

RESUME

Born in 1968, in Istanbul, and graduated from the sociology department at Bosphorus University, he pursued his studies for MA and PhD degrees in Philosophy and Religion, and he also studied political sciences. His range of interests, not being limited to philosophy, sociology and political sciences, stretched to such fields of positive sciences as physics and biology, and he produced works on the said disciplines as well. In all these scientific treatises, dealing in widely differing subjects, his focus point has always been religion. Among his works are; *Quran Unchallengeable Miracle*; *The Big Bang, Philosophy and God*; *Evolution, Philosophy and God*; *Modern Science, Philosophy and God*; *Quantum Theory, Philosophy and God*.

METHOD OF THE QURANIC ISLAM

The world at large is debating at present how to conceive Islam. The recent developments that have paved the way to modernization and urbanization, the eased pressure exerted by traditional religious authorities on the general public and the rapid globalization process of the means of communication like television and internet have had important effects on the current debates about Islam and its expansion over a wide area of the globe.

It is observed that a Quran-centered concept of Islam is gaining ground and opinions not based on the Quran are henceforth discredited. Most of the viewpoints used to be grounded on hadiths, Sunni and Shiite convictions and other persuasions traditionally adopted as Islamic creeds or practices have been abandoned by a wide mass of people. Considering that this revision of the practiced Islam is made under the authority of the Quran in total disregard of the hadiths and sectarian concerns, we have thought it convenient to style it “Quranic Islam.”

METHOD IN UNDERSTANDING RELIGION

A religious conception devoid of a method and based on pragmatic approach is certainly not sound. What must be done is to lay down the fundamental principles and proceed on to individual issues, since otherwise religion will be exposed to subjective interpretations and conventional practices. Furthermore, without such method, individual cases will run the risk of being contradictory.

Once we set the ball rolling the first question that crops up in our mind should be ‘What is Islam?’ which, in turn, leads to the question: “What is the source of Islam?” This is the essence of the matter, since the answer we shall provide for this question will clarify all other related queries. Unless this question is answered, a person seeking answer for the religious issues that puzzle him, will fail to see his way clearly. The

traditionalist sectarian Islamist will answer this question: “The sources of Islam are the conclusions reached by the sectarian imams who based their research on the Quran and the Hadiths.”

According to this view an individual is not permitted to formulate a judgement basing directly on the Quran or the hadiths. He has to abide by the established view and rules of the sectarian imams. The latter sees no inconvenience in creating a frame of reference of their own, outside the Quran and the hadiths basing on canonical jurisprudence (ijtihad) and analogy “kīyas”. The followers of the imams abide by

- (1) the Quranic verses approved by the sectarian imams,
- (2) the hadiths approved by the sectarian imams,
- (3) the jurisprudence and analogy of the sectarian imams.

For instance, if the sectarian imam is of the opinion that a given verse of the Quran – like in the case of the stoning to death of the adulteress – has been abrogated, that verse is disregarded henceforward. Or else, the sectarian imam may, basing on one hadith, arrive at a decision that a man’s calf may be exposed to the view, while he may not approve it basing on another hadith. While the Sunnis follow the dead imams, the Shiites follow the sayings of a Shiite a living scholar who follows the 12 dead imams. The divine inspiration received by the 12 imams is as a reliable source of religion as the revelation to the prophet. The followers of the sects abide by the Quran and the hadiths if approved by the sectarian imams. We must remember that the number of so-called hadiths is much more numerous than the number of the Quranic verses and that the considered opinion of the sectarian imam is more characteristic with reference to the selection and interpretation of the hadiths. If one takes into account the numerical preponderance of the hadiths and the frequent contradictoriness of the Quranic verses and the hadiths as well as the inconsistency of the latter among themselves one cannot avoid the emergence of sects as source of religion. Individuals who are confused with contradictory hadiths have no choice other than opting for a particular sect of a certain tradition. Here comes the issue of the role of the hadiths in Islam. If one comes to the conclusion that the hadiths have no authority in Islam, this invented source of practiced religion will dry up and consequently the sectarian views based on this source will lose their validity.

