

“THE PATH TOWARDS A TRULY HOLISTIC AND COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL, THE SOCIETY AND THE NATION IN THIS AGE OF TURBULENCE”*

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Introduction

Looking at the state of the world and the environment today, we recall what Alan Greenspan, the former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board of U.S.A. wrote in 2007, namely *The Age of Turbulence: Adventures in a New World* (Penguin Books 2007). Although his focus was on the financial tumult of recent times, particularly in the U.S.A., the title of his work is an apt description of the current state of economic and financial turmoil, the political uncertainties, social upheavals, moral degeneration and potential environmental catastrophes. In view of these highly challenging global scenarios, a fundamental review of the well-established conventional systems have to be undertaken by Muslim leaders, intellectuals and scholars if the Muslim world and communities are not to remain hostage to the provenly corrupt and unreliable internal and external structures.

The modern concept of development, as an important component of the project of secular modernity and the worldview of materialistic progress, has been subjected to intense intellectual and political debates over the last five decades, not only because it is open to a variety of ideological interpretations, but also because its implementation in the Third World or the South has failed to deliver the promises of prosperity, equity, socioeconomic justice and freedom to the masses. Evidences of widening inequalities within the economically developing countries and the alarming ecological crisis of planet earth point undoubtedly to serious faults in modern man’s economic and technological exploitation of natural and human resources. If

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one were to take into consideration the recent symptoms of dangerous systemic breakdown of Western economic and financial systems as well as the moral decay of modern culture, one wonders how much longer should the Third World remain subservient to the dominant paradigm of Godless modernity and unethical progress.

In the Muslim world too, it is now evident that nations which followed the path of secular development or the unjust models of economic growth have to contend with strong opposition from the religious-oriented movements and mounting resistance from the educated, the alienated, the oppressed and the impoverished groups of people. The current uprising or social unrest brewing in a number of Middle Eastern societies today has its roots in long-standing economic, social and political discontent which was suppressed by the greedy and autocratic leaders whose strong grip on the political system was, nonetheless, endorsed and sustained by the Western promoters of democracy and human rights themselves. It seems that the intelligent and the educated Arab youths and intelligentsia could no longer bear the hypocrisy of national leaders and the hypocrisy of international forces of global hegemony. The way forward can no longer be the destructive path of soul-denying development, but the less trodden path of holistic material-spiritual development of man, society, culture and state.

The Road of Development Travelled So Far

In the post-World War 2 period until early 1970s, the Western concept of development emphasized the meaning of development in terms of economic growth or economic development which was defined as a “process whereby the real per capita income of a country increases over a long period of time while simultaneously poverty is reduced and the inequality in society is generally diminished” (John Martinussen, n.d). Although one of the strategies adopted by the World Bank and developing economies in the 1980s was described as “redistribution with growth”, “basic needs” or “growth with equity”, the end seemed to be increase in per capita income and improvement in the material living standards. Faced with a strong critique from the neo-Marxist school of thought and disputed by prominent economists

such as Amartya Sen, Paul Streeten and Mahbubul Haq, the emphasis on achieving human welfare, involving “the enlargement of all human choices – whether economic, social, cultural, or economic” became the overall objective. For Sen, the most important goal of development is human freedom. For him economic development results in a paradox:

We live in a world of unprecedented opulence, of a kind that would have been hard even to imagine a century or two ago... And yet we also live in a world with remarkable deprivation, destitution and oppression. There are many new problems as well as old ones, including the persistence of poverty and unfulfilled elementary needs, occurrence of famines and widespread hunger, violation of elementary political freedoms as well as basic liberties, extensive neglect of the interests and agency of women, and worsening threats to our environment and to the sustainability of our economic and social lives. (C.T. Kurien, 2000)

Thus “human development” became a more universally acceptable discourse, leading to the UNDP *Human Development Report* whose architect and founder was Mahbubul Haq and was launched in 1990. The yearly *Reports* focus on people as “the real wealth of a nation” and their empowerment as participants in the development process. The reports include the Human Development Index (HDI) and cover diverse themes, such as the environment, gender, poverty, globalization, cultural liberties and migration, etc. (Sabina Alkire, 2010). Other dimensions and aspects were added later, “and the name of the concept itself was changed from ‘human development’ to ‘sustainable human development’ in order to highlight the importance of sustaining all forms of capital and resources – physical, human, financial, and environmental – as a precondition for meeting the needs also of future generations” (Martinussen, n.d.).

