

Introduction: The Social Issue

The world problem that preoccupies human thought today and touches its core reality is that of the social system. This problem can be summed up in the endeavour to give the most truthful answer to the following question: 'Which system is good for human beings and provides them with a happy social life?'

Naturally, this problem occupies an important position, and is, with its complexity and variety of kinds of efforts for solving it, a source of danger for humankind itself. This is so because the system is an aspect of the consideration of human life and affects the innermost structure of its existence.

This problem is deeply rooted in the distant times of human history.

Mankind has confronted it ever since it arose in actual social life. [Primitive] communal human [living] began exemplified in a number of individuals joined together, united by common relations and bonds. But these relations, which were formed to satisfy the requirements of instinct and nature, were, as a matter of fact, in need of guidance and organization. It is on the basis of the extent of harmony between such organization and human reality and welfare that the stability and happiness of society depend.

This problem has driven humanity to plunge into a long struggle in the ideological and political fields, and into different kinds of conflicts, and of various intellectual doctrines (p. 12) that seek to establish and construct the social edifice, as well as to formulate its designs and to posit its principles. This is a delicate struggle full of tragedies and injustice, and overflowing with laughter and tears.

Happiness and misery were linked together in it. All of this was due to the expressions of deviation and estrangement from the proper social condition that were represented in [various] social forms. Were it not for flashes of light that shone at certain moments in the history of this planet, human society would have been living in constant misery, and continuously swimming in overwhelming waves.

We do not wish at the present to discuss [all] the aspects of the human struggle in the social field. It is not our purpose in this study to write a history of human misery and environments in which for a long time humankind has experienced vacillation in fortune. Rather, we wish to accompany mankind in its present reality and in the objectives it has attained. By so doing, we know the end to which humankind's march must lead, and the natural shore toward which the ship unavoidably pushes its way, and then, anchors at its [side]; so that it attains peace and goodness, and returns to a stable life full of justice and happiness, after a long painful struggle, and wide travels to various points, in different

directions.

The Social Schools of Thought

The most important social schools of thought that pervade general human thought today, and that are ideologically or politically in conflict among each other, according to the relevance of their social existence to the lives of human beings are four in number. (1) the capitalistic democratic system; (2) the socialistic system; (3) the communistic system (p. 18); and (4) the Islamic system.

Two of these four systems partition the world today. The capitalistic democratic system forms the basis of government for a large region of the earth, while the communistic system prevails in another large region. Each of the two systems enjoys great political stature that protects it in its conflict with the other, and that arms it in the gigantic battle that its heroes fight to seize the leadership of the world and unify the social system in it.

Regarding the communistic and Islamic systems, they are in actuality purely ideological. However, the Islamic system was tried as one of the most magnificent and successful social systems. After that, it was crippled when the scene became bereft, or almost bereft, of principled leaders.

The attempt continued at the hands of pile who neither embraced Islam nor felt the elision of its spirit and substance. Thus, it failed to stand defiant and to continue. Hence, the Islamic structure was destroyed. [With this], the Islamic system continued, [cherished] as an idea in the mind of the Islamic nation, as a doctrine in the hearts of Muslims, and as a hope seeking realization by the snuggling Muslim children.

As for the communistic system, it is an idea that has not yet been fully tried. Rather, at the present, its leaders attempt to prepare for it the (proper] social atmosphere which they failed to apply when they seized power. Then they proclaimed the socialistic system and applied it as a step toward real communism.

Now, why concerns us about these systems? For what position must we devote our lives, and toward the shore of which position must we steer the ship? (p. 14)

1. Capitalistic Democracy

Let us begin with the capitalistic democratic system. This system puts an end to a kind of injustice in economic life, to dictatorial rule in political life, and to the stagnation of the church and its ideational life. Capitalistic democracy tightened the reins of power and influence for a new group of rulers that replaced earlier ones, and adopted the same social role played by their predecessors, but used a new style.

Capitalistic democracy is based on unlimited confidence in the individual, and in the fact that the individual's personal interests naturally ensure the interests of society in various areas. The idea of such a state is that it seeks to protect the individuals and their personal interests. Therefore, it is not permissible for it to go beyond the limits of this purpose in its activities and in the fields of its operations. The capitalistic democratic system can be summed up in the declaration of the four types of freedom: political freedom, economic freedom, ideational freedom and individual freedom.

Political freedom dictates that the words of every individual be heard, and that his

evaluation of the general life of the nation be respected, [as in] laying down the nation's plans in its legislation,¹ and in assigning the powers entrusted with its defense. This is because the social system of a nation and its ruling organization is a matter directly related to the life of every one of its individuals and has a great influence on his happiness or misery. It is, therefore, natural that every individual has the right to participate in constructing the system and government.

If the social condition is, as we have already stated, a matter of life and death and a matter of happiness and misery for the citizens to whom the laws and general systems are applied, it is then also natural not to evolve its responsibility upon an individual or a specific group (p. 15) of individuals, regardless of circumstance, as long as there is no individual above emotions and errors because of his unblemished intentions and his weighty mind.

It is necessary, therefore, to advocate complete equality of political rights among all citizens; for all citizens are equally subject to the effects of social conditions, and equally submit to the requirements of legal and executive powers. It is on the basis of this [equality] that the right to vote and the principle of a general election were established. These ensure that the ruling organization, in all its powers and members, comes from the majority of citizens.

Economic freedom relies on confidence in a free economy, and is determined to open all channels [of opportunity] and to prepare all fields. In the economic field the citizen is permitted ownership² of both consumption and production. This productive ownership, from which capital is formed, is available to all people equally, without limitation or restriction, and to all of them equally. Thus, every individual has the full freedom to pursue any approach and to take up any path for acquiring, enlarging and multiplying his wealth in accordance with his personal interests and benefits.

Some of the defenders of this kind of economic freedom make the following claims. Firstly, the laws of political economy that are naturally concordant with general principles insure the happiness of society and the retention of its economic balance. Secondly, personal interest, which is a strong incentive and a real goal of the individual in his work and activity, is the best insurance of the general social welfare.

Thirdly, the competition that takes place in the free market as a result of producers and merchants exercising their equal right to economic freedom is alone sufficient for realizing the spirit of justice and fairness in the various contracts and deals.

Thus, natural economic laws almost mechanically intervene - for example, to conserve the normal price level. That is, if the price becomes higher than its normal and just limits, the demand falls, in accordance with the natural law that dictates that a rise in price affects the fall in demand, and that the fall in demand leads, in turn, (p. 16) to a lowering of the price, in order that another natural law is satisfied. The fall in demand persists in this fashion, until it brings the price down to its previous level. With this, deviation is eliminated [in the long run].

Personal interest always requires the individual to think of ways to increase and improve production, while decreasing its cost and expenses. This fulfills the interest of society, when at the same time it is also considered something proper to the individual.

Competition naturally requires the fixing of the prices of goods and the salaries of employees and service personnel justly, and free from wrongdoing and prejudice. For every

salesman or producer is weary of raising the price of his goods or lowering the salaries of his employees, because others, including salesmen and producers are competing against him.

Ideational freedom dictates that people must have a life of ideological and doctrinal freedom. That is, they must be able to think in any manner that they see fit and that appeals to their intellects; and uphold whatever [views] they have arrived at as a result of their own efforts or the inspiration of their desires and inclinations, without being hampered by the government. It also dictates the freedom of expressing one's thoughts and doctrines and of defending one's points of view and interpretations.

Individual freedom expresses the liberation of the personal conduct of a human being from various kinds of pressures and limitations. Thus, he has control over his will and its development in accordance with his own desires, regardless of the complications and consequences that may occur as a result of his exercise of this power over his personal conduct, as long as his power does not conflict with others' powers over their conduct.

Hence, the final limit on the individual freedom of everyone is the freedom of others. Thus, unless the individual misuses this kind of freedom, he will not be harmed by living in any manner he pleases, and pursuing the various habits, traditions, slogans and rituals that he seeks to enjoy, because it is a matter of his existence, his present and his future. As long as he has this existence, he has the power to manage it as he wishes.

Religious freedom in the opinion of capitalism that calls for it is nothing but (p. 17) an expression of ideational freedom in its doctrinal form, and of the individual freedom in the practical form, that is related to slogans and conduct.

One can conclude from this exposition that a major ideological point in this system is that, as mentioned, the interests of society are embodied in the interests of individuals. Thus, the individual is the basis on which the social system must be established. The good state is that organization that can be used for the service and for the sake of the individual, and that is a strong instrument for preserving and protecting his interests.

