return to the tradition and ethics of Islam.¹² The current movements in the Islamic world are simply a continuation of the pre-modernist movements which tried to resolve contradictions created by exogenous forces.

Here, the central question is not one of economics but of culture, ethics, and tabligh. It is in this context that contemporary movements in the Islamic lands must be studied and understood. The question which Muslims have to answer, therefore, is how best to devise structural changes and institutional setups that would help to maintain the precious communication and ethical balance which has been traditionally part of the Islamic civilization.

NOTES

1. A.L. Kroeber and Talcott Parsons, "The Concept of Culture and of Social System," *American Sociological Review*, 23, Oct. 1958, pp.582-583.
2. See Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics, or Control and Communication In Animal and Machine*, new ed: Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1961, and his *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society*, New York: Avon Press, 1967. Also, Colin Cherry, *On Human Communication*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1961; and Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, Urbana, the University of Illinois Press, 1961; and Peter Payl Kirschmann, *Information and Reflection: On Some Problems of Cybernetics and How Contemporary Dialectical Materialism Copes with Them*, Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1970.
3. Harold D. Lasswell, Daniel Lerner, and Hans Speier, eds., *Propaganda and Communication in World History*, Three volumes, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1980. (The first volume deals with "The Symbolic Instrument of Early Times," while the second volume concerns the "Emergence of Public Opinion in the West." The third volume deals with the contemporary world situation.)

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