

The Roots of Western Culture

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Almost fifty years ago two great armies faced each other in the desert on the borders of Egypt and Libya: the British, under General Montgomery, and the Germans under General Rommel. Preparing for the decisive battle which he knew must soon begin, Montgomery sat in his caravan gazing at a photograph of his opponent and reading all that he could about Rommel's life, opinions and attitudes. Looking at the photograph, he tried to read this face and to understand what kind of mind lay behind it and what thoughts might occupy that mind. In short, he was following one of the basic maxims of all conflict: "Know your enemy" — know him, study him, try to understand him.

To describe the contemporary West as the enemy of Islam and of the Muslim *Ummah* may seem a little extreme. Very well, let us say rival or competitor. But, whatever word we choose, the fact remains that there is a confrontation between the secular world of Europe and America on the one hand and, on the other, the still — if only just still — religious domain which we call the *Dar Al-Islam*. This is nothing new, although it remained "underground" during two centuries of colonialism. It was and remains today an inevitable fact of history. If we leave aside Buddhism, which is a special case, only two religions have claimed a universal mission encompassing the whole world and have cherished the hope that all mankind might be brought under the God-given canopy of the "one true Faith" — Christianity and Islam. Only one thing has changed. Islam is confronted today, not by Western Christendom, but by Western secularism, agnosticism, and unredeemed worldliness. Where Christendom failed, the civilization which replaced it has achieved almost total success and complete dominance of the planet.

Formerly, this confrontation was between men of faith who had more in common than they could ever have acknowledged. That likeness, that shared devotion to an almighty and unseen God, no longer exists. The gulf has become infinitely wider, and mutual comprehension has become far more difficult. The believer to whom the transcendent reality of God is the most compelling fact known to him cannot really understand unbelief or imagine its sterility. The unbeliever, try

* *Roots of Western Culture* was the first in a series of lectures delivered by Charles Gai Eaton from February 28 to March 2, 1992, on the occasion of the Annual Qur'anic Muhadrat (Lectures) held at Qur'an Auditorium, Lahore.

as he may, cannot even guess what the experience of faith is; his imagination is baffled by this strange, other-worldly phenomenon.

Nonetheless, if Muslims are to act effectively in this situation and to see it clearly and objectively, then they must understand what it is that they confront. In my experience, the Muslim, even if he lives in the West, has very little understanding of the enemy or of the true nature of the threat he faces. Certainly in Britain, the majority of Muslim immigrants still refer to the people around them as “Christians” and many think that they are in some way threatened by Christianity. Much, of course, depends upon how you define “Christianity.” and no doubt most British people, when asked to name their religion on some official form, will write down “Church of England” or “Roman Catholic.” But let me say this: in a long life in which I have met and known a very great number of people, I met no convinced, believing Christians until, in recent years, I found myself lecturing Christian groups on Islam. The threat to the Muslims is no longer from a rival religious faith but from a sector of the world that has lost the gift of faith and no longer knows where to seek it. In practice, this is a more dangerous threat than was represented by Christianity in the past; a more subtle and insidious threat, because it appeals to the traitor within cut own breasts, the whisperer who whispers: “How can you be sure? How can you be sure that there is anything beyond this world of the senses? How can you believe in something unseen, unheard, unfelt?”

Moreover, this danger is all the greater because of the worldly success of the unbeliever. Muslims in general, like most other people in what is commonly called the “Third World,” have an ambivalent attitude to the West. On the one hand there is bitterness and resentment induced by the history of colonialism and now by the brute fact of Western hegemony; on the other hand there are feelings of admiration and envy. Inherent in human nature is the readiness to be overawed by successful power, and there is no denying the dominant power of the West. This power derives in part from industrial might and technological expertise, but what is most admired is Western efficiency in getting things done.