These are the basic principles of capitalistic democracy due to which a number of revolutions have occurred, and for whose sake many people and nations struggled under leaders who, whenever they spoke of this new system and enumerated its advantages, it was [as though] they described the heavens with its paradise and its happiness, as well as the liberty, well-being, dignity and richness that it promises.

Later on, a number of amendments were added to this kind of democracy, but they did not affect its innermost substance. Rather, it continued with its most important principles and fundamentals.

I. The Materialistic Tendency in Capitalism

It is clear that this social system is a purely materialistic system that people adopted, separating themselves from their source and final end, and limiting themselves to the beneficial side of their material life. People adopted³ [this system] along these lines.

But this system, which was at the same time full of a tyrannical materialistic spirit, was not established on a materialistic philosophy of life and a detailed study of it. Life in the social atmosphere of this system was separated from any relation external to the limits of

material things and benefits. However, setting up this system did not assume a complete philosophical comprehension of this process of separation. I do not mean by this that the world did not have schools of the materialistic philosophy and defenders of it.

Indeed, an advent of the (p. 18) materialistic tendency resulted from the influence of the empirical mentality that had prevailed ever since the Industrial Revolution.⁴ Its prevalence was due firstly to the intellectual spirit of doubt and confusion that was caused by the change in opinion concerning a number of notions that were considered among the clearest and most sound truths;⁵ and secondly the spirit of rebellion and anger against the alleged religion that caused thoughts and intellects to stagnate, appealed to wrongdoing and power, and supported social corruption in every battle is waged against the weak and the persecuted.⁶ (p. 19)

These three factors helped materialism arise in many Western mentalities. All of this is true, but the capitalistic system does not center on a materialistic philosophical notion of life. This is a contradiction and a failure; for the social consideration of life is linked to the reality of life, and is not case in a sound form unless it is established on a central basis that explicates life, its reality and its limits.

The capitalistic system lacks this basis. It involves in its innermost spirit deceit and misguidance, speed and impatience, since it freezes the actual situation of life, and studies the social conditions in isolation from it. This is so, in spite of the fact that the essence of the ideological standard for the system [was] from the very beginning defined by its view of the reality of life that supplies society with social material - this being the relations exchanged among people - of the method of its understanding this reality, and of discovering its secrets and values.

Thus, if humankind existed on this planet due to the skill of a governing and protective power who knew of their secrets and mysterious affairs, their expressions and details of their lives, and took charge of organizing and guiding them, it is then natural that in orientation and style of living, they would submit to this creative power, since it is more discerning of their affairs, more knowledgeable of their reality and with loftier intentions, and is more moderate than they are.

Further, if this limited life is the beginning of an attempt to reach an eternal life that proceeds from this present one, is colored by its style, and has standards that depend on the degree of moderation and loftiness shown in this life, then it is natural to organize the present life in a way [befitting] to the initial stage of a life free from destruction, and to establish it on both spiritual and material principles.

Hence, the issue of faith in God and life's origin in Him is not a purely intellectual issue unrelated to life and isolated from the fields of life, nor is it something for which separate methods and rules must be enacted, while ignoring and setting aside the issue of life. Rather, it is an issue related to the mind, to the heart and to life together.

Capitalistic democracy itself offers evidence for the relation of faith to life (p. 20) in the idea that this system is presented on faith in the absence of an individual or a group of individuals who have attained a certain degree of infallibility with respect to their intentions, inclinations, opinions and interpretations that makes it possible to entrust them with the social affairs [of the people] and to rely on them for establishing a good life for the nation.

But there is no room for this basis [of faith], nor does it make any sense, except if it is grounded in a purely materialistic philosophy that does not admit the possibility that the system proceeds from anything other than a limited human mind.

Thus, the capitalistic system is materialistic in every sense of the term. It either internalizes materialism, while lacking the courage to declare its being linked to it and based on it; or it is ignorant of the extent of the natural link between the actual and social situations of life. Due to this, capitalistic democracy is devoid of the philosophy on which every social system must rest. In a word, it is a materialistic system, even though it is not based on a dearly outlined materialistic philosophy.

II. The Position of Ethics in Relation to Capitalism

Because the capitalistic system was filled with the spirit of materialism, morality was removed from the picture. It was nowhere to be found in the system. Put more correctly, its notions and criteria underwent a change. The individual interest was declared as the highest objective, and all kinds of freedom as means for fulfilling that kind of interest. This resulted in most of the severe trials, catastrophes, tragedies and misfortunes that the modern world has experienced.

Supporters of capitalistic democracy may defend this system's perspective on the individual and his personal interests by saying that the individual's aim is in itself a fulfillment of the social interest, and the results that morality achieves by its spiritual principles are achieved in a capitalistic democratic society, yet not by way of morality, but by way of having and serving individual motives. For when a human being performs a social service (p. 21), he also fulfills a personal interest, since he is a part of the society for whose sake he works.

Moreover, when he rescues the life of an individual in danger, he, too, derives a benefit from that, since the [redeemed] living individual will perform a service for the social organization. Thus, the rescuer regains a portion of this service. Hence, the personal motive and beneficial sense are sufficient for providing and securing the social interests since, in the last analysis, these interests are reduced to personal interests and individual benefits.

This defense is closer to vivid imagination than to evidence. Imagine for yourself if the practical criterion in life for every individual in the nation were the fulfillment, on the largest scale and for the longest term, of his benefits and personal interests, and if the state provided the individual with freedom, glorified him without reservation or limit, how would these individuals define social action?

Further, how could the linkage of social welfare to the individual suffice for directing an individual to the actions called for by ethical values when many of these actions do not benefit the individual? If, on the other hand, it happens that such actions involve some benefit (to the individual) since he is a member of society, that slight benefit, which is not grasped by a human being except by means of analytical scrutiny, is often rivaled by the absence of immediate benefits or personal interests that find their assured attainment in freedom. Thus, the individual abolishes any ethical scheme or spiritual consideration for their sake.

III. The Tragedies of the Capitalistic System

If we wished to present the links in the chain of social tragedies that resulted from this

system, which is neither well studied, nor philosophically based, there would be no room for doing so in the space designated for the present discussion. Because of this, we will [only] make a brief allusion to this point.

The first of these links is the following. The majority governed the minority, their vital interests and affairs. Political freedom meant that the majority had the prerogative to lay down the system and its laws (p. 22), as well as their management. Let us imagine that the group which represents the nation's majority seizes the reins of power and legislation, and adopts the capitalistic democratic mentality which is purely materialistic in its orientation, inclinations, purposes and desires.

What then would be the fate of the other group? Or what life would you expect for the minority under laws legislated with the majority and the preservation of its interests in mind? Would it be strange for the majority to legislate laws, particularly in light of its own welfare, to neglect the welfare of the minority, and to turn toward fulfilling its desires in a manner unjust to others? Then who would preserve the minority's vital structure, and defend it against injustice, if personal interest is the [sole] concern of every individual, and if the majority's social mentality lacks the notion of spiritual and moral values?

It is natural that under (this) system, the despotic rule continues as before, and that the phenomena of manipulation and neglect of the rights and interests of others persist in the social atmosphere of this system as they did in the old social atmosphere. Put briefly, the difference [between the present and the old systems] is that neglect of human dignity arose [in the older systems] because of individuals in the nation; while in the present system, it arises because of groups that represent majorities in relation to minorities. [But] the totality [of these minorities] constitutes a large number of people.

I wish the matter ended there. (Had it not gone beyond that) the tragedy would have been less and the stage would have witnessed more laughter than tears. However, the matter became more grave and intense after that, when the economic issue arose in this system. Thus, it determined the economic freedom along the lines discussed earlier.

It allowed various methods and kinds of [acquiring] wealth, regardless of how exorbitant the wealth is, and regardless of how deviant it is in its methods and reasons. It also secured the realization of what it had advocated at the same time as the world witnessed a great industrial revolution, and when science became the product of the birth of the machine that changed the face of industry and swept away manual labor and the like.

Thus, bountiful wealth came to (p. 23) a minority of the nation's individuals who were given the opportunity to utilize the modern means of production,⁷ and who were supplied by unlimited capitalistic freedom that provided sufficient assurances for exploiting these means of production and benefiting from them to a great extent, as well as for destroying many groups in the nation whose industry was swept away and whose lives were shaken by the steam engine, and who found no way to stand steadfast in the face of this storm, as long as the lords of modern industries were armed by economic freedom and the rights to the glorified freedom of these industries.