Once the authority of the hadiths collapses, we shall have before us the Quran as unique lawful authority. People are puzzled with regard to questions not mentioned in the Quran. The sects have ventured to make authoritative statements as to the meritoriousness of stepping in the bathroom with the right foot rather than with the left or the manner of eating one's food. A person who cannot come across such details in the Quran may be puzzled not to find them. The Quran states that whatever is not mentioned in the Quran have been left to the discretion of the individual (5 The Feast, 101). Individual will thus face the bare reality that many acts to which the sectarian imams have attributed religious connotation are in actual fact have nothing to do with religion. To step in the bathroom with the left foot first, to eat food with the hand, man's not wearing golden ring and the segregation of women have nothing to do with Islam. Such false traditions have originated from misinterpretations of the hadiths and of the invented hadiths. A person who has adopted the Quran as the sole authority will not have to dally with invented ways of behavior not just because they are incompatible with the modern lifestyle but because they are not contained in the Quran.

The method in question is the adoption of fundamental principles on which the individual will base all religious issues according only to the dictates of the Quran. This approach may seem easy of practice; what is difficult though is the abolition of preconceived ideas. Many people whose behavior is based on *a priori* acceptance of certain established ways of behavior are puzzled when they cannot find them in the Quran and reach the conclusion that the Quran is not complete, and, consequently must be complemented by the hadiths and sectarian interpretations. What the individual should do is to try to understand religion with all one's due sincerity and adjust our conception of religion accordingly. We cannot find out truth so long as we adopt as criteria the inculcated contents of our minds. The sincere initiation into the mystery might be the following question we would put to ourselves: "Does the religion propounded by God corresponds to my own conception of it?" This will pave the way to a differentiation between the revealed religion of God and the religion invented by sectarians and inculcated in our minds through inherited traditions.

One of the wrong impressions about the Quranic Islam under which the public is laboring is that the religion is being adjusted to the prevailing tendencies of the modern world and globalization. The outstanding feature of the Quranic Islam is the emphasis it makes on the exclusive authority of the Quran and its refusal of the authority of the sectarian imams, heads of religious orders etc. Otherwise, if a religion were to be made up to fit the requirements of modernization and globalization, the values of judgement of modernity and globalization would be taken for a basis on which God's authority (expressed in the Quran) would be appraised. The Sunni and Shii approaches blended God's authority with Arabic and Persian traditions thus mixing up the divine with the human. In differentiating between what is divine and what is human one must be careful not to interpolate new human elements to what has been revealed. The process of modernization and globalization gathered momentum thanks to western civilization dominated by positivism. A religion that would fit in the requirements of modernization and globalization would be a hybrid combination of the revealed religion with the values of western civilization. For instance, freedom in sexual relations in the west has paved the way to a display of tolerance for perversities and homosexuality, now gaining ground the world over. If we strive to fit Islam in this view of life we cannot avoid committing the error of mixing it with practices outside the religion.

The implacable enemy of religion is the "dominant value judgments". We must remember the war waged against the Prophet was for sticking to the old values with a view to preserving the established order. The values transmitted over from their ancestors provided them the power they needed to protect their idols. The war waged now against the Quranic Islam is for the preservation of such "dominant value judgements" and the historical sovereignty of the Sunni and Shii concepts are presented as an evidence. They rely on the power of dominant values rather than the power of the methods that the said sects have adopted in conceiving Islam. If religion is made up to fit in with the values of modernization and globalization, the old dominant values are superseded by new dominant values. While the former dominant values rely on historicity, the values of modernization and globalization rely

on the values of the welfare society, and of the civilization that has brought about the modernization and globalization.

Proponents of the transmitted value judgements mix up reality with what they have inherited from their ancestors. Modernization and globalization mix up the latest developments with truth and assuming that what has been achieved last is the ultimate truth, they deprecate the former state, while the “new” is considered a “relative truth” within the historical framework. The Quran, on the other hand, derives its power from revelation of God and bases its reality on the ontology it establishes. According to this ontology God is the Creator of everything, the omniscient and omnipotent Being. Given its infallible origin in God, it is the only reliable authority invulnerable. The idolaters that had raised arms against the Prophet, those who took sectarian imams for religious references next to God and those who have tried to combine Islam with the value judgements of modernization and globalization and attempted to make a new religion have mixed up religious authority with what is human, denying thus the fact that God has the exclusivity of religion.

What we are trying to get at here is the denial of extra-divine authorities while establishing the authority of God. In our daily life discretionary judgments of extra-divine authorities and the values that have received general acceptance which do not conflict with religious principles may, of course, be acknowledged.” For instance there is no inconvenience in wearing a headgear in the fashion of idolaters, the segregation of men and women like in the Sunni sect or wearing jeans, a consequence of globalization. What is dangerous is attribution of religious character to them.

In certain parts of the world traditions are mixed up with religion, while in others the values consequent to globalization and modernization are blended into a whole. The Arabs in Saudi Arabia are more susceptible to the first danger while the Muslims in United States are exposed to the danger that the second alternative presents. Although this cannot be hypothesized, a generalization may be permitted.

All these considerations point to one incontestable truth: the adoption without reservation of the method of Quranic

Islam. The slightest reservation may end up with concoction of an invented religion; one part 1% of the Quran and one part 99% of other elements or vice versa. What is not indicated in the Quran either as duties or prohibitions shall be removed outside religious considerations; however, actions not coming within the purview of religion can be accepted if they do not clash with the provisions of the Quran. For instance one may choose to opt for segregation of women on condition that he does not attribute it a religious character. Moreover, Muslims may well carry on their customs and traditions so long they do not assign to them a religious connotation. Celebrations on the occasion of the termination of the fasting month Ramadan or the feast of sacrifice may be carried on without however attaching them a religious significance. One must take into consideration the fact that the civilization of Islam amassed a great number of customs, traditions and cultural elements in various domains in its 1400 years of history. The Quranic Islam does not deny this fact; what it stands against is the attribution of religious connotation to them. Traditions in which history, arts and culture find a home are surely commendable; this heritage can be preserved. Yet, adulteration of religion with traditions would be a disaster. Categorical separation of these two different domains is absolutely necessary.

One of the greatest calumny heaped on the Quranic Islam is the alleged denial of the Prophet or parsimony in showing him due respect. The Quran has praised him and people heard the Quran for the first time from his mouth. Therefore, the Quranic Islam concept is deeply attached to him. A Muslim who does not love him is unthinkable. The Quranic Islam asserts that Muhammad communicated what was revealed to him as the only source of religion and that he mentioned no other source nor made any other bequest. The Quranic Islam maintains that the Prophet had not dictated any hadith as source of religion as his banning of such an attempt evidences. It holds that the hadiths have come about as a result of slanders and aspersions, misinterpretations and mixing up of his ways (like winding a turban or eating dates) with religious injunctions. It affirms that denial of hadiths as religious dictates will safeguard the Prophet's memory. In brief, the Quranic Islam lends no authority to the hadiths, in conformity with the will of the Prophet, not against him.

The Quranic Islam removes outside the religious framework a good many cultural traits and traditions, thus facilitating the adaptation of the Muslim population to the global rules of conduct. A Muslim may thus wear a kimono, if he/she so chooses or jeans, he/she may eat mussels, shrimps or study in mixed educational establishments. Divesting man's behavior of religious connotations does not make him less religious. A Muslim well knows that God is omniscient; he frequently remembers Him and never forgets him. What was foreign to religion having been removed, man feels better oriented to the essence of religion. A Muslim even though in domains remaining outside the confines of religion, observes religious principles like justice, honesty, and reliability. The Quranic Islam is not a movement whose aim is to make religion easy. However, as the Quran has left many actions to the discretion of man and considering that the sects have interpolated unnecessary elements into Islam, the Quranic Islam has certainly simplified many things. The aim has not been a simplification of the revealed religion but the application of the method did facilitate certain things. If people attempt at Islamizing the globalized values in total disregard of the Quran, correction of the outcome may render Islam more difficult. The Quranic Islam movement is, in a sense anti-reformist in that it stands against reforms made in the revealed religion by the Omayyads and the Abbassids. Therefore it should be interpreted as a return to the essence. This conception explains methodically the fact that the existing problems in the world of Islam do not stem from Islam but from the Muslims themselves and shows concretely the difference between Islam as such and the conception of Islam by the Muslims.

The lack of a method will end up by attribution of religious character to traditions, communal acceptances and desires and globalized values. This is making religion out of human elements. To adopt the Quran as the unique source of religion denying authority to all other sources, to make religion the exclusive revelation of God is absolutely necessary for a religion where the sole sovereign is God.