And yet admiration for these organizational skills should be tempered by caution. No race, no people, no human group can be good at everything. That is the

nature of our life in the world. It is therefore always a question of priorities. If we can only be successful in a few aspects of this life, a choice has to be made. Which aspects are the more important? Those who are skilled in one field are likely to be inadequate in another, for we are very limited creatures and, if we develop one side of our nature to its fullest extent, this is usually at the expense of other aspects of the personality. If you are prepared, as Western man has been prepared, to turn your back on God (I say “God” rather than “Allah,” since this is of universal application), if you are prepared to devote all your energies and all your talents to the affairs of this world and to the successful execution of these affairs, disregarding every other consideration, then you are likely to be very successful indeed. Devote every waking moment of your life to devising ways of making money and then more money and still more, you may even end up as a millionaire. The question, of course, is whether you are prepared to pay the price in spiritual impoverishment and, through blind greed, to sink below the level of the animals, whose hunger does not extend beyond that which suffices to fill their bellies.

Let me take two simple examples. As Muslims, our daily prayers interrupt our daily work. The successful businessman or civil servant in the West cannot afford to divert his attention to prayer or to anything of the sort in the course of the day. He would, as it is said, “lose out.” Well, you make your choice; our lives are composed of choices. Secondly, there is the total divorce in the West between professional life and private life or personal relationships. The traditional Muslim way of conducting business — the polite greetings, the friendly questions, the serving of coffee or tea — is, from the Western point of view, time-wasting. Westerners, when they come together to do business, leave their humanity behind and keep an eye on their watches. They must conclude this business in the shortest possible time. They do not meet as persons, although the meeting of persons is something of tremendous significance in the sight of God. No. They meet only as professionals who have come to do a deal. They wear their official masks. The deal is done and they part without ever really having met. This too is part of the price paid for efficiency. Do we really wish to abrogate our humanity for the sake of some brief success?

I have no doubt that, in the course of these talks, I shall be asked: Are you suggesting that the Muslim world should always remain “backward” in comparison with the West? I am, I believe, a realist. In realistic terms we have to live in the world as it is, not as we might wish it to be. But since Muslims evince such fear of being thought “backward,” there is a question I must pose in this context. What is wrong with “backwardness” when others are hastening forward to disaster? Is not a healthy old man, though “backward” in comparison with another of the same age who is sick and dying, in the better position? We must all die, but we need not run towards that end.

However, before proceeding to discuss the roots of that powerful and, from our point of view, menacing and invasive culture, there is one further point that must be made. Do not overestimate that power! It has been said by the historians of colonialism that, until the invention of the Maxim gun (the early machine gun), in the middle years of the last century, the British Empire was held by bluff rather than by force. The white man held at bay a mob of “natives” with nothing more than a stick in his hand, perhaps because of his supreme racial self-confidence. He did not believe that they would dare to attack him, so they did not attack him. Self-confidence is the key, and, indeed, one might say that it was the key to the unprecedented success of the Muslims in the early centuries of Islam. It is the lack of this quality which may be seen as the greatest weakness of the Muslims today. It would be impossible to overstress the power of self-confidence. Look, after all, at the British, the inhabitants of a small and unimportant off-shore island, who nonetheless conquered and dominated half the world; this was no giant subduing pygmies, but a pygmy persuading giants to submit to him!

Let me offer you the example of an individual case. The newspapers in England have recently been full of stories about a Jewish businessman called Maxwell who died recently under mysterious circumstances. With no real security to offer, this man had borrowed more than a hundred million pounds from the banks. How did he do it? By sheer bluff and because of his overwhelming self-confidence. Shrewd, though bankers could not doubt his word because he himself was entirely free from self-doubt.

The Muslims' lack of self-confidence may be attributed in part to the experience of colonialism, but it still endures chiefly, I think, because the West has bluffed the Muslims into accepting it at its own valuation and has succeeded in hiding its weaknesses, its vulnerability. It seems to me that this was exemplified in the early 1970s, during the so called "oil crisis." The oil producers — the Saudis in particular — had what amounted to a stranglehold on the Western world; they had very great power, which might have been put to use to their own advantage and to the advantage of the *Ummah*. What they lacked was the self-confidence which would have enabled them to use that power wisely and effectively. They lacked also that spirit of daring which encourages the powerful to make full use of their power. The opportunity was missed and may not come again.