The scene became the sole province of an elite of the lords of industry and production. The middle class became smaller and grew closer to the general lower class. This left the destroyed majority at the mercy of that elite whose thoughts and considerations were consistent with the capitalistic democratic method only.

It was natural for this wealthy elite to withhold compassion and charity from this large group of people, in order to keep them in the abyss and deny them a share in the elite's own exorbitant profits. Why should the elite not do so, as long as the ethical criteria are benefit and pleasure; as long as the state secures for them absolute freedom of action; and as long as the capitalistic democratic system has no room for a moral philosophy of life and its specific concepts?

The issue must, therefore, be studied in a manner inspired by this system. These powerful persons exploit the majority's need for them, and their life supports. Thus, those who were capable were required to work in the elite's fields and factories for an extremely long time; and for salaries sufficient only for the necessities of life.

This is the pure reasoning of benefit. It was natural for the elite to adopt it, thus dividing the nation into a group of immense wealth and a majority in the deep abyss.

Here, the political right of the nation is crystallized once again in a different form. Even though equality of political rights among individual citizens, for example, was not erased from the records of the system, nevertheless, after such tremors, it was nothing other than a figment of the imagination or a mere thought. For when economic freedom records the results that we have presented, it leads to the abominable division (p. 24), Mentioned above.

Further, it would itself be in control of the situation and of the reins of power, and would overcome the political freedom confronting it. Thus, by virtue of its economic position regarding society, its capacity for utilizing every means of propaganda, and its ability to buy defenders and aids, the capitalistic group has the upper hand over key positions⁸ in the nation.

It assumes power in order to exploit it for its own welfare and for the pursuit of its aims. Legislation and the social system come under the control of capitalism when, according to democratic notions, they are the right of the nation as a whole.

Thus, in the last analysis, capitalistic democracy is reduced to rule by a privileged minority, and to power used by a number of individuals to protect their existence at the expense of others. This they do by means of the benefit mentality which they derive from capitalistic democratic thought.

We arrive now at the most abominable link in the tragedy played by this system. Those gentlemen in whose hands the capitalistic democratic system places full power and to whom it supplies every force and capacity, will extend their vision -inspired by the mentality of this system - to wider horizons. Also, inspired by their welfare and aims, they will feel in need of new areas of power. Two reasons account for this.

First, the availability of production depends on the extent of the availability and abundance of raw materials. Thus, he who has a large share of such materials also has productive capacities that are large and strong. Such materials are spread all over the vast, God-given earth. If it is necessary to obtain them, it is necessary to control the land that has them, in order to absorb and exploit them.

Second, the intensity and strength of the movement of production motivated, on the one hand, by the protection of profit and, on the other hand, by the fall in the standard of living of many citizens due to the materialistic ambitions of the capitalistic group and its

domination over the rights of the general public through their self-interested methods which make the citizens incapable of (p. 25) purchasing and consuming products create big producers who are greatly in need of new markets to sell the surplus products existing in the markets. Finding such new markets means chinking of a new country.

Thus, the issue is studied with a purely materialistic mentality. It is natural for such a mentality whose system is not based on spiritual and moral values, and whose social doctrines admit no ends except those that bring pleasure to this limited life in various delights and objects of desire, to see in these two reasons a justification or a logical formula for assaulting and dishonoring peaceful countries, in order to control their fate and their large natural resources, and to exploit their wealth to promote surplus products.

All of this is reasonable and permissible, according to the notion of individual interests on which the capitalistic system and the free economy are based. From there, gigantic materialism proceeds to raid and fight, to restrict and shackle, to colonize and exploit in order to please the appetites and to satisfy the desires.

Reflect on how much the human race has suffered from the calamities of this system due to its materialistic spirit, form, tactics and purposes. This is so, even though it does not center on a well-defined philosophy which is in agreement with that spirit and form, and concordant with such tactics and purposes, as we have pointed out.

Estimate for yourself the lot of a society established on the basis of this system and its conceptions of happiness and stability. In this society, mutual love and confidence, real merry and compassion, as well as all good, spiritual tendencies art totally absent. Thus, in it the individual lives feeling that he is responsible for himself alone, and that he is endangered by any interests of others that may cash with his. It is as if he is engaged in a constant struggle and a continuous fight, equipped with no weapons other than his personal powers, and provided with no purposes other than his personal interests. (p. 26)

2. Socialism and Communism

There are many schools of socialism. The best-known of these is that which teats on Marxist theory, or dialectical materialism, which expresses a specific philosophy of life and a materialistic understanding of it along dialectical lines.

Dialectical materialists have applied this theory to history, society and economics; and thus, it became a philosophical doctrine concerning the world, a method for studying history and society, a school of economics and a plan in politics.

In other words, it shapes the entirety of humankind into a specific mold, according to the kind of thinking they have, their outlook on life and their practical actions. There is no doubt that the materialistic philosophy, as well as the dialectical method, are not the creation and innovation of the Marxist school.

The materialistic tendency existed in philosophical circles thousands of years ago, revealed at times, while concealed at other times behind sophistry and absolute denial. Similarly, some points of the dialectical method of thinking have deep roots in human thought. All its points were formulated at the hands of Hegel, the well-known idealist philosopher. After that, Karl Marx adopted this [dialectical] method and that [materialistic] philosophy.

He tried to apply them to all fields of life, and achieved two things. First, by the dialectical

method, he explained history from a purely materialistic perspective. Second, he claimed to have discovered the contradictions of capitalism and the surplus value that the possessor of money steals from his employees in accordance with his doctrine.⁹

On the basis of these two achievements, Marx based his faith on the necessity of abolishing the capitalistic system and erecting, instead, the communistic and the socialistic societies (p. 27) which he considered as humankind's [first] step toward a full implementation of communism.

In this philosophy, the social field is one of struggle among contradictions. Every social situation that pervades this field is a purely material phenomenon concordant with the rest of the material phenomena and circumstances, and influenced by them.

However, at the same time, this social situation carries its own contradiction within itself. Then struggle erupts among the contradictions within its contents, until the contradictions accumulate and create a change in this situation and the construction of a new situation. Thus, the battle continues, until all people become of one class, and the interests of every individual become represented in the interests of this unified class.

At that point, harmony prevails, peace is realized, and all the bad effects of the capitalistic democratic system are removed, because such effects were produced by the existence of multiple classes in society. This multiplicity of classes was, in turn, produced by society's division into producer and employee. Therefore, it is necessary to put an end to this division by means of terminating ownership.

In this respect, communism differs from socialism in some of its principal economic ideas. The communist economy is based on the following. First, private ownership must be canceled and fully obliterated from society. All wealth must be appropriated by everyone and handled by the state, since it is the legal trustee over society, so that the state manages and exploits this wealth for the welfare of the whole population.

The belief of the communistic school in the necessity of this absolute nationalization was a natural reaction to the complications of private ownership in the capitalistic democratic system. Such nationalization was justified on the ground that its purpose was the cancellation of the capitalistic class and the uniting of people in one class, in order than to end the struggle, and to prevent the individual from employing the various tactics and methods for enlarging his wealth, in an attempt to satisfy his greed and appease the motive that drives him after personal benefit. (p. 28)

Second, goods produced must be distributed in accordance with the individual need for consumption. This point is summarized in the following text: 'from everyone, in accordance with his capacity, and for everyone, in accordance with his needs'. This is to say that every individual has natural needs deprived of which he cannot survive. He devotes all his efforts to society; in return, society satisfies the necessities of his life and supports his living.

Third, this must be carried out on the basis of an economic plan put forth by the state. In this plan, the state reconciles the needs of the whole population with the quantity, variety and limit of production, in order to prevent afflicting society with the same illnesses and difficulties that occurred in the capitalistic society when absolute freedom was allowed.

I. Deviation from the Communist Operation

The leading authorities of communism who called for this system were unable to implement it with all its features when they seized power. They believed that, in order to implement this system, a development of human thought, motives and inclinations was necessary.

They claimed that there would come a time when personal interests and individual considerations would disappear from the human soul, replaced by a social mentality and social inclinations. With that, a human being would think only of the social welfare, and would be motivated only for its sake.