The special emphasis championed by the environmentalists and ecologists in the West has now given prominence to the global concern and discourse on “sustainable development” of the natural resources in light of the current issue of climate change and ecological degradation as a result of toxic emissions into the air, water and land. The fears of the environmentalists and ecological scientists in Western countries are to be taken seriously because the consequences of unethical exploitation of natural resources and the expansionist nature of the market economy can only lead to global and planetary catastrophe in the not too distant future. One

such scientist is Lester W. Milbrath of the State University of New York, whose book entitled *Envisioning a Sustainable Society: Learning our Way out* (1989) is worth rereading.

His well-argued and well-documented thesis is that the present trajectory of secular modern society is not sustainable (1989; xi) He says that modern society has learned too well how to dominate and if it fails to “learn how to control our exuberance... [then] our ‘success’ will lead to our extinction” (1980, 3). He concludes that “we have built a society, and economic system, that cannot sustain its trajectory” (1989, 4). He says further:

Devastation from climate change will be exacerbated by other global biospheric effects: loss of the ozone layer, acid rain, and poisonous red tides of algae, toxic pollution of soils, water, and air, species extinction. Nature may have many additional unpleasant surprises in store for us. When these effects are combined with resource shortages, we may well wonder how we can continue to support even the 5 billion people already living, much less the additional billions that are destined to arrive (even if we strive vigorously to limit population growth).

Today our power to dominate and injure nature is awesome. We can move mountains, fly to the moon, obliterate cities, slash down jungles, poison large water bodies, and create new species. Our ability to control the power we have gained is not well-developed. The industrial disasters at Bhopal and Chernobyl signal that we can expect many more such disasters. A nuclear war followed by a nuclear winter could obliterate nearly all life from planet earth.

The people living 100 years ago could hardly have imagined the changes that this brief span of time would bring. Nearly everyone today expects the pace of change to accelerate. If nanotechnologies, which I discuss in Chapter 12, were developed, they would accelerate our thrust for power and change 1,000 times. We are told that this is progress and that is good. Labeling an activity as progress implies that we know where we are going and that we can measure our speed on getting there. Actually, we do not know where we are going and we do not know we wish to go. *Progress* is a meaningless term without this knowledge. We also forget to ask, “Can we sustain what we are building?” (1994, 4-5)

Lester Milbrath also discusses what he considers as the “Technological Imperialism of the Developed Countries”, “The Imperialism of Large Technology-Based Systems” and “Structural

Wastefulness" (1989, 225-260) and offers examples of structures and technology that enhance sustainability. The reality is that we "humans live in one biosphere but our world is fragmented" and the policies of the rich and powerful nations are not geared to help sincerely the poor and technologically underdeveloped societies and countries of the south. (See Paul Krugman, "Betraying the planet". *New York Times*, 30 June 2009; Bunn Nagara "Global Emperors Have No Clothes," *Sunday Star*, 12 July 2009, and Martin Khor, "New gloomy findings on global warming", *The Star*, 16 March 2009). Recently Jacques Diou, the Director of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the U.N. revealed that, as a result of the current global financial crisis, the number of the hungry people in the world has reached a record 1.02 billion, an eleven percent increase compared to the figure of 915 millions in 2008. (*Mingguan Malaysia*, 21 June 2009).

Another important Western critique of development is Gilbert Rist who describes the concept of development as the morphing of a Western myth into a "global faith". In his *The History of Development from Western Origins to Global Faith* (1997). To him the "strength of 'development' discourse comes from its power to seduce, in every sense of the term: to charm, to please, to fascinate, to set dreaming, but also to abuse, to turn away from the truth, to deceive" (1997, 1).

We are aware that the development strategy of the United Nations has gone a step further in constructing the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by which countries agreed that between 1990 and 2015, they would "halve income poverty and hunger; achieve universal primacy education; promote gender equality; reduce under-five mortality by two-thirds, cut maternal mortality by three-quarters; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis; ensure environmental sustainability, and build a global partnership for development." (<http://www.undp.org>, accessed on 7 June 2009).

Gilbert Rist critiques the inadequacies of the definitions of development and considers it as "an element of the religion of modernity." and "a result of Western arrogance" (Gilbert Rist, 1997, 21). In his judgment, "development" is always presented as a solution, whereas in actual fact it is "a problem (as well as creating problems)" (1997, 46). The United Nations Conference on

Environment and Development (UNCED) has come up with several declarations since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the international conventions on climate change, on biodiversity, on the forest and Agenda 21 (for the twenty-first century) which consists of eight hundred pages and considered as the “bible of sustainable development” (1997, 188-190). He seriously doubts the success implementation of those grandiose plans and noble declarations because of the “deliberate ambiguity” in their interpretations and that the ultimate aim is still that of the economic growth which benefits the North more than the south (1997, 192-193).