When I talk with my fellow Muslims about the nature of Western dominance, one of my principal aims is to persuade them that this power rests upon very shaky foundations. Be that as it may, understanding on the part of the Muslims of exactly what it is they confront — what it is that threatens us — is of the utmost importance. This is why I have chosen to start this series of talks with a discussion of the roots of Western culture; very tangled, very complex roots. That is perhaps the first thing that the Muslim should understand. The origins of Muslim culture and civilization are clear and simple. They have one source, the Revelation combined with the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW) and are therefore easily identified. The roots of Western civilization lie in different lands, different cultures, different periods of history.

We must, inevitably, start with ancient Greece. We — that is to say, the children of the West — were taught at school about something described as "the Greek miracle." This "miracle" was the emergence of a people who, unlike any other people on earth, had turned their backs upon what we were told was "superstition" and discovered the supremacy of human reason, devoting themselves to rational enquiry and to philosophical speculation which left no space for the supernatural and took as its basis this world as it appears to the senses, not as it is in terms of its divine origin. In other words, the Greeks — so we were told — were "advanced" in relation to all others of their time; a beacon of light in an otherwise dark age.

Now at this point I want to make a short digression which has, I think, an important bearing on the subject we are considering. As Muslims we must acknowledge that no people was ever left without a messenger bringing them the Truth, therefore no people was, in origin, without a religion reflecting the Truth in terms accessible to them. The origins of Greek culture lie out of sight, but I think it is clear that, by the time Greece became a significant factor in human history, Greek religion had degenerated into idolatry. This, after all, is the form which religious degeneration commonly takes or, at least, took in the past. And this, surely, is why Islam, as the final Revelation, is so fiercely opposed to every trace of idolatry. One feature of idolatry as we find it, for example, in classical Greece, that is to say the presence of many rather absurd “gods” often fighting among themselves, is that it is difficult for sensible people to believe in this. There is therefore a reaction against the very notion of religion or of any supernatural reality, a reaction in the direction of rationalism. This rationalism is, precisely, the “miraculous” Greek legacy so honored in the West. The Muslims, as we know, discovered this legacy in the early Abbasid period, but Islam as an integrated faith and culture, rooted in a single Revelation, was able to take from the Greek tradition what it found useful and what it could assimilate without harm to itself, and to reject the rest. In particular, it rejected the philosophical basis upon which the so-called Greek wisdom rested. The Muslims, however, handed the poisoned cup, the Greek legacy, to the Christians, to whom it proved profoundly destructive.

After Greece comes Rome, the monstrous civilization of imperial Rome. Here again, by the time ancient Rome appears as a real force in the world Roman religion, whatever it may have been in earlier times beyond the reach of history, had followed the same course as Greek religion. In other words, it had fallen into total decadence, and, if a people’s religion is decadent, then they themselves are inevitably decadent. It is therefore the sick face of Rome that has endured and that has had such a dominant influence upon the West; so dominant, for example, that I was compelled as a schoolboy to learn Latin because that was the language of the great civilization upon which we had attempted to model ourselves in our days of imperial grandeur. It is perhaps ironic that these Romans should have bequeathed to us a term very commonly used today, the term “barbarian.” The British press frequently describes

the Muslim way of life as “barbaric,” and this always upsets Muslims. It should not upset us! Those to whom the ancient Romans referred as “barbarians” were, in every quality that really matters, their superiors; superior in virtue and in their way of life, free from the hideous corruption which characterized and ultimately destroyed the Roman Empire.

In ancient Greece and in ancient Rome therefore are planted some of the roots of contemporary Western culture. Then Christianity penetrated this world of corruption, gradually gaining ground, at first savagely persecuted but finally triumphant. Oil and water, we are told, do not mix, and there was nothing that could be acceptable to Christians in the Latin world as they found it. The slate had to be cleaned, for a religion of Jewish origin had nothing in common with what had gone before; and it was indeed wiped clean. There were elements in the Arab *Jahiliyyah* which could be absorbed into Islam — the Hajj is an obvious example — but there was nothing in the Roman *Jahiliyyah* that could be allowed to survive.