Because of this, it was necessary, according to the tradition of this social doctrine, to establish prior to that a socialistic system in which people could rid themselves of their present nature and acquire the nature which is consistent with the communistic system. In this socialistic system, important revisions of the economic aspect of communism were made.

Thus, the primary point of the communist economy - namely, the annulment of private ownership - was changed to a more moderate stand. This stand called for the nationalization of heavy industry, foreign trade, and large domestic trade, as well as the imposition of government restrictions on all of them. (p. 29) In other words, it called for the elimination of large capital to help the advance of simple industries and trades, and to give individuals power over these industries and trades.

This is because the main point of the communist economy clashed with actual human nature to which we have alluded earlier. Individuals began to neglect performing their jobs and activities at work. They also avoided fulfilling their social duties. This was due to the fact that [under this system, they were only] supposed to secure an orderly life and a satisfaction of their needs.

Also, under this system, one was not supposed to perform any work or make any effort for more than this, regardless of its intensity. Why then should the individual make any effort, work hard and earnestly, as long as the result for him is the same whether he is lazy or active?

Further, why should he be motivated to make happiness available to others, and to bring comfort to them by his own sweat and tears and by the sap of his life and capacities, as long as he does not believe in any values of life except in those that are purely materialistic? Thus, the leaders of this school felt obliged to freeze absolute nationalization.

They were also obliged to amend the second important point of communist economics. They did this by creating differences among salaries, in order to motivate the employees to become active and to carry out their jobs - apologizing at the same time that these were temporary differences which would disappear when the capitalistic mentality was abolished and when humankind undergoes further development.

Due to this, they applied continual change, in accordance with their economic methods and socialistic tactics, so that they could avoid the failure of any one method by introducing a new method. However, until now, they have not successfully eradicated all the basic principles of the capitalistic economy. Usurious loans, for example, have not been completely eliminated, even though in reality they are the basis of social corruption in the capitalistic economy.

But none of this means that those leaders were failures or that they were not serious about

their teachings or sincere about their doctrine. Rather, it means that they clashed with reality when they came to apply [their ideas]. They found their way full of the contradictory elements that human nature imposes in the face of the revolutionary method of social reform (p. 80) that they preached. Thus, reality forced them to retreat with the hope that the miracle would be accomplished in some near or distant future.

Politically, communism, in the long run, aims to eliminate the state from society when the miracle is accomplished and the social mentality prevails among all people. At that point, everyone will think only of the material interests of the whole society. But before that, when the miracle is not yet accomplished, when people are not yet united in one class and when society is still divided into capitalistic and labor forces, the government must be purely that of the labor force. This would be a democratic government within the limit of the labor circles, and dictatorial with regard to the general public.

They tried to justify this by claiming that a dictatorial labor government was necessary at every stage experienced by humankind with the individual mentality. This is so, for the protection of the interests of the labor class, for the stifling of the breath of capitalism and for the prevention of capitalism from reappearing on the scene.

In fact, this school, which is represented in socialistic Marxism and then in communistic Marxism, is distinguished from the capitalistic democratic system in that it is based on a specific materialistic philosophy which adopts a specific understanding of life that does not admit any¹⁰ of the moral ideals or values of life. It also explains life in a way that leaves no room for a creator beyond the limits of nature, nor for expected retributions beyond the boundaries of the limited material life.

This is contrary to capitalistic democracy which, even though a materialistic system, is not established on a definite philosophical basis. Materialistic communism believes in proper linkage between the issue of actual life and the social issue, but capitalistic democracy does not believe in such a linkage, or does not attempt to make it clear.

Thus, the communistic school was in reality the outcome of philosophical study. It was tested by experiencing the philosophy on which it was based, and from which it branched out. Judgement of any system (p. 81) depends on the extent of the success of that system's philosophical notions in understanding and portraying life.

From the first glance one casts on the communistic system, it is easy to notice that, whether this system is diluted or complete, its general characteristic is to destroy the individual in society and make him an instrument to be manipulated for the purpose of realizing the general standards that this system presupposes. Therefore, it is exactly the opposite of the free capitalistic system that considers society for the sake of the individual and subjugates it to his interests.

It is as if the individual personality and the social personality were destined in the traditions of these two systems to clash and to struggle against each other. The individual personality was the winner in the system whose legislation was based on the individual and his specific benefits. Thus, society was afflicted by economic tragedies that shook its existence and malformed the life of all its people.

The social personality was the winner in the other system, which tried to avoid the errors of the former system. Thus, it supported society, and sentenced the individual personality to disappearance and death. As a result of this, individuals were exposed to severe ordeals

that abolished their freedom, their personal existence, as well as their natural rights to choice and thinking.

II. Flaws of Communism

In fact, even if the communistic system treats a number of the maladies of the free capitalistic system by means of abolishing private ownership, yet in one respect, this treatment has natural complications that render the price of treatment much too high. This is in addition to difficulties that one encounters in the method of applying this treatment. One cannot employ this method, unless¹¹ all other methods and procedures fail.

In another respect, this treatment is incomplete and does not ensure the end of all social corruption. This is so because it is not accompanied by a correct diagnosis of the illness and the specification of the point from which evil proceeded and conquered the world under the capitalistic system. That point continued (p. 82) in the communistic school to retain its position with regard to social life. With this, humankind did not win a decisive solution for their big problem, nor did they obtain the remedy that heals their fits of illness and uproots their bad symptoms.

The complications of this treatment are enormous indeed. Its concern is to terminate individual freedom, in order to establish communist ownership in place of private ownership. But¹² this enormous social transformation is, at least until now, contrary to general human nature - as admitted by its leaders - since the materialistic human being still thinks in terms of himself and considers his interests from his limited individual perspective.

Further, to put forth and try to fulfill a new design for society in which individuals completely melt away and personal motives are totally eradicated requires a firm power that holds the reins of society with an iron hand. Moreover, this power quiets any voice that grows loud, stifles any breath of freedom that circulates in society, monopolizes all the means of propaganda and publicity, imposes limits on the nation that the nation cannot exceed under any circumstances and punishes on the ground of accusation and speculation, so that it does not suddenly lose its grip on the reins of power. This is natural in any system one seeks to impose on a nation, before the mentality of that system matures in that nation, and before the spirit of that system prevails.

Indeed, if the materialistic human being begins to think in a social manner, to consider his interests with a social mentality and to be free of all personal sentiments, private inclinations and psychological effects, it would be possible to erect a system in which individuals melt away. With that, nothing would remain at the scene except the huge social giant. But the realization of this in a materialistic human being who does not believe in anything except in a limited life, and who does not perceive any sense of life except that of material pleasure requires a miracle that creates heaven in the present life and brings it down from the highest to earth.

The communists promise us this heaven. They await that day in which the factory will put an end to human nature, recreate ideal humankind (p. 88) in thinking and acting even though they do not believe in any idealistic and moral values. If this miracle is realized, we will then have some words for them.

For the time being, to put forth the social design that they seek requires confining individuals to the limits of the idea of this design and ensuring its execution by setting the group that believes in it in charge of protecting it and by taking precautionary measures for

its sake, through silencing human nature and psychological effects and using any means to prevent them from bursting forth.

Under this system, even if the individual acquires full insurance and social security for his life and needs because the social wealth supplies him with all of this at the time of need, nevertheless, it would be better for him to obtain this insurance without losing the breath of righteous freedom, without melting away in fire as a person, and without drowning in a stormy social sea.

How could a human being aspire to freedom in any field when he is deprived of the freedom of his life, and when his nourishment is fully linked to a specific organization - considering that economic freedom, as well as freedom of life, are the basis of all kinds of freedom?

The defenders of this system apologize while asking: 'What would a human being do with freedom, with the right to be critical and to express his views, when he suffers from an abominable social burden? Again, what benefit would he derive from debate and opposition, when he is more in need of good nourishment and a secured life than of the protests and clamor with which freedom provides him?'

Those who put forth such questions do not pay attention to anything other than capitalistic democracy, as if it were the only social cause which rivals theirs on the battleground. Thus, they diminish the value and rights of individual dignity, because they see in it a danger for the general social trend.

However, it is the right of humankind not to (p. 34) sacrifice any of their essentials or rights as long as it is not necessary for them to do so. Humans had to choose between dignity, which is one of their moral rights, and satisfaction of need, which is one of their material rights. Thus,[13](#) they lacked the system that combines both sides and succeeds in resolving both issues.

A human being whose capacities are the objects of extortion by others and who does not enjoy a comfortable life, a fair salary, and security in times of need is one who is deprived of the delights of life and has no access to peaceful and stable living.

Similarly, a human being who lives continuously under threat, who is judged on any movement he makes, who is exposed to detention without a hearing and to imprisonment, who is exiled or executed for the slightest mistake he commits is indeed scared and alarmed. Fear steals away his good life and alarm disturbs its pleasures.

The third type of human being, who enjoys a tranquil life and is confident of his dignity and safety, is the pleasant dream of humankind.[14](#) But how can this dream be realized, and when will it become an actual reality?

We have stated above that the communist treatment of the social issue is incomplete, in addition to having the complications to which we have already alluded. Even though it represents human sentiments and emotions that were stirred up by the general social tyranny - thus attracting a group of thinkers to the new solution - nevertheless, these thinkers did not grasp the cause of corruption so that they could eliminate it. Rather, they eliminated something else. Therefore, they were not successful in their treatment and in achieving a cure.

The principle of private ownership is not the cause of the absolute evils of capitalism that

shook the happiness and peace of the world. It is not, for example, what imposes unemployment on millions of workers, in order to utilize a new machine that will destroy their industries. This is what (p. 35) happened at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. Again, the principle of private ownership does not impose a despotic control over the salaries of employees with disregard for their efforts.

Further, it does not require the capitalist to damage large quantities of his products for the protection of the price of commodities and the preference for squandering these commodities instead [of using them] to satisfy the needs of the poor. Further still, it does not call upon the capitalist to turn his wealth into profitable capital, multiplying it through interest and through the absorption of the efforts of those who are in debt, and not through producing or working.

Moreover, the principle of private ownership does not drive the capitalist to purchase all the consumer's goods from the markets, so that he can monopolize them and then raise their prices. Finally, this principle does not require that the capitalist open up new markets that may infringe upon, or abolish, the freedom, rights and honor of nations.

None of these fearful tragedies was the result of private ownership. Rather, they were the product of personal, materialistic interest that was made the standard of life in the capitalistic system and the absolute justification of all managements and dealings. A society based on such an individualistic standard and personal justification cannot be expected to do other than what it actually did.

It is from the nature of such a standard that those evils and afflictions proceed to fall upon mankind as a whole, rather than from the principle of private ownership. If such a standard is changed, and a new, rectified objective of life in accord with human nature is put forth, the real treatment of the big problem of mankind will have been accomplished.

III. The Correct Explanation of the Problem

In order for us to reach the first part of the explanation of the social problem, we must inquire about the personal, materialistic interest that the capitalistic system established as a criterion, as a justification and as an objective. Thus, we ask: 'What was the idea that validated this criterion in the capitalistic mentality, and what was the source of its inspiration?' For it is this idea which is the real basis of the social afflictions and failure of (p. 36) the capitalistic democracy to achieve human happiness and dignity.

If we are able to kill this idea, we will put an end to all conspiracies against social comfort, and to the unions against the rights and real freedom of society. We will also succeed in exploiting private ownership for the sake of the welfare and development of mankind and for their progress in the industrial fields and areas of production. What then is this idea?

This idea can be summarized in the limited materialistic explanation of life on which the West erected the powerful edifice of capitalism. If every individual in society believes that his only field in this great existence is his personal material life, if he also asserts his freedom of managing and exploiting this life and in his inability to achieve any purpose in this life other than pleasure which is made available to him by material factors; further, if he adds these materialistic beliefs to self-love which is intrinsic to his nature, then he will follow the same path trodden by the capitalists, and will fully carry out their procedures, unless he is deprived of his freedom by an overwhelming power and barred from selecting this path.

Self-love is the most general and the oldest instinct we know; for all other instincts, including the instinct for life, are branches and subdivisions of this instinct. The self-love that human beings have - by which is meant their love of pleasure and happiness for themselves, and their hatred of pain and misery for themselves - is what drives them to earn their living and to satisfy their nutritional and material needs. That is why a human being may put an end to his life by committing suicide if he finds that bearing the pains of death is easier for him than bearing the pains with which his life is full.

Therefore, the true, natural reality that is concealed behind all human life and that directs life with its own hand is self-love, which we express by our yearning for pleasure and hatred for pain. It is not possible for a human being to carry freely the burden of the bitterness of pain and forgo (p. 37) any pleasures just so that others may have pleasure and comfort, unless his human nature is stripped away from him and he is given a new nature that does not yearn for pleasure and detest pain.

Even the wonderful forms of love which we witness in human beings and about which we hear in their history are in reality subjugated to that principal moving force - the instinct of self-love. A human being may love his child or friend over himself, as he may make sacrifices for the sake of some ideals or values.

However, he would not perform any of these heroic acts, if he did not derive from them a specific pleasure and a benefit that outweighed the loss resulting from his love for his child or friend, or from his sacrifice for the sake of some of the ideals in which he believed.

Thus, we can explain human behavior in general, (as being well-grounded in] the areas of selfishness and [self]-love alike. In human beings, there are many propensities for taking pleasure in a variety of things, such as taking pleasure in material things exemplified in food, drink, the various kinds of sexual pleasures, and similar material pleasures.

Other examples of similar pleasures are those of the soul, such as moral and emotional pleasures in moral values, in a spiritual companion or in a specific doctrine. These pleasures are felt when human beings find that those values, that companion, or that doctrine are a part of their specific existence. Such propensities that prepare human beings for enjoying those various delights differ in degree from one individual to the other.

They also vary in the extent of their effectiveness, in accordance with the difference in human circumstances and in the natural and educational factors that affect people. While we find that some of those propensities mature in human beings naturally - as does their propensity for sexual pleasure, for example - we find, at the same time, that other forms of propensities may never appear in people's lives. Rather, they await the educational factors that help their maturation and blossoming.

The instinct of self-love, working behind all these propensities, determines human behavior in accordance with the extent of the maturity of those propensities. Thus, it drives a human being to give himself exclusive access to food when somebody else is hungry. And it is the same propensity that drives another human being (p. 38) to deprive himself of food in order to give someone else exclusive access to it.

This is because the propensity of the former for taking pleasure in the moral and emotional values that drives him to this love was latent. The educational factors which help this propensity focus and grow were not open to him. The latter, on the other hand, has acquired this kind of education. Thus, he takes pleasure in the moral and emotional values,

and sacrifices the rest of his pleasures for their sake.

Whenever we wish to create any change in human behavior, we must first change the human notion of pleasure and benefit, and then place the behavior desired in the general frame of the instinct of self-love.

If the instinct of self-love occupies in the present life of humankind the position [already mentioned], if the self, according to the view of people, is an expression of a limited material power, and if pleasure is an expression of the delights and joys that matter makes available, then it is natural for people to feel that their opportunity for profit is limited, and that the race for their goal is short, and that their goal in this race is to acquire a certain amount of material pleasure.

Further, the way to this acquisition is, as a matter of fact, confined to the nerve of the material life - that is, to money - which opens the way for human beings to realize all their objectives and desires. This is the natural succession in the materialistic notions which leads to a complete capitalistic mentality.

Now, do you think that the problem can be decisively solved if we reject the principle of private ownership and retain these materialistic notions of life, as did those thinkers? Again, is it possible for society to be delivered from the tragedy of such notions and to attain secure happiness and stability by the mere elimination of private ownership?

Take into consideration that securing its happiness and stability depends, to a great extent, on securing the non-deviation of those personalities in charge of carrying out their reformative programs and objectives in the fields of work and execution. (p. 39) Those who are in such positions are supposed to uphold the same purely materialistic notions of life on which capitalism was established.

The difference, though, [between them and the capitalists] is that they laid these notions in new philosophical molds. [In accordance with their teachings], it is reasonable to assume that quite often personal interest stands in the way of social interest, and that the individual fluctuates between a loss and a pain which he bears for the sake of others, and a profit and a pleasure which he enjoys at the expense of others. What security would you estimate there is for the nation and its rights, for the doctrine and its objectives, under such trying times as the rulers face?

Personal interest is not represented in private ownership only, so that the cancellation of the principle of private ownership would destroy our above-mentioned assumption. Rather, personal interest is represented in [various] procedures, and takes on different forms. The evidence for this can be seen in the revelations made by the present communist leaders concerning acts of treason committed by earlier rulers and the consolidation of these earlier rulers around the objectives they had adopted.

The capitalistic group controls the wealth [of the nation], under the auspices of economic and individual freedom, and manages this wealth with its own materialistic mentality. [Similarly], when the state nationalizes the whole wealth and eliminates private ownership, the wealth of the nation is handed to the same state organization which consists of a group adopting the same materialistic notions of life and imposing on people the priority of personal interests, by virtue of the judgement of the instinct of self-love which denounces a human being's renunciation of personal pleasure or interest without any compensation.

As long as the material interest is the power in control due to the materialistic notions of life, it will ignite once again the battleground of struggle and competition, and expose society to various kinds of danger and exploitation.

Thus, all the danger for mankind lies in these materialistic notions and in the standards of goals and actions that proceed from these notions. Unifying the capitalistic wealth, be it small or large, into one large unit of wealth whose management is handed to the state - without any new development (p. 40) of the human mentality - does not alleviate this danger. Rather, it makes all people employees of one and the same company, and ties their lives and dignity to the directors and owners of that company.

Admittedly, this company differs from the capitalistic company in that the owners of the latter are those who own its profits, and spend them in any manner dictated by their desires. The owners of the former company, on the other hand, do not own any of this, according to the teachings of the system. However, the fields of personal interest are still open to them, and the materialistic notion of life, which posits this interest as a goal and as a justification, is still upheld by them.

3. The Islamic System: the Proper Treatment of the Problem¹⁹

The world has two options for driving off the above-mentioned danger and for erecting the principles of a stable society. The first option is to replace the present human nature by another nature -that is, to create in people a new nature that makes them sacrifice their personal interests and the material acquisitions of their limited lives for the sake of society and its interests. They do this with the conviction that there are no values other than material values, and no gains other than the gains of this limited life.

This can be accomplished only if self-love is stripped away from the heart of their nature and is replaced by social love. Thus, human beings would be born without self-love, except inasmuch as they constitute a part of society, and without taking pleasure in their happiness and interests, except inasmuch as their happiness and interests represent an aspect of the general happiness and the social interests. The instinct of social love would then insure in a mechanical manner and procedure effort-making in the direction of achieving social interests and fulfilling social requirements.

The second option open to humankind for eliminating the danger threatening the present and future human generations is to develop people's materialistic notion of life. (p. 41) With such a development, human goals and standards would naturally develop, and the miracle would be accomplished in the easiest way possible.

The first option is the one that the communist leaders dream of realizing for the future human race. They promise the world that they will reconstruct mankind in such away as to enable thorn to move mechanically in the service of society and its interests.

Further, in order to accomplish this great deed, we must entrust them with world leadership, as one would encrust the surgeon with the fate of the patient and delegate to him the cure of the patient, the amputation of the sick parts of his body and the readjusting of the misaligned parts. No one knows the length of time required for such an operation, which places mankind under the surgeon's dissecting knife.

People's surrender to that operation is the greatest evidence for the extent of the injustice they have suffered under the capitalistic democratic system, which, in the last analysis, deceived them with alleged freedom, stripped them of their dignity, and sucked their blood in order to serve it as a tasty drink to the representative ruling group.

The idea of this point, which advocates treating the problem by developing and reconstructing human nature, relies on the Marxist notion of self-love. Marxism holds that self-love is neither a natural inclination nor an instinctive phenomenon in the human nature. Rather, it is a product of the social condition that rests on the ground of private ownership.

The social condition of private ownership is what constitutes the spiritual and internal content of the human being, and creates in the individual his love for his personal interests and individual benefits. Thus, if a revolution occurred with regard to the principles on which the social structure is established, and if private ownership were replaced by social and socialistic ownership, the revolution would be reflected in all aspects of society and in the innermost being of people.

With this, the individual feelings of a human being would be turned into social feelings, and his love for his personal interests and benefits into a love for the social benefits and interests. This would be in accordance with (p. 42) the law of concordance between the state of basic ownership and all the superstructural phenomena that are regulated in accordance with the ownership.

In fact, this Marxist notion of self-love views, in a reverse order, the relation between individual reality (the instinct of self-love) and social conditions. If this were not so, then how could it hold that the individualistic motivation is the product of private ownership and class conflicts that result from this kind of ownership?

But if people did not already have individualistic motivation, they would not have created such conflicts, nor would they have thought of private ownership and exclusive personal possessions: Why would a human being seek exclusive power over the acquisitions of the system and employ this power in a manner that preserves his interests at the expense of others, if he does not deeply feel an individualistic motivation?

In reality, the social manifestations of selfishness in the economic and political fields are nothing but a result of individualistic motivation which in turn is a result of self-love. Thus, this kind of motivation is deeper in human nature than the social phenomena of selfishness.¹⁵ Hence, it is impossible to remove it and root it out by removing those manifestations. An operation of this sort is simply a substitution of certain manifestations by some other manifestations that may differ from them in shape and form, but agree in substance and reality.

Add to this that if we explain objectively the individualistic motivation, [which is the result of] the instinct of self-love,¹⁶ as a reflection of the phenomena of individualism, such as the phenomenon of private ownership in the social system (as Marxism does) this would not mean that, by the removal of private ownership, the individualistic motivation will lose its objective source, as well as its cause, which is grounded in the social system.

This is because, even though it is a phenomenon marked by the individualistic character, nevertheless it is not the only one of its kind. There is, for example, the phenomenon of private administration which is retained even in the socialistic system.

For even though the socialistic system eliminates private ownership of the means of production, still it does not eliminate the private administration of these means by members of the ruling group who practice (p. 43) the proletarian dictatorship, and monopolize the supervision over all the means of production as well as over the management of them.

After all, it is not possible that at the time of their nationalization the means of production can be administered by all the individuals of society in a collective and socialistic manner.

Therefore, the socialistic system retains prominent individualistic phenomena. It is natural for these individualistic phenomena to preserve the individualistic motivation and to reflect it continuously in the innermost human nature, as did the phenomenon of private ownership.

Thus, we now know the value of the first option for solving the problem that is, the communistic option which considers the cancellation of legislating private ownership and its removal from the legal records as alone sufficient for developing human nature and solving the problem.[17](#)

Regarding the second option discussed earlier, it is the option pursued by Islam, due to its conviction that the only solution for the problem is to modify the human materialistic notion of life. Thus, Islam did not begin with the cancellation of private ownership.

Rather, it assaulted the materialistic notion of life and posited, instead, a new notion of life. On the basis of this new notion, Islam established a system in which the individual is not considered as a mechanical tool in the social system, nor society as an organization established for the sake of the individual. Rather, it gave to each - the individual and society - their rights and insured for the individual both his spiritual and material dignity.

Islam put its finger on the real source of the illness in the social system of democracy and in other similar systems. Thus, it eradicated this source in a manner concordant with human nature. [According to Islam], the basic central point due to which human life was crowded with various kinds of misery and different forms of tragedy is the materialistic view of life which we can summarize in the following brief statements. 'The assumption of human life in this world is all that should count. Further, personal interest should be set up as the standard of all action and activity.'

According to Islam, capitalistic democracy is a system destined for definite collapse and failure; however, this not by reason of the claims of the communist economy concerning the contradiction (p. 44) that are natural to the capital and the destructive factors inherent in private ownership. This is because Islam diverges from the notions and dialectical method of such a claim in its logical method, in its political economy and in its social philosophy.

This was pointed out in the book *Iqtisaduna (Our Economy)*. It insures the placing individual ownership in a social plan free from those alleged contradictions.

According to Islamic doctrine, the failure and painful condition that afflicted capitalistic democracy can be ascribed to the purely materialistic notions of this kind of democracy. People cannot be happy under a system whose essence is drawn from such notions and whose general ideas are derived from the spirit of these notions and at their directions.

It is necessary, therefore, to be assisted by something other than the materialistic notions of the universe from which the social system can be drawn. It is also necessary to have sound political awareness based on sound notions of life, upholding the greatest human cause, making an effort to achieve this cause on the basis of these notions, and studying the world problems from this point of view.

When this sort of political awareness is fully achieved in the world, when it prevails over every other political awareness, and when it assaults every notion of life that does not agree with its main principle, it becomes possible for the world to enter a new life shining with light and full of happiness.

This profound political awareness is the real message for peace in the world. Further, this message for salvation is the eternal message of Islam which drew its social system - that differs from any other system we have discussed - from a new ideological principle of life and the universe.

By means of this ideological principle, Islam provided human beings with the correct view of life. Thus, it made them believe that their lives proceed from a principle which is absolutely perfect, and that their lives prepare them for a world free from hardship and misery. Besides, Islam set up a new moral criterion for human beings (p. 45) [with which they may evaluate] all the steps they take and all the stages they cross, this criterion being the satisfaction of God, be He exalted.

Therefore, not everything dictated by personal interest is permissible, and not everything that leads to a personal loss is prohibited and in bad taste. Rather, the goal that Islam set up for human beings in their lives is the divine satisfaction, and the moral criterion by means of which all actions must be weighed is only a measure of this glorified goal that these actions can achieve. The righteous human being is one who achieves this goal. And the complete Islamic personality is the one which, in its various advances, moves by the guidance of this goal, in light of this criterion and within its general scope.

This transformation of people's moral notions, criteria and objectives does not signify a change in human nature and a new development of it, as was intended by the communist idea. For self-love - that is, the love that a human being has for himself - as well as the fulfillment of the specific desires of this self, are natural to human beings. We do not know of any inductive reasoning in any empirical field clearer than the inductive reasoning experienced by people in their long history that proves the essential character of self-love.

Indeed, if self-love were not natural and essential to humankind, earlier human beings (that is, those who lived before any social formation) would not have been driven to satisfy their needs, to repel dangers from themselves, and to pursue their desires through primitive methods by means of which they preserved their lives and continued their existence. This resulted in their plunging themselves into a social life and merging in relations with others for the purpose of fulfilling those needs and repelling those dangers.

Since self-love enjoys such a [prime] position in the human nature, what decisive solution for the great human problem must be established on the basis of accepting this reality? If such a solution is based on the notion of the development of this reality or on overcoming it, then it is an idealistic treatment for which there is no room in the practical realm of human life. (p. 46)

I. The Message of Religion

Here, religion delivers its greatest message, whose burdens cannot be carried except by it, and whose constructive objectives and well-guided goals cannot be realized except on its bases and principles. Thus, religion ties together the moral criterion which it lays down for people and self-love which is centered in their nature. In other words, religion unifies the natural criterion of action and life - this criterion being self-love - and the criterion that must be laid down for action and life; so that it can ensure happiness, comfort and justice.

The natural criterion requires that the human being advance his personal interests over the interests of society and the elements of its solidification. [But] the criterion that must be the judge and that must prevail is the criterion in accordance with which all interests are equal, and in accordance with whose notions, individual and social values are of equal weight.

How then can the two criteria be reconciled, and how can the two scales be unified, so that human nature in the individual is once again one of the factors leading to the happiness and goodness of society, this nature having been a cause of tragedy with inclinations skilled at producing different forms of selfishness?

The reconciliation and unification occur through a process that religion ensures for forlorn humankind. This process takes one of two forms. The first form focuses [on] a realistic explanation of life, and on spreading the understanding of life in its real form, as an introduction that prepares the way for the second life in which the human being achieves happiness proportional to his efforts in this limited life to attain God's satisfaction.

Hence, the moral criterion, or God's satisfaction, be He exalted, ensures personal interest, while at the same time it achieves its greatest social objectives. Therefore, religion guides the human being to participate in establishing a happy society, and in preserving the issues in society that are concerned with justice and that help attain God's satisfaction, be He exalted. (p. 47) This is part of his personal profit, as long as every action and every activity in this area are compensated for by the greatest and most splendid rewards.

According to religious notions and explanation of life, society's problem is the same as that of the individual. But this form of reconciliation cannot be held in a materialistic view of life. This kind of outlook views people as naturally not attentive to anything other than their present involvement and their limited life. This is contrary to the realistic explanation of life which Islam offers. The latter explanation broadens the horizon of a human being. It imposes on him a more profound view of his interests and benefits. In the last analysis, this profound view turns fast loss into real profit, and fast profits into real loss:

He who does right it is for his soul, and he who does wrong it is against his soul.[18](#)
He who does right, whether male or female, and is a believer will enter Paradise where he will be provided for, without restriction.[19](#)

On that day, people will proceed in scattered groups to see their deeds. He who does good an atom's weight will see it then, and he who does evil an atom's weight will see it then.[20](#)

That is because no thirst, hardship or hunger afflicts them on the path of God. They do not take any step that harms the disbelievers. And they do not gain anything from the enemy; but, by virtue of that, a good deed is recorded for them. God does not lose the wages of the good. They do not spend anything, be that small or large, nor do they cross any valley; but

it is recorded for them that God will repay them the best of what they had done.[21](#)

These are some of the beautiful images that religion offers as examples of the first form that the above-mentioned process can take on, and that religion pursues in its attempt to reconcile the two criteria and to unify the two scales.

Thus, it builds a link between personal motives and the paths leading to good in life. It also modifies the interest of individuals (p. 48) in such a way as to make individuals believe that their personal interests and the real general human interests - as defined by Islam - are interrelated.[22](#)

The second form that religion adopts for the purpose of reconciling personal motivation with social values and interests is its attempts to offer a specific moral education concerned with the spiritual nourishment of human beings and their emotional growth and moral sentiments. For, as we have mentioned earlier, there are in human nature capacities and dispositions for various inclinations. Some of these inclinations are of the material type, the desires for which open up naturally, such as the desire for food, the desire for drink, and the desire for sex.

Other such inclinations are of the spiritual type. These sprout and grow as a result of education and commitment. Because of this, it is natural for people, if left to themselves, to be dominated by the material inclinations, for such inclinations open up naturally; while the spiritual inclinations and their dispositions that are latent in the soul remain concealed.

By virtue of believing in an infallible leadership guided by God, religion entrusts the matter of the education of human beings and the growth of their spiritual inclinations to this leadership and to its branches. As a result of this, a number of noble emotions and sentiments develop. Human beings begin to appreciate moral values and the ideals that religion teaches them to respect, to desire defiance of death for their sake and to eliminate any of their own interests or benefits that stand in the way of these moral values and ideals.

This does not mean that self-love must be eliminated from the human nature. Rather, action for the sake of such values and ideals would be a complete fulfillment of the will to self-love. For, due to religious teachings, values become desirable to people. The realization of the desirable object itself expresses a specific personal pleasure. Thus, the very nature of self-love dictates the pursuit of the desirable moral values, for the purpose of achieving a specific pleasure pertaining to moral values.

These are the two ways in which the linkage of the moral issue to the individual issue occurs. (p. 49) The former can be summarized in giving a realistic explanation of an eternal life, not in order that human beings lose interest in the present life, nor in order that they yield to wrongdoing and settle for what is unjust, but in order to regulate themselves by the proper moral criterion supplied with sufficient assurances by this explanation.

The latter can be summarized in the moral education which produces in the human soul various emotions and sentiments that ensure the operation of the moral criterion by inspiration from the self. Thus, the spiritual comprehension of life and the moral education of the soul are, in the teachings of Islam, the two causes that together treat the deeper cause of the human tragedy.

Let us always express the understanding that the present life is a preparatory stage for an

eternal life through the spiritual understanding of life. Let us also express the feelings and sentiments that moral education nourishes a moral sense of life.

The spiritual understanding of life and a moral sense of life are the two principles that are the ground of the new moral criterion which Islam lays down for humankind. This criterion is the satisfaction of God, be He exalted. The satisfaction of God that Islam erects as a general criterion in life is that which steers the human ship to the shore of righteousness, goodness and justice.

Thus, the basic distinguishing feature of the Islamic system is represented in its being based on a spiritual understanding of life and a moral sense of life.

A major point of this system is the taking into consideration of both the individual and society, and the securing of a balance between life of the individual and social life. The individual is not considered the central principle in legislating and governing, nor is the large social existence the only thing to which the state pays attention and for whose sake it enacts its laws. (p. 50)

Any social system not proceeding from such an understanding and such a sense is either a system that goes along with the individual and his personal inclinations -thus exposing social life to the harshest complications and the most intense dangers - or a system that confines the individual's inclinations to himself, paralyzing his nature for the purpose of protecting society and its interests.

With this, bitter and continuous struggle arises between the system and its laws [on the one hand], and the individuals and their inclinations [on the other hand]. Indeed, the social existence of the system becomes constantly exposed to relapses at the hands of its own creators, as long as they, too, have personal inclinations, and as long as these inclinations find for themselves - by virtue of suppressing other personal inclinations and by seizing total power - wide opportunity and a unique field for advance and exploitation.