The Millennium Development Goals too have their share of serious criticism. Samir Amin is critical of the MDG for several reasons. He sees the 2000 circumstances as one in which “the United States and its European and Japanese allies are now able to exert hegemony over a domesticated UN” and that the millennium goals were drafted by Ted Gordon, a well-known consultant for the CIA (Samir Amin, 2000: 1). As for the specific eight sets of goals, he agrees that each of them is commendable in itself, but the definition of each leaves much to be desired. We reproduce below some of his criticisms (Samir Amin, 2000: 2-3):

Goal 1: Reduce extreme poverty and hunger by half.

This is nothing but an empty incantation as long as the policies that generate poverty are not analyzed and denounced and alternatives proposed.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education.

UNESCO devoted itself to this goal beginning in 1960, hoping to achieve it in ten years. Progress was made during the two decades that followed, but ground has been lost since. The almost obvious relationship between this lost ground, the reduction in public expenditures, and the privatization of education is not examined in fact or in theory.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.

The equality in question is reduced to access to education and the empowerment is measured by the proportion of wage-earning women. The neoconservative Christian fundamentalists of the United States, Poland and elsewhere, the Muslims of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and other countries, and the

fundamentalist Hindus agree on eliminating any reference to the rights of women and the family. Without discussion, declarations on this question are only empty talk.

Goals 4, 5, and 6: *(Concerning health) reduce infant mortality by two-thirds and maternal mortality by three-fourths; stop the spread of pandemic diseases (AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis).*

The means implemented in these areas are assumed to be completely compatible with extreme privatization and total respect for the “intellectual property rights” of the transnational corporations and, curiously enough, are recommended in Goal 8 concerning the supposed partnership between North and South!

Goal 7: *Ensure environmental sustainability.*

A general principle is asserted (“to integrate the principles of sustainable development” into national and global policies), but no definite content is made explicit. Moreover, any mention of the refusal of the United States to promote conditions necessary for environmental protection (i.e., their rejection of the Kyoto Protocol) is carefully avoided.

It is presupposed, then, that the rationality of capitalist economic strategy is compatible with the requirements of “sustainable development.” That is obviously not the case since capitalist strategy is founded on the concept of the rapid discounting of economic time (with the timespan governing investment decisions never exceeding a few years at maximum), while the questions raised here relate to the long term. The specific goals are thus in fact reduced to nothing much: reduce by half the population having no access to clean water, improve living conditions in the slums—two ordinary goals of simple public health.

The criteria for measuring the results (CO₂ emissions, change in the ozone layer) undoubtedly make it possible to monitor the degradation of the environment, but certainly not to curb it. Note the strange timidity of the writers concerning biodiversity (there is no question of infringing on the greater rights of the transnational’s!): they propose only “to observe” the evolution of land areas protected from the destruction of biodiversity! But above all not to stop it!

Goal 8: *Develop a global partnership for development.*

The writers straightaway establish equivalence between this “partnership” and the principles of liberalism by declaring that the objective is to establish an open, multilateral commercial and financial system! The partnership thus becomes synonymous with submission to the demands of the imperialist powers. Progress in access to the market is measured by the share of exports in the GDP (an increase in this ratio is thus synonymous with progress regardless of the social price!), progress in the conditions of nondiscrimination by the reduction in subsidies.

To carry out this “liberal partnership” would require, in the end, nothing more than the fight against poverty (the only “social” goal allowed). To this is added, like hair in soup, “good governance,” a phrase favored by the U.S. establishment that is never defined and is taken up uncritically by the Europeans and the institutions of the global system (UN, World Bank, etc.).

The real goals behind the formulation of the MDG, according to Amin are the following:

1. *Extreme privatization, aimed at opening new fields for the expansion of capital.*
2. *The generalization of the private appropriation of agricultural land.*
3. *Commercial “opening” within a context of maximum deregulation.*
4. *The equally uncontrolled opening up of capital movement.*
5. *States are forbidden in principle from interfering in economic affairs.*

Another serious criticism of the MDG has to do with the methodology of gathering sufficient and reliable data on each of the goals, leading to “a worrying lack of scientifically valid data” because “often the subject matter is so immeasurable, or the measurements are so inadequate” (A. Attaran, 2005). Feminists have also advanced gender critiques of the MDG, calling it a “most distracting gimmick in that it has diverted the attention away from feminists main concerns” with the exclusion of the “goal of women’s sexual and reproductive rights” (Jamilah Ariffin, 2004). The 2010 HDI, however, has included new indices for the gender inequality index (GII) which is designed to measure maternal mortality rates, women’s representation in parliaments, and “the negative human development impact of deep social and economic disparities between men and women” (*Human Development Report 2010*: E-1-3)

The Zero Growth concept championed by Ken Meyercord in USA and his supporters outside of USA rejects the concept of “sustainable development” as an oxymoron. Ken Meyercord (www.zerogrowth.org.) says:

What do environmentalists, corporate heads, presidential hopefuls, and even the head of the Federal Reserve, have in common? They are all talking in terms of "sustainable development".

With such diverse voices singing in unison, one has to wonder if the phrase has any meaning. Can ecological economists wailing about the folly of unrestrained resource depletion and capitalist cheerleaders ballyhooing the booming economy possibly have the same thing in mind when they talk of sustainable development?

In fact, they can, but only because the phrase "sustainable development" is so amorphous it almost defies definition. The closest environmental lexicographers have come is, basically, "leaving something for future generations". Who can be opposed to that (at least openly)? Who is for "unsustainable development"? If there is no opposition, what use is the term?

In arguing for sustainable development ecologists offer the usual gloomy observations on dwindling resources, wasteful consumption, and expanding populations. Behind their arguments can be detected the conviction that development as we have known it over the last 100 years must be radically altered. But what "sustainable" alternatives do they, or can they, propose: conservation, recycling, renewable energy. These are all well and good, but are they "development"? In a world of finite resources supporting growing economies and populations aren't sustainability and development in contradistinction?

The Impending Demise of the Western Model and Paradigm of Development

In this era of economic turbulence and political uncertainties, coupled with the specter of environmental catastrophes and widespread social unrest, the current model of development – even after becoming more comprehensive in scope via the MDGs and HDIs – seriously lacks the spiritual and transcendental mechanisms to deal with the inward ailments of the human soul left unattended by the reigning paradigms of secular humanism and Godless modernization strategies. The inability to envision a holistic material-spiritual human growth and wellbeing is a direct consequence of a worldview grounded in the naturalistic ontology and positivistic

epistemology of modern science. It took the postmodernist philosophers of the late 20th century to unceremoniously deconstruct the worldly and power related underpinnings of modern Western science and technology to make many contemporary intellectuals more aware of the limits and dangers inherent in the ethnocentric or national biases of the modern constructs of knowledge and systems.

The Western social sciences from which the grand Western narrative of development or progress is constructed are even more value-loaded and problematic than the natural or hard sciences. Pulled in many different directions by the conflicting schools of thought and theoretical orientations of all shades and colors, the contemporary social sciences are not in a position to provide lasting and stable foundations for a more humane, peaceful and meaningful existence of human beings and societies in a highly pluralistic, mobile and globalised world.

Immanuel Wallerstein, the former president of the International Sociological Association (1994-1998), believes that Western social scientists “are in the midst of wandering through dark woods and have insufficient clarity about where we should be heading.” (1998: ix). The modern world-system according to him, “has entered into a terminal crisis and is unlikely to exist in fifty years...we do know that the period of transition will be a terrible time of troubles, since the stakes of the transition are so high, the outcome so uncertain...”(1998:1).

Questioning whether the world has really “progressed”, Wallerstein concludes that “the belief in certainties, a fundamental premise of modernity, is blinding and crippling”. He agrees with the critique of Ilya Prigogine, the Nobel laureate in chemistry, who maintains in his latest book Lafindescertitudes (The End of Certainty, 1997) that the universe is a highly complex system and that the human social systems are the most complex and “the hardest to analyze” (1998: 3). From these new views a “science of complexity” is emerging. There are many signs; he asserts that humanity has now “entered a time of troubles. The outcome is uncertain. We cannot be sure what kind of historical system will replace the one which we find ourselves. What we can know with certainty is that the very peculiar system in which we live, and in which the states have played a crucial role in supporting the processes of the endless accumulation of capital, can no longer continue to function” (1998: 75).