As I suggested earlier, the Christian of the early Middle Ages and the Muslim of the same period could have understood each other without difficulty if they had allowed themselves to do so; beyond their differences in doctrine and dogma, the fact remains that Christendom, like the *Dar Al-Islam* of that time, lived entirely by the light of religious faith; and yet this structure, governed by faith in God, had within it an inherent weakness. With its origins in Judaic Palestine, Christianity was in a sense a “foreign body” inserted into Western Europe, particularly in relation to the shamanistic traditions of the northern areas. It was utterly opposed to everything that had previously been thought or believed in that part of the world: a radical break with the past. The Arabs of the *Jahiliyyah*, on the other hand, had been in sense ready for the coming of Islam, which dawned less as a rejection of their past than as a fulfilment of what was best in their past.

This inherent weakness — this “fissure,” as it has been called — became fully apparent when we, the Muslims, handed Christendom what I referred to as the “poisoned cup” of the Greek legacy. This led in due course to what is known as the “Renaissance,” the “Rebirth,” an event which every European child is asked to believe was one of the most glorious and fruitful events in human history. What was

it that had been “reborn”? The old paganism, surely, now called humanism: the exaltation of the human above the Divine, the concept of man as a little god who inevitably realizes eventually that he has no need of a greater God. It would be difficult to exaggerate the difference between the early medieval Christian ideal of servanthood and the Renaissance ideal, typified in the titanic paintings and sculptures of Michael Angelo. The fact that these can be found in the Sistine Chapel in Rome indicates how effectively this humanistic ideal infiltrated the Christian Church, then, of course, the Catholic Church.

The adjective “Promethean” is often applied to the Renaissance ideal, and the Greek myth of Prometheus has great significance if we wish to understand Western culture. It is a myth that could never conceivably have arisen or been tolerated within the sphere of Islamic thought and the Muslim imagination. Prometheus stole the gift of fire from “the gods,” or, let us say simply from God, from Heaven. In this way, although he was punished for his sin, he brought inestimable benefit to mankind. You will note the profound implications of this myth. The great gift was not bestowed by the Almighty upon humanity; it had to be taken from Him by force, an act of radical defiance, an act of revolt against Heaven which had not chosen to give what there was to be given. The myth of Prometheus dominated the Renaissance mind and, in a sense, dominates Western culture today: God does not give, man takes.

The exclusion of the Divine and of the view of this world as totally subordinate to That which infinitely transcends it, gave rise, in due course, to an entirely secular philosophy, and the first of these “modern” philosophers was Descartes (***** 1596). To anybody who has any feeling for religion and any belief in the possibility of Revelation, the contrast between the great theologians and religious philosophers of the Middle Ages on the one hand and, on the other, the new philosophy, is astonishing. It might be compared to the contrast between a wise man and a clever child. Seen from an Islamic point of view, what could be more absurd than the ambition to spin out of an unenlightened human mind all wisdom and all understanding of the heavens and the earth? Yet this is what Descartes proposed with his *Cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am), offering this as the only truth that could

be known with certainty and as the basis upon which to construct other certainties. I remember someone suggesting that what Descartes should have said *was Cogitor ergo sum* (I am thought therefore I am); in other words, because God “thinks” me, therefore I exist.

It is from Descartes that Western culture and, above all, science, have inherited the dualistic view of the world which is contrary to Islam in root and in branch. This represents a total separation between — I will not say the spiritual, for what Descartes was talking about was solely the mental — but between, let us say the immaterial and the material, the unseen and the seen. It is precisely on the basis of this Cartesian dualism that the modern mind operates, and that is the philosophical basis for what is commonly called the “scientific method.” One is bound to ask whether a method which has its origins in such a doubtful proposition can lead to the discovery of any sure truth.

In the common view and for the educational textbooks, Descartes is the first “great Western philosopher.” Those who followed him might or might not make some allowance for a spiritual dimension, and their views differed from his in many respects; but the fact remains that they were still purely secular, unidimensional, excluding the possibility of knowledge through Revelation from the mental processes through which they reached their conclusions.

And so we come — a century and a half after Descartes — to the so-called “Enlightenment,” indeