THE "GOLDEN AGE" SYNDROME
ISLAMIST MEDINA AND OTHER HISTORICAL MODELS
OF CONTEMPORARY MUSLIM THOUGHT

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1. HISTORY'S RELIGIOUS IMPORTANCE TO MUSLIMS

Islam being remarkably thiswordly it is but natural that religious history should play a decisive role in the consciousness of its followers. Moreover, unlike the adherents of other faiths, Muslims did not have to wait for centuries to see their message triumph. They achieved political power more or less from the start, during the very life-time of the founder. Furthermore, their power soon assumed the proportions of world supremacy, ushering in centuries of glory and splendor. Many Muslims epitomize their own mentality in the Persian phrase: *padaram sultân bûd* ("my father was a ruler")! This "prince-complex" is strongest where the memory of glory is freshest (the Ottoman Caliphate, the Moghul Empire), but in one way or the other it persists in many regions of the Muslim world.

An important reason for this historical thinking is the fact that Islam, as the youngest of the major world religions, is less detached from its origins. Its inception and early history are well-documented. As a result, the civil wars of the seventh century continue to haunt Muslims with a vividness sometimes reminiscent of Spain, where many combatants of the internecine strife of the late 1930s are still alive.

Fundamentalism — or integrism — in Islam, therefore, is not merely a going back to the book of divine revelation. It is equally much, and in some cases even more so, an attempted return to the early phase of the Muslim community, the resuscitation of a golden age or what is perceived of as such. Besides, it is no new phenomenon as there has always existed a tendency to reject all historical accretions as unlawful innovations and to re-enact the age of the Prophet.

We descern such fundamentalism in the opposition of the religious scholars of Medina against the early Umayyad rulers in Damascus, whom they regarded as "pagan" usurpers. However, the heroic figure with which the theoretical elaboration of this stance came to the fore was Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (780–855) who opposed an enlightened Caliph and his rationalist theologians in Baghdad. The next outstanding name mentioned in this connection is that of Ibn Taimîya who preached in 13th century Damascus. Following this line of development one arrives at Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhâb's central desert of Arabia in the middle of the 18th century. Another great thinker in this bird's perspective of Muslim fundamentalism is the Syrian Rashîd Riḍâ. His school, also known as neo-Wahhabîya, called itself Salafîya, a name pointing to the model of the pious forbears (al-salaf al-ṣâliḥ), in other words, the Prophet's Companions. The renowned fundamentalists of the 20th century, such as Ḥasan al-Bannâ (1906–1949) in Egypt, Abû l-A'lâ' Maudûdî (1903–1979) in India-Pakistan, and even the Shî'ite Rûḥ-Allâh Khumaynî (1903 –   ) in Iran were all influenced by Rashîd Riḍâ, notwithstanding the latter's Arab-Sunni bias.

This is not to say that Rashîd Riḍâ was the only influence. Each of the aforementioned thinkers left his traces in a number of ramifications. Among these are to be counted the many attempts to establish a state on the pattern of the Prophet's Medina. Sometimes these endeavors did not proceed beyond the fomentation of a forceful fundamentalist revolt. In a number of cases, however, they did eventuate in a new state, mostly of short duration, but sometimes with a fascinating longevity. The best-known example is that of the Mahdi of Sudan at the end of last century. The parallels to Khumaynî's Iran are indeed striking, despite the different setting.

A particularly intriguing feature of this fundamentalist yearning for the "pristine purity" of the faith is that it constitutes both a source of unity and a source of friction for the community, with friction having the upper hand over unity. First of all a point has to be raised that cannot be emphasized enough: fundamentalism, despite all its importance, past and present, is a minority phenomenon and as such not altogether different from fundamentalism in Christianity. Throughout the centuries it used to be defeated by other interpretations of the faith. Where states on a fundamentalist base achieved a remarkable degree of stability it was because fundamentalism had soon succumbed to the impact of the civilization it rose to destroy, if it was not right from the start diluted by the culture of Muslim mysticism. Such was the case in the Maghreb with both the Almoravides and their successors, the Almohades.