Any spiritual understanding of life and any moral sense of life that do not result in a complete system of life in which every part of society is taken into consideration, and every individual is given the freedom that is rectified by this understanding and this sense, and that the state determines in the cases of deviation from this understanding and this sense, I say that any doctrine that does not produce this sort of system for mankind does not do anything beyond rendering the atmosphere amiable and reducing the [weight of] calamities.

It is not a definite treatment and a derisive judgement of the illnesses and evils of society. A solid social edifice must be established only on a spiritual understanding of life and a moral sense of life, proceeding from both of them to fill life with the spirit of this sense and the essence of that understanding. This is Islam, expressed in the briefest and most beautiful statement.

It is a spiritual and a moral doctrine from which a complete system for mankind proceeds, sketching for them their clear and well-defined advance, setting up for them the highest goal of this advance, and making known to them their gains from that goal.

As for terminating the spiritual understanding of life, stripping mankind of its moral sense of life, and considering moral notions as pure illusions created by material interests, and the economic factor as the creator of all values and ideals -and after that, desiring happiness and social stability for mankind - it is (p. 51) a wish that cannot be fulfilled unless mankind

is transformed into mechanical systems, organized by a number of technical engineers.

Further, having people operate in accordance with the principle of this spiritual understanding of life and this moral sense of life is not a hard job. In human history, religions have fulfilled their mission in this domain. For all the spiritual notions, moral sentiments, and noble feelings and emotions, there is no clearer and more logical explanation than that which bases its principles and fundamentals on the great efforts that religions have made to educate mankind, to show them their natural motivation and the life and actions they must pursue.

Islam carried the torch that overflows with light after mankind reached a specific degree of awareness. Thus, it advocated spiritual and moral principles on the largest scale, and for the longest term. On the basis of these principles, it raised the human banner, and established an ideological state that seized the reins of world power for a quarter of a century. It aimed at uniting all people and rallying them around one ideological principle that offers a way and an order of life.

Therefore, the Islamic state has two functions. The first is to educate mankind in accordance with [its] ideological principle, and to impress its own character on their tendencies and feelings. The second is to observe them externally, and to bring them back to the principle if they deviate from it in practice.

Because of this, the political awareness of Islam is not limited to the formal aspect of social life. Rather, it is a profound political awareness due to a general and complete outlook on life, the universe, society, politics, economics and ethics. This comprehensive outlook is the complete Islamic awareness.

Any other political awareness is either a shallow awareness that neither views the world from a specific perspective, nor sets its notions on a specific focal point, (p. 52) or an awareness that investigates the world from the point of view of pure matter that provides mankind with struggle and misery of all forms and types.

II. A Final Point

Lastly, at the end of our investigation of the four social schools, we reach the following conclusion. The basic problem that causes all the social evils and that results in various kinds of misdeeds is only given the proper treatment that determines such maladies, and roots them out of the human social body, by the Islamic social school, to the exclusion of other schools. It is necessary, therefore, to inquire about Islamic philosophical convictions concerning life, the universe, society and the economy.

We must also inquire about its legislation and procedures, in order to acquire the complete outline of Islamic awareness and comprehensive Islamic thought, comparing these Islamic convictions to other forms of conviction regarding the procedures they pursue and the doctrines they adopt.

It is natural that our investigation of any conviction begins with an investigation of the basis of the general doctrine of life and the universe, as well as the method of understanding both the universe and life. The notions of any conviction regarding life and the universe form the basic structure of the substance of that conviction. The primary criterion for testing a conviction is experience of the basic ideological principles on whose limit and soundness of judgements the judgements and success of the superstructures depend.

We will therefore reserve the first portion of this work of ours for an investigation of the primary structure, the point from which our conviction proceeds. The superstructures will be investigated in the remaining portions of this work, God willing, exalted be He.

The capitalistic democratic system does not proceed from a specific doctrine concerning life and the universe, nor is it built on a complete understanding of the values of life that are related to, and have influence on, social life. For this reason, the capitalistic democratic system is not a conviction in the real sense of the term. This is because a conviction is a doctrine in life from which a system for life proceeds. (p. 53)

As for Marxist communism and socialism, they are established on an ideological principle which is the philosophy of dialectical materialism. Islam, on the other hand, reserves for itself an ideological principle of life that has its own method of understanding life and its specific scales.

We stand, therefore, between two philosophies that we must study, in order to find the sound ideological principle of life on which we must establish our social and political awareness of the affairs of the whole world, and our social and political criteria by means of which we measure the values of actions and weigh human events in instances of national and individual difficulties.

The principle on which a conviction rests involves a method and an idea; that is, it involves a determination of the method of thinking and a determination of the notion of the world and of life. Since our purpose in this book is not philosophical studies for their own sake, but rather the study of the rational principles of convictions, we will limit ourselves to a study of the two basic factors pertaining to every rational principle from which a system proceeds.

These two factors are the method of thinking, and the philosophical notion of the world. These two matters are the focus of the discussion in this book. Since it is necessary to determine the method before forming the notions, we will then begin with the theory of knowledge that involves a determination of the [identifying] marks, method and value of thinking. This will be followed by a study of the general philosophical notion of the world in general.

It is better that the dear reader knows at the outset that the benefit that lies at the heart of Islam is the method and the notion - that is, the rational method of thinking and the theological notion of the world. As for the various methods of demonstration and kinds of proof for this or that matter, we do not add all of them to Islam. Rather, they are the product of intellectual studies by prominent thinkers among Muslim scholars and philosophers.

[1.](#) Text: qawaninihima (the laws of both of them).

[2.](#) i.e., control over.

[3.](#) Text: wa -ftarad

[4.](#) Experimentation acquired great importance in the scientific field, and achieved an unexpected success in the discovery of many truths and in the revelation of astonishing secrets which opened the opportunity for men and women to exploit in their practical lives. (p. 18) The success of this experimentation glorified it in the common mentality, and led people to abandon rational thought, as well as all the truths that do not appear in the empirical and experimental fields, so that sense experience became, in the view of many empiricists, the only ground of any knowledge or science. In this book, we will show that experimentation in itself relies on rational thought and that the primary ground of knowledge and science is the mind, which grasps the truths that are not accessible to the senses, as are sensible truths.

[5.](#) A group of general doctrines were very clear and simple to the common understanding, even though they were not based on a rational method or on philosophical evidence, such as the belief that the earth is the center of the universe. But when such beliefs collapsed in the face of sound experiments, the common belief was

shaken, and a wave of doubt prevailed, over many minds. Thus, there was a rebirth of Greek sophistry influenced by the spirit of doubt, as it was influenced in Greek times by the spirit of doubt which was the outcome of contradiction among philosophical schools and disputes concerning them.

[6.](#) The church played an important role in exploiting religion in an ugly way. It used the name of religion as an instrument for fulfilling its desires and objectives and for stifling the scientific and social spirit. It established inspection courts to which it gave wide powers over managing the fates of people. All of this led to discontent and anger with religion, for the crime was committed in the name of religion, even though in its pure reality and true essence, religion was not less disturbed by that crime than those who were discontented and angry with it, nor was it less repelled by the motives and consequences of that crime.

[7.](#) Text: wasa'il al-intaj al-hadith (the means of modern production).

[8.](#) Text: tuhaymin 'ala taqalid al-hukm fi al-'umma.

[9.](#) We have explicated these theories together with a detailed scientific study in the book Our Economy.

[10.](#) Text: bi -jami' (all).

[11.](#) Perhaps the author means 'even'.

[12.](#) Text: wa-dhalika li-anna (that is because).

[13.](#) Text: idha (if).

[14.](#) This is the type that everyone would like to be.

[15.](#) In other words, self-love is responsible for the individualistic motivation which, in turn, is responsible for the social manifestations of selfishness in both the economic and political fields.

[16.](#) The text here identifies individualistic motivation with the instinct of self-love. But since the previous discussion shows that, according to the author, the former is caused by the latter rather than identified with it, we chose to break the identification by inserting what is within the brackets.

[17.](#) The text reads: 'for solving the problem and developing human nature'. We made the switch in conformity with the spirit of the discussion, according to which, the development of human nature is a precondition for the solution of the problem.

[18.](#) Al-Qur'an, XLI, 46.

[19.](#) Al-Qur'an, XL, 40.

[20.](#) Al-Qur'an, XCIX, 6, 7, 8.

[21.](#) Al-Qur'an, IX, 120, 121.

[22.](#) See Our Economy, p. 808.

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