Wallerstein argues that the grave ecological catastrophes the world is in now—the greenhouse effect, depletion of the ozone layer, poisonous toxic waste in the water, the air and the earth, unpredictable global warming and climate change—are “directly the result of the fact that we live in a capitalist world-economy.”(1998: 82). In his view, the present historical system is in fact in terminal crisis.”(1998: 85). He argues for the creation of “not only a new social system, but new structures of knowledge, in which philosophy and sciences will no longer be divorced, and we shall return to the singular epistemology...prior to the creation of the capitalist world economy.”(1998: 86). He thinks it is possible and desirable to bring about in the twenty-first century, “the epistemological reunification of the so-called two cultures, that of science and the humanities; the organizational reunification and redivision of the social sciences, and the assumption by social science of centrality in the world of knowledge” (1998: 243).

The Integralist Vision and Social Philosophy of Pitirin Sorokin

Western social scientists and sociologists in particular, need to revisit the integralist visions of scholars and thinkers like Pitirim Sorokin (1884-1963) if they wish to reconstruct a more holistic discourse of human development which recognizes the existence and needs of the theocentric soul in addition to the temporal needs of the body. As a former president of a learned society, namely the American Sociological Association (1965) and founder of the department of sociology at Harvard University, Sorokin has been concerned with the “sensate society” of the modern era which is based upon the following vision of reality:

The sensate form of culture and society is based upon the ultimate principle that true reality and value are sensory and that beyond the reality and values which we can see, hear, smell, touch and taste there is no other reality and no real values.

The whole system of sensate culture represents an articulation and “materialization” of this ultimate principle in its science, and philosophy, its modicum of religion, its law and ethics, its economics and politics, its fine arts, and its social institutions. This basic principle becomes also the main

determinant of the dominant mentality, aspirations, and way of life of sensate society. Quite consistently, sensate culture makes the testimony of our senses the criterion of what is true and what is false. It intensely cultivates scientific knowledge of the physical and biological properties of sensory reality, which contributes little creative thought to the fields of supersensory religion and theology (1964:17-18).

Pitirim Sorokin's idea and alternative of "integral culture" and his integral theory of cognition and creativity which integrate the sensory, rational and supersensory-super rational dimensions of human life, one would submit, are more in harmony with the Islamic *Tawhid*-based worldview of man, society and holistic developments than the secular, empirical or rationalist perspectives in contemporary civilisation. A brief description of the intergralist alternative given by him is as follows.

Once in a while third basic type of culture and fine arts, and intermediary between the sensate and ideational, appears and blossoms for a comparatively short time. Its ultimate principle proclaims that the true reality-value is an Infinite Manifold which has supersensory, rational and sensory forms inseparable from one another. This type of culture can be called integral. All its compartments and its social life articulate this principle. It pays attention to the empirical as well as the super empirical aspects of the true reality-value. Science as well as philosophy and theology begin to blossom in it, and they harmoniously cooperate with one another. The subjects of its fine arts are partly supersensory and partly empirical, but only in the noblest and most sublime aspects of sensory reality. Its heroes are partly gods, partly heroic human beings at their best. It is an art intentionally blind to everything vulgar, debasing, and ugly in the empirical world of the senses. It ennobles the ignoble, beautifies the ugly, rejuvenates the old, and immortalises the mortal. Its style is partly symbolic and allegorical, partly realistic and naturalistic. Its emotional tone is serene, calm, and imperturbable. The artist here is merely *primus inter pares* of the community of which he is a member (1964: 22).

In Sorokin's study of some modern Western social philosophies, he states that most of the social philosophers (Danilevsky, Spengler, Toynbee, Schubart, and Berdyaev) prophesy that the coming civilisation or cultural prototype which will replace the sensate cultural model will be

Religiously-Ideational, or Integral, “as a synthesis of the Aesthetic-Theoretic (Northrop)” (1963: 298). To these writers, the hitherto dominant “positivistic” and “empiricistic” methods of understanding social phenomena are utterly inadequate.

The Islamic Vision and Paradigm of Real Human Well-being (AL-FALAAH)

1. Two Models of Human Development from the Qur’an

﴿وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ
وَحَفَفْنَاهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زُرْعًا﴾

And present to them an example of two men: We granted to one of them two gardens of grapevines, and We bordered them with palm trees and placed between them [fields of] crops.

﴿كُلَّتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ ءَاتَتْ أُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِم مِّنْهُ شَيْئًا وَفَجَّرْنَا خِلَالَهُمَا نَهْرًا
﴾

Each of the two gardens produced its fruit and did not fall short thereof in anything. And We caused to gush forth within them a river.

﴿وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ
مِنْكَ مَالًا وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا﴾

And he had fruit, so he said to his companion while he was conversing with him, "I am greater than you in wealth and mightier in [numbers of] men."

وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَنْ تَبِيدَ
هَذِهِ أَبَدًا ﴿٣٥﴾

And he entered his garden while he was unjust to himself. He said, "I do not think that this will perish - ever.

وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِنْ رُودِدْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا
﴿٣٦﴾

And I do not think the Hour will occur. And even if I should be brought back to my Lord, I will surely find better than this as a return."

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ
ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّكَ رَجُلًا ﴿٣٧﴾

His companion said to him while he was conversing with him, "Have you disbelieved in He who created you from dust and then from a sperm-drop and then proportioned you [as] a man?"

لَكِنَّا هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ﴿٣٨﴾

But as for me, He is Allah , my Lord, and I do not associate with my Lord anyone.

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ
إِنْ تَرَىٰ أَنَا أَقَلَّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا ﴿٣٩﴾

And why did you, when you entered your garden, not say, 'What Allah willed [has occurred]; there is no power except in Allah'? Although you see me less than you in wealth and children,

فَعَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ
فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا ﴿٤٠﴾

It may be that my Lord will give me [something] better than your garden and will send upon it a calamity from the sky, and it will become a smooth, dusty ground,

أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَأْوَاهَا غُورًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا ﴿٤١﴾

Or its water will become sunken [into the earth], so you would never be able to seek it."

وَأَحِيطَ بِثَمَرِهِ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ
عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ﴿٤٢﴾

And his fruits were encompassed [by ruin], so he began to turn his hands about [in dismay] over what he had spent on it, while it had collapsed upon its trellises, and said, "Oh, I wish I had not associated with my Lord anyone."

وَلَمْ تَكُن لَّهُ فِئَةٌ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنتَصِرًا ﴿٤٣﴾

And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah , nor could he defend himself.

هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا ﴿٤٤﴾

There the authority is [completely] for Allah , the Truth. He is best in reward and best in outcome.

وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيْحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا ﴿٤٥﴾

And present to them the example of the life of this world, [its being] like rain which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it and [then] it becomes dry remnants, scattered by the winds. And Allah is ever, over all things, Perfect in Ability.

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِندَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا ﴿٤٦﴾

Wealth and children are [but] adornment of the worldly life. But the enduring good deeds are better to your Lord for reward and better for [one's] hope.

(Surah Al-Kahf: 32-46)

2. Islamic Perspectives on Development

In the light of the world-threatening multiple but interrelated global crises affecting all countries of the world, in particular the poor and weak states as well as Muslim countries, it is imperative that the Islamic alternative paradigm of *al-Falaah* (wellbeing in this world and wellbeing in the Hereafter) be studied, understood, disseminated and finally implemented, first in Muslim countries and later as a model to be emulated by other communities across the globe.

Realizing the shortcomings and failures of the dominant secular paradigms of the dominant secular paradigms of development, either in economics, politics, culture or education, Muslim scholars and intellectuals have come up with the alternative models of “development.” The writings of scholars such as Khurshid Ahmad (1979, 1980), Nejatullah Siddiqi (1972), Aidit Ghazali (1990), Umer Chapra (1993) Ataul Huq (1997, 2006), Muhammad Shukri Salleh (1987, 1995, 2009), Abulhassan M. Sadeq (2006) are some of the examples of the attempt by Muslim scholars known to the present author who disagree with both the Liberal Capitalist as well as the Socialist-Marxist models of “development”. One of the latest writings on the Islamic perspective of development that one would strongly recommend is by Umer Chapra with the title *The Islamic Vision of Development in the Light of the Maqaasid al- Sharii`ah*(2008). One of the higher objectives of the Divine code of life is the preservation of faith in and servitude to the Creator, Sustainer and Master of mankind. Thus no development efforts of mankind can be considered truly just, holistic and comprehensive if they do not address the moral, spiritual and transcendental aspects and needs of human beings and societies.

In the Tawhidic worldview of Islam, human beings as Allah’s obedient servants and vicegerents, are obliged to strive with all the God-given resources in themselves and in the universe, for the attainment of goodness and wellbeing in this world and, at the same time – and more importantly – goodness and wellbeing in the Hereafter (Q. 2: 201; 7: 156). The concept of *al-Falaah* (an Arabic word which means success, gain, prosperity, happy state) is used by Muslim scholars to underscore the material-spiritual unity of man, of society, of culture and of state

and their common goal of material-spiritual fulfillment in the service of God (Q. 23: 1-8; 3: 200; 5: 35,90,100; 22: 77; 62: 10).

The final destination being in the Hereafter, with the pleasure of Allah (S.W.T.) being the ultimate goal, human development in all its material-spiritual dimensions must lead and be oriented to the ultimate goal. Failure to attain the vision of *al-Falaah* or the ultimate goal in the Hereafter could lead to the real loss (*al-Khusraan*) and earning, instead, the displeasure or wrath of Allah (S.W.T.) (Q. 2: 27, 64, 121; 3: 149; 5: 21, 30, 53; 10: 95; 23: 34; 29: 52). This condition or state of affairs cannot be considered as human development in the truly holistic meaning of the word, however great is the quantitative or material attainment or technological advancement of a given group, community or society.

The Disease of Corruption and Abuse of Power

One of the major causes of the ongoing uprising and unrest in the Middle East today is entrenched political and economic corruption in the power structure and social system of several nation states. The pretensions and deception of autocratic regimes which have been enriching the cronies and psychopants of power at the expense of the people and the country have been exposed, and the need for political and moral reform of the corrupt system is indeed urgent. With the culture of corruption and power abuse being widespread in many parts of the Muslim world, it is not strange that massive “leakages” and partial siphoning of public funds have become commonplace practice or institutionalised in the midst of economic development or growth. The twin diseases of corruption and abuse of power pose a formidable challenge to concerned Muslim intellectuals and God-fearing leaders as they are major vices or evil deeds which should never be committed by people in authority or entrusted to govern a country.

The 2010 Global Corruption Barometer reports the following:

Corruption has increased over the last three years, say six out of 10 people around the world. One in four people report paying bribes in the last year. The 2010 Barometer captures the experiences and views of more than 91,500 people in 86 countries and territories, making it the only world-wide public opinion survey on corruption.

Views on corruption were most negative in Western Europe and North America, where 73 per cent and 67 per cent of people respectively thought corruption had increased over the last three years

In the past 12 months one in four people reported paying a bribe to one of nine institutions and services, from health to education to tax authorities. The police are cited as being the most frequent recipient of bribes, according to those surveyed. About 30 per cent of those who had contact with the police reported having paid a bribe.

The 2010 Barometer reports that significant increases in petty bribery since 2006 has occurred in more than 20 countries, i.e. in Chile, Colombia, Kenya, FYR Macedonia, Nigeria, Poland, Russia, Senegal and Thailand. It finds that “more than one in two people in Sub-Saharan Africa reported paying a bribe - more than anywhere else in the world.” It is reported that “poorer people are twice as likely to pay bribes for basic services, such as education, than wealthier people. A third of all people under the age of 30 reported paying a bribe in the past 12 months, compared to less than one in five people aged 51 years and over.”

It is most worrying to know that “bribes to the police have almost doubled since 2006, and more people report paying bribes to the judiciary and for registry and permit services than five years ago. Even more disturbing is the revelation that few people trust their governments or politicians.” Eight out of 10 say political parties are corrupt or extremely corrupt, while half the people questioned say their government's action to stop corruption is ineffective.” (www.transparency.org/11April2010)

While the Barometer is based on a public opinion survey, the *Corruption Perception Index* (CPI) reflects the perception of experts and informed observers on corruption in the public sector and politics. The 2010 *Corruption Perception Index* shows that of the top 20 countries perceived to be least corrupt, only one Muslim country, Qatar, made it to number 19 with 7.7 score. From the list of the nine most corrupt countries with scores of 1.8 to 1.1, only one country, Myanmar, is a non-Muslim country with a score of 1.4. The rest are Muslim countries, namely Burundi (1.8 at no.170), Chad (1.7 at no. 171), Sudan (1.6 at no. 172), Turkmenistan (1.6 at no. 172), Uzbekistan (1.6 at no. 172), Iraq (1.5 at no. 175), Afghanistan (1.4 at no. 176) and Somalia, the

lowest (1.1 at no. 178). China with 3.5 stands at no.78, India with 3.5 stands at no. 87, while Russia with 2.1 stands at no. 154. The Muslim countries that achieved better rankings than the majority of Muslim countries are U.A.E with 6.3 at no. 28, Brunei with 5.5 at no. 38, Oman with 5.3 at no. 41, Bahrain with 4.9 at no. 48, and Jordan with 4.7 at no. 50, and Malaysia with 4.4 at no. 56. Another group of Muslim countries perceived to be among the low achievers are Egypt (3.1 at no. 98), Indonesia (2.8 at no. 110), Bangladesh (2.4 at no. 134), Pakistan (2.3 at no. 143), and Iran (2.2 at no. 146) (www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2010/results. Acc. 11 April 2011).

Another alarming finding of Transparency International *Global Corruption Barometer 2010* is that almost all countries in the world experienced an increase in the world perception of corruption. With many Muslim countries perceived to be among the most corrupt in current international ranking, it is imperative that all Muslim governments pay serious and sincere attention to the elimination of the “cancer” that eventually destroys the infrastructures of human or sustainable development efforts.

The External and Internal Reform of Muslim Societies and Governments

In view of the seriousness of the political, economic, social and moral crises of contemporary Muslim societies and governments, the reform agenda has to address the lack of reliable systems and efficient institutions which guarantee the implementation of a just, transparent and people-oriented government which protect the people from being exploited by the leaders and power holders, and at the same time promote the welfare and comprehensive wellbeing of the people and the environment. As the world changes from the era of plenty to the era of scarcities and turmoil, the principles of justice and compassion, the separation of powers and the existence of a truly independent judiciary operating in a democratic political and social systems with priority given to accountability to God and to the people are urgently needed to provide the stable pillars of sound political, economic, social, educational and cultural developments of Muslim societies.

Leadership of the nation and the community has to be in the hands of men and women of high integrity who work not for self-glory or vested interests but for the pleasure of the Lord of the universe and the welfare of the people. The economic system has to be built on the pillars of social justice, equitable distribution, cooperation, moderation, preservation of public interest above individual or group interests and gratefulness to the Almighty God for all the resources He has abundantly bestowed upon the people and the country. A vigilant, independent, socially responsible and ethical media is necessary to become the watchdog of a morally-oriented society. The existence of an educated and enlightened civil society is given adequate public space to speak on behalf of the people or to defend the legitimate interests and rights of minority groups. An independent and well-informed religious scholars group or associations together with independent academiawhich seek intellectual and spiritual excellence protects the voice of conscience, truth and constructive criticism when governments or vested interest groups appear to stray away from the path of people’s welfare and the common good.

The educational system, based on the worldview of Tawhid, hasto implement the integration of modern knowledge with spiritual-ethical values, of reason with revelation, and of science and religion, so as not to become subservient to the dictates of the heartless market or neo-liberaleconomics which lead to the commercialization of higher education and the ethical erosion of the professionals, bureaucrats, business and the power elites. Bearing in mind the critical analysis of Harry Lewis, a long-time former dean of Harvard College in his book, *Excellence Without A Soul: How A Great University Forgot Education* (2006), the institutions of higher learning in Muslim countries should not be blind worshippers of foreign “idols”or they too would lose their souls.

In the fight against the cancer of corruption and abuse of power, the establishment of anti-corruption agencies which are independent of political or executive influence and works professionally without fear or favour can no longer be delayed. These institutions and law enforcement bodies have to be led by leaders well-known for their integrity, competency and dignity. A culture of public and private integrity based on the foundations of *`ilm*, *imaan*, *`adl*, *amaanah*, *`ubuudiyah*, *taqwaa*, *ihsaan* and ummatic responsibility – all of which are first

nurtured in the family and educational institutions, and then infused into the civil service right up to the thrones of political power – would serve as a strong impregnable fortress against the onslaught of worldly temptations of one sort or the other, which have managed to topple powerful and affluent dictators, presidents, prime ministers, emperors and kings.

People in leadership positions must be mindful and vigilant against the spread of the diseases of the spiritual heart, the *qalb*, which includes hypocrisy, jealousy, nepotism, ostentation, greed, arrogance, pride, self-admiration, passion for and delusions of worldly power, wealth, fame, influence, and *hubb al-dunya* (love of the pleasures of the world). These are the fertile unseen breeding grounds for the viruses of corruption and abuse of power to grow and spread within the human and social systems. The continuous *tazkiyat al-nafs* (cleansing or purification of the soul) of the leaders, as the most fundamental internal reform process, has to go hand in hand with the vigorous comprehensive external and structural reforms to ensure that Muslim societies and countries have the capability – not just the intention or determination -- to change the trajectory of false “development” to one that leads to a truly holistic and comprehensive development which culminates in the attainment of *al-Falaah*, the *hayaatun tayyibatun* (a good and blessed life, Q. 16: 97) and the *baladatun tayyibatun wa rabbun ghafuur* (a country blessed with goodness and the mercy of a Forgiving Lord, Q. 34: 15).

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