As a result of fundamentalism's more or less regular defeats the notion of early Medina as the golden age of Islam is by no means the same with all Muslims. No doubt, there is the concept of the "right guided Caliphate" that is shared by a majority of Sunni Muslims, however, with a whole pano-

rama of different perceptions. The term "right guided Caliphate" applies to the four immediate successors to the Prophet, the Caliphs Abû Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, 'Alî. For Shi'ites, only the barely five years of 'Alî's rule count. Many Sunnis, on the other hand, reduce the 38 years period of the four Caliphs to just 12, counting only Abû Bakr and 'Umar, because with 'Uthmân started corruption and civil war.

Nonetheless, some or the other recognition of this period as the "right guided Caliphate" does exist among most Muslims. In many places, however, the "right guided Caliphate" has to share its seat of honor as the "golden age of Islam" with some other period, and mostly this other period is more decisive in conditioning the respective Muslim people's frame of mind. Generally this "rival" period is one of local circumpscription, such as that of the early Moghuls in India ending with Aurangzêb (1658–1707), the early Ottomans in Turkey, culminating in Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–1566), the early Safawids in Iran, especially Shâh Ismâ'îl (d. 1524), the early Abbasids in Iraq, till Al-Mu'tasim (d. 842), the early principalities in Syria, culminating in Saladin (1138–1193), the early Mamulks in Egypt, culminating in Baibars (d. 1277), the early Alawites in Morocco, especially Moulay Ismâ'îl (1672–1727), apart from the glory associated with minor principalities and city states such as Granâda and Herât in the 15th, Haydarâbâd/Deccan in the 19th century etc. Mostly it is the Hârûn al-Rashîd syndrome of a ruler whom posterity remembers as just and noble because his reign was marked by general prosperity as well as a long stretch of peace and stability, with a population little affected by whatever minor wars took place at far-flung borders. It is thus that Bukhârâ and Samarqand were mystified. Collections of legends and fairy tales such as the "Arabian Nights" provide many a valuable clue to the common Muslim's view of Islamic history.

In all of the aforementioned cases modern secular nationalism has very much fostered such notions of a golden age based on the particularism of each region or nationality. But it is everywhere built on a solid foundation of popular consciousness. It needed no arbitrary underpinning as was necessary where attempts were made at resuscitating pre-Islamic history — such as Turanism, Pharaohnism, Persepolis etc. Many Muslims associate the glory they desire to be regained with the local prime of a particular dynasty. (The term "local", though, can have as wide a connotation as the entire Indo-Pak Subcontinent, or the Maghreb from Mauritania to Libya.) And yet the Caliphates of the Umayyads and the Abbasids do generally transcend geography and assume a catholic significance with most Muslims that makes them appear as a sequel to the "right guided Caliphs", as a slow petering out of the initial phase of pristine purity.

Thus we find the Muslim identification with hisory generally divided into three phases: a) the "right guided Caliphate"; b) the Caliphate of the Umayyads and the Abbasids; c) the splendor of dynasties that rose to glory

in his respective part of the world. Most Muslims accept that in terms of religious faith or in matters of understanding Islam a) was superior to b), and b) to c). However, to many this does not seem to matter much. The bulk of the community, which is being constituted by the followers of the Sufis (mystics) and the orthodox (traditionalists) takes as major points of reference spiritual masters and doctors of the law who lived in the b) or c) period:

    'Abd al-Qâdir al-Gaylânî (1078–1166),
    Al-Ghazâlî (d. 1111),
    Ibn 'Arabî (1165–1240),
    Rûmî (1207–1273).

While admitting theoretically the superiority of the early forbears the majority of Muslims feels itself practically close to them through the medieval masters the link to whom is very much kept alive by dint of the fraternities and preacher-seminaries — very often also by descendants of the masters or by present-day embodiments of their spiritual powers.

Fundamentalists do not only reject the charismatic leadership of the fraternities and challenge the credentials of the 'ulamâ, they also tend to dismiss many — if not most — of the historical pradigms of sufism as spurious. This unbridgeable antagonism between fundamentalist movements and the large masses of Muslims is often overlooked, especially ever since Saudi-Arabia assumed a leading role in world affairs. For many, however, the days are not forgotten when the Egyptian vice-roy, Mehmet Ali, crushed the Wahhâbîs on the Arabian peninsula. This was not just an imperial move by the challenged Ottoman Caliph but a punitive expedition that had the backing of the majority of the believers. To this very day the term Wahhâbî serves as a deragotary label in a country so closely allied with Saudi Arabia as Pakistan. In the Indo-Pakistani context Wahhâbî stands for heretic, fanatic, destuctive. Besides Wahhâbî, another term denoting "fundamentalist" is Ḥanabalî. In Eyptian parlance it stands for obdurate, narrow-minded and pedantic.

Fundamentalist insistence on the "right guided Caliphate" as the only and always valid model for "true" Islam has to be seen against this background. Despite the all-prevading veneration for the Prophet's Companions and their age, the bulk of the believers does not normally attach such an exclusiveness to it. This, at least, must be said for the purely religious plane.

Politically speaking the fundamentalist position is even more tenuous. There are few in the Muslim world of today who do not long for power and rehabilitation. This is the underlying motive both for the majority enamored with its medieval glory and the fundamentalists seeking to rekindle the vigor of the (largely imaginary) early Caliphate. Why this clash between two different models? It is invariably a conflict between Medina and some other center: Medina vs. Damascus, Madina vs. Baghdad, Medina vs. Delhi and, ultimately,

Medina vs. Mecca. For the Shi'ites it is Medina vs. Kufa, superated however, by the conflict between Damascus and Kufa.

Before entering in a discussion as to why the fundamentalists prefer Medina to all those alternatives it might be helpful to start with the other side and present the various views emanating from the majority of non-fundamentalist Muslims.

2. BAGHDAD VERSUS DAMASCUS — MUSLIM UNIVERSALISM VERSUS ARAB NATIONALISM

Damascus (the Umayyads) serves as a rallying point for Arab nationalists, particularly those defining themselves as Arabs first and Muslims second. It is the natural orientation for the ideologues of the secularist Arab Socialist Baath-Party. Damascus (the Umayyad Caliphate) allows Arab Christians to identify with Arabism by seeing it as distinct from the Muslim world at large. But it also draws — as a second and unintended step — Arab Christians closer to Islam, because the Umayyad Caliphate as the apogee of Arab glory coincided with Islam or rather was the outcome of it. Michel 'Aflaq, the Christian founder of the Baath-Party, who is much maligned by Muslim fundamentalists, converted in his old age to Islam. Although he did so in Baghdad, this step was, in a way, a logical consequence of his developing an ideology for which the major historical point of reference was Umayyad Damascus.

Support for the Damascus model, however, comes from an entirely different quarter too. There has always been a brand of Sunni theologians who, while bewailing the plight of the Prophet's family at the hands of the Umayyads, considered the Damascene Caliphate a lesser evil in comparison to Shi'ism and Khârijism, or what we would call in modern terms "extremists to the right and to the left". They would not regard the Umayyads as an ideal solution but felt grateful to them for having safeguarded the orthodox doctrines of the faith and ensured the survival of the Sunni community. A Marxist inspired theologian of this century drew an analogy to modern times that may strike as odd but, nonetheless, illustrates very well a traditional attitude persisting to this day among sections of the Sunni 'ulamâ. According to this revolutionary theologian from India, 'Ubayd-Allâh Sindhî (d. 1945), the Umayyad Caliph Mu'âwîya (the villain of the Shi'ites) may be likened to Stalin, whereas his rival, the fourth Caliph 'Alî, is to be compared to Trotsky. 'Alî might have been a loveable idealist, however, he had no sense of proportion. His dreamy revolutionism was a danger to the very existence of Islam as a polity. Mu'âwiya, on the other hand, was a political animal, a realist who knew how to consolidate the gains before exporting the revolution.

This view makes it possible to opt for Mu'âwiya as a necessary evil while simultaneously shedding tears over the inevitable fate of noble 'Alî, who had to be sacrificed at the altar of political realism. In a way this has been a majority attitude long before Muslims ever heard of Stalin and Trotsky. In contrast to the Arab nationalists' unrestrained option for Damascus, this attitude allows for a nostalgia for Medina and the earliest days before civil war began.

Like the Umayyads, the Abbasids have a distinct group of supporters. For many non-Arab Muslims the historical Baghdad is preferable to Damascus because it was Muslim in a universalist sense, freed of the Arab bias of the Damascene Caliphate. The confluence of cultural influences from all the then known civilizations, religions and races is to the majority of Muslims all over the world the hallmark of their identity.

The second group of supporters for the Baghdad model comes from intellectuals of the Muslim enlightenment, 1890–1930 in a narrower sense, 1870–1950 in a wider sense, roughly coinciding with what Albert Hourani called the liberal age of Arab thought. It was marked by Indians such as Sayyid Aḥmad Khân (1817–1898) and Shiblî Nu'mânî (1857–1914), and Egyptians such as Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849–1905) and Aḥmad Amîn (1886–1954), as well as a galaxy of other thinkers in these and other regions of the Muslim world. What united them was the rediscovery of the civilizational achievements of Islam. In quest of Muslim equivalents to standards of their time they pounced upon the rational theology of the Mu'tazila, a long defunct school of thought that bore some resemblance to the European enlightenment and which seems to have given birth to the scientific method. Over a period of about three centuries Baghdad was bristling with cultural productivity, an enrichment fo everlasting benefit to humanity. What a difference to the barely thirty years of the "right guided Caliphate" in Medina! The rediscovery of all those treasures in the newly edited books from Abbasid Baghdad were of some help in tackling the problems of modernization, if in no other way then providing the necessary self-confidence and religious reassurance.

No wonder then that Aḥmad Amîn, who introduced modern methods of research in Arab historiography, dedicated most of his energy to 10th century Baghdad. A devout believer and a mystic he devoted only a few pages to the "right guided Caliphate" in Medina and not very many to the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus either (the Umayyad Caliphate of Cordova fared much better). Most tomes of his voluminous cultural history of Islam deal with the Abbasid Caliphate and beyond.

To sum up: support for Baghdad as an historical model exceeds by far the support given to Damascus and to Medina. Damascus holds little attraction for non-Arab Muslims who feel that in Baghdad the balance was redressed with Muslim universalism emerging victorious over an Arab nationalist distortion of Islam. For sufis and orthodox alike, Baghdad provides a religious link with the "right guided Caliphate" through towering personalities such as

Abû Ḥanîfa, 'Abd al-Qâdir al Gaylânî and Ghazâlî, to name only a few. This may account for the largest consensus discernible. To this is to be added a numerically small but effective class of intellectuals (in most countries of the Muslim world) for whom historical Baghdad is more meaningful a pole of cultural orientation than Medina or Damascus.

3. THE PREDOMINANCE OF LOCAL IDENTIFICATIONS OVER THE CALIPHATE

The particularist identification with local Muslim glory is so manifold that an example chosen at random must do. The above-mentioned 'Ubayd-Allâh Sindhî is a useful instance in point insofar as his revolutionary élan entailed an outspokenness rarely found in conservative societies. Strident as his assertions may sound, they neatly echo the sentiments of large segments of Indo-Pakistani Muslims, though few would venture to express them so candidly.

For Sindhî the first and foremost point of reference was Delhi, more specifically the Delhi of the Moghul emperors, regardless of the chaos of the latter days. Delhi produced great thinkers, poets and architects even in the days of its worst decadence right up to the last Great-Moghul, Bahâdur Shâh Zafar, himself a poet of renown. The most important of these intellectual giants was the theologian Shâh Waliy-Allâh (1702–1769) whom Sindhî visualized as a national *imâm* of Muslims in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent. Shâh Waliy-Allâh was Ibn 'Arabî, Rûmî, Ghazâlî and Ibn Rushd (Averoes) all in all and, of course, much more than all of them together. In fact, Sindhî sees Delhi as the direct heir to Baghdad, because when Baghdad fell to the Mongol hords, most of the great minds with their sciences migrated to Delhi. This engendered an enormous upsurge of cultural life in India, in analogy to the Renaissance in Italy whereto so much of Greek intellect had escaped from the Turkish assault on Konstantinopel.

Such reasoning may seem construed and exaggerated, and yet it is representative of a widespread local patriotism within the Muslim realm. Sindhî could well have been a product of the Maghreb (including Spain) with its unshakeable faith in the singularity of Qayrawân and the Qarawiyîn (in Fez) and with its cult of all that is *andalusî*. What Sindhî said about Delhi was said much earlier abour Cordova. Both the Red Fort of Delhi and the Mezquita of Cordova acquired a symbolic importance rivalling that of the Temple in Jerusalem to the Jews. A senior official of Pakistan's religious establishment who has travelled widely can be heard saying that strictly speaking there is no real Islam beyond Zâhidân (town at the Iranian border). Fuqahâ' (doctors of the religious law) in Morocco's Tafilalet can be just as doubtful about their

Egyptian colleagues or even about fellow Muslims from the North of their own country. The explanations given are more often than not based on historical experiences with people of other countries or regions who are being blamed for not having adhered to the call of the religious leader most outstanding in local history. Such reflections greatly outweigh all thoughts about the replacement of Medina by Damascus. This may not be openly admitted as such, for the Companions of the Prophet are placed on the most elevated rangs of the pantheon. Probably it is precisely for this reason that later endeavors of Muslim resurgence kindle the emotions more. Medina is the holiest of shrines after Mecca, but Marrakesh is more plausible as a staging ground for the remodeling of Muslim society.

4. A "SECOND MESSAGE" OF ISLAM SUPERATING THE TRADITIONAL SHARI'A – MECCA VERSUS MEDINA

The greatest challenge to the Medinese model of the fundamentalists does not, however, come from any of the three categories (a, b, c) mentioned earlier. It comes rather from the opposite direction, not from any of the post-Medinese models, but from a period preceding the establishment of the Muslim polity in Medina, viz. the Meccan period of the Prophet's life, more precisely, from the time he recieved the first revelation till his migration to Medina. Maḥmûd Muḥammad Ṭâhâ, a Sudanese philosopher of religion and leader of a sufi reform movement called the "Republicans", advocates what is certainly the most radical return to the sources by demanding that priority be given to the Qur'ânic verses revealed in Mecca over those revealed in Medina. For him and his followers the social pattern and the community structures that developed under the Prophet and his immediate successors are clearly a phenomenon of that age. Therefore, Medina is not a model valid for "all climes and all times", its relevance is restricted to seventh century Arabia.

Maḥmûd Muḥammad Ṭâhâ teaches that Mecca is essential, Medina subsidiary. All of the Qur'ân is divine in origin, but only the ethical principles *(uṣûl)* revealed in Mecca are of eternal validity, the practical shape *(furû')* given to these under the Medinese circumstances were time-bound, to be enforced on those generations only, not on later ones. In fact, God made certain concessions to the Companions of the Prophet by abrogating some of the high moral standards set in the Meccan verses. The purpose was to set something into motion that is to be completed in the course of time. Ultimately the abrogated Meccan verses are to assert themselves and abrogate the Medinese ones, making the traditional *sharî'a* fall into disuse and calling for the development of a new *sharî'a* in tune with the knowledge and the requirements of industrialized world society in the 20th century.

In this conception Medina is not entirely devoid of meaning to present-day Muslims. The difference is that it does not serve as a model but as an illustration only. It is an illustration of how the eternal principles of Mecca are to be enacted under given circumstances in the best possible way. It shows the believer how to push ahead with the Meccan ethics in a realistic manner. To regard Medina as an unalterable model is considered tantamount to shirking the responsability God has shouldered upon the believers. God has provided humanity with ethical principles and *one* possible way of implementing them, — together with the demand that this process be repeated by each generation by exerting itself to its utmost capacity.

The division between Mecca and Medina is not all that sharp as it may appear from what has been said above, but it does of course open up possibilities of religious creativity unimaginable in any other reformist approach. The division that is evident between the Meccan and the Medinese parts of the Qur'ân is bridged by the example of the Prophet, his personal conduct *(sunna)*, stretching from even before the first revelation to his death in Medina. For whereas his Companions were granted a kind of divine dispense relieving them of some of the toughest demands of the Meccan ethics, the Prophet always stuck to the loftiest of those principles without availing himself of the ease provided by the Medinese abrogations.

There is a sense in which one might regard the "Republicans" as the most fundamentalist of all. We have noted the tendency among fundamentalists to limit the period of their model more and more, leaving the Sunnis with little more than the Caliphate of Abû Bakr and 'Umar while the Shî'is have to be content with the less than five years of 'Alî's rule. Seen in this context Maḥmûd Muḥammed Ṭâhâ seems to go a step further by discarding even Medina and solely relying on the deepest foundations: Mecca as the only that is really fundamental.

This, however, is only apparently so. The result is in fact the very opposite of what the fundamentalists are aiming at. Along with the traditional *sharî'a* Maḥmûd Muḥammad Ṭâhâ discards such concepts as *wiṣâya* by which women were held in the bondage of men, as well as the crypto-democracy termed *shûrâ* according to which a majority decision can be overruled by the head of the community. *Zakât* (almsgiving or "poor tax") as a symptom of a capitalist society (Medina) is to be substituted by a socialist economic order. (This obviously applies to *zakât* as a tax stipulated by the traditional *sharî'a*, not to *zakât* as an ethical principal of charity.) All in all, the society envisioned by Maḥmûd Muḥammad Ṭâhâ would provide a striking contrast to the one enunciated by the fundamentalists and those witnessed presently in Iran and Pakistan. There is in the Sudanese reformer's teachings a clear-cut commitment to democracy and socialism as well as to the emancipation of woman. Secularism is looked at askance because the "Republicans" are a genuinely religious movement of a deeply mystic nature, desirous of making

Islamic ethics pervade all spheres of life. In a political sense, however their attitude may be termed a secularist one because they militate against all projects of an "Islamic consitution" as propounded by the fundamentalists. The "Republicans" totally reject any legal or political distinctions between citizens on the basis of religion or sex.

5. THE FUNDAMENTALIST RETURN TO MEDINA – RADICAL NATIVISM OR RELIGIOUS RECONSTRUCTION ?

Among the fundamentalists again we have to differentiate three major tendencies. The literature of the "Muslim Brotherhood" in Egypt betrayed a certain ambivalence right from the start in the early thirties. There is the more traditional viewpoint, so to say fundamentalist proper, according to which the "right guided Caliphate" is to be reborn. Those following this line of thought often do believe that conditions of life can be reest. blished closely resembling those of seventh century Medina. Some from among this group will protest against the 'insinuation' that this means a preference for camels and donkeys over trucks and jeeps. But they will opt for numberless ritualistic niceties pertaining to a bygone age, such as the *miswâk* instead of a toothbrush, very much insist on traditional (Arab) dress, prefer dates to any other fruits no matter where they live, give up the pictorial arts for calligraphy, practice sword-fighting instead of football, etc. This "Wahhâbî" brand of fundamentalism is nativism in one of its extremest manifestations. Significantly, it is being most clearly displayed by an organisation of American and European converts affiliated to the Moroccan Darqâwî Brotherhood with its international headquarters in Norwich/England. Although they are somewhat sufi (medievalist) in outlook, their practice is extremely fundamentalist. They take the notion of "right guided Caliphate" seriously and are more consistent in giving it a practical shape than most of their oriental mentors.

Fairly early there emerged among Egyptian and other Arab "Muslim Brethren" a second, more intellectual, tendency demanding a return to the spirit of Medina while acknowledging, at the same time, that the seventh century cannot be repeated in the twentieth. Apparently this second trend prevails against the first. However, this should not induce us to conclude wrongly, as some analysts have done, that the first trend does not exist at all and that it is an unjust misinterpretation of fundamentalist propaganda if their opponents "allege" that the "Muslim Brethren" want to lead us back into the seventh century. Many a "Muslim Brother" does indeed wish to bring this about and there is ample evidence to this in their copious literature.

Thus it is difficult to assess what the "Medinese Model" really amounts to. For the old guard of fundamentalist parties such as the "Muslim Brother-

hood" or Pakistan's "Islamic Party" *(Jamâ 'at-e Islâmiî)* Saudi Arabia is still the neatest re-enactment of the "Islamic order", with many shortcomings, no doubt, but nonetheless appreciable as an approximation. These fundamentalists, who are no longer revolutionaries, deem it permissible — and possible — to adopt all the sciences and modern techniques without doing harm to the substance of the "true Islamic way of life". For decades now they have preached that Muslims ought to outdo others in mastering the sciences while upholding (or rather re-enforcing) the social structure and the rythm of Medinese life of the seventh century. The resultant erosion of Wahhâbî austerity and the increasing sophistication of a Saudi society with few links — if any at all — to ancient Medina causes, however, considerable malaise and disorientation. It leads to outbursts of extremer forms of nativism such as that of the "Mahdi" and his followers who occupied the holy shrine in Mecca in 1978, or the Egyptian terrorist movement *takfîr wa hijra.*

Fundamentalists, therefore, are deeply divided over the means by which their "Medinese Model" is to be carried through. They all agree on the Prophet's Medina as the culmination of history, but they differ as to the extent to which history can be resuscitated. For many it is more the mental condition of the Prophet's Companions which they long to acquire and communicate to others, but for just as many it is the entire setting with its minutest details which they wish to recreate — except, perhaps, for the weapons. No matter how radically nativist the new and mostly anonymous "Islamic associations" in various Arab countries may be, none seems prepared to dispense with the Kalashnikov. It is only some of the Western converts to Muslim fundamentalism who stick to bow and arrow.

The third tendency is the *Islamist* one. Adherents of this school call their ideology *Islamism* as a means of distinguishing themselves unmistakably from all other *isms* (capitalism, communism, liberalism, nationalism, secularism, etc.). They reject the conservative leadership of the fundamentalist parties with their ties to Saudi Arabia. (Although the term *Islamism* is used by some of those too.) Most of these radical Islamists are Iran-inclined and refuse to recognize the Shî'ite communalist tinge in Khumaynî's teachings. The identification with Khumaynî's regime is often so complete that one can hardly go amiss in labelling this third tendency of fundamentalism as the Khumaynîst one, even though it has to be acknowledged that Shî'ite fundamentalism owes much to such Egyptian Sunni ideologues as Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) to Pakistan's Maudûdî (d. 1979). It is in this third tendency that the influence of European fascism is most pronounced. Fascist notions, though, already conditioned the emergence of the "Muslim Brotherhood" in Egypt. Discussing all the ramifications of this influence would, however, take us too far afield.

The important difference with the two first-mentioned tendencies is that Khumaynî and like-minded Islamists do not really share the notion

of a culmination of history in the past. For them the golden age is yet to come. They acknowledge the Prophet's Medina plus the short period of Caliph 'Alî's rule as the best we so far had, but they also believe that the same can be achieved again. Especially Khumaynî and his Shî'ites seem convinced that they can go beyond what was. "Islam has never had a chance", "the true manifestation of Islam has yet to come", "the full implementation of Islam lies still ahead of us", these are the slogans commonly heard among Islamists. A superficial observer is easily misled into perceiving flexibility and creativeness in this approach to the "Medinese Model", for if Islam has never come to fruition, then there can be little deadweight of history and scarcely any shackles of iron traditions. At first sight some of the Islamist rhetoric resembles the reasoning of the Sudanese "Republicans", especially since there is a further reduction of the golden age, to the virtual exclusion of the Caliphates of Abû Bakr and 'Umar, not to speak of 'Uthmân.

Only the Indian Barkat-Allâh and, picking up from him, the Egyptian 'Alî 'Abd al-Râziq, in their books written in 1924 and 1926 respectively, came still closer to Mahmûd Muhammed Tâhâ's limitation of the model to the Prohpet's life. For them none of the four Caliphs was anymore part of religion, they viewed the entire "right guided Câliphate" as secular history. But they failed to arrive at a clear distinction between the essential (*uṣûl* — Mecca) and the non-essential (*furû'* — Medina). Moreover, unlike Mahmûd Muhammad Tâhâ, they did not initiate a reform movement, but remained more or less isolated intellectuals. To the best one can speak of their having given rise to a school of thought.

In the final analysis both, *al-ikhwân al-muslimûn* (Islamists) and *al-ikhwân al-jumhûriyûn* (Republicans), hold that the full realization of Islam is a matter of the future, but whereas Mahmûd M. Tâhâ has clearly come to terms with Medina, Khumaynî and his ideologues apparently have not. The dominant Islamist position is one of partly going back to patterns of the past, and partly one of 'Islamizing' elements of the new that suit their requirements by declaring them as Medinese — even though there may be no relationship whatsoever. Most of all, however, Medinese standards allow them to reject what disturbs them or hampers them politically. For the Islamists Medina is not so much something constructive to be emulated as it is a yardstick by which to reject. The "Medinese mood" of the Islamists is basically more a negative than a positive one. Here Medina mostly serves as a model for what "true Islam" is not rather than for what it is.

Maudûdî and Khumaynî are probably the thinkers who have been most explicit in stating what that Medinese Islam is that is yet to unfold. It is striking to see that the flexibility which they have theoretically won by severely reducing the golden age to a very brief span of time (when much could simply not happen) is not put to much use. On the contrary, the Islam of the future which they chisel out of this raw material bears neither a primordial nor a

futuristic look. It is, first and foremost, a selective representation of medieval aspects. Particularly with regard to the social order their vision is starkly conservative. It is in the power structure that they are innovative, availing themselves of the experiences of totalitarian political parties of the twentieth century by legitimising these as seventh century religion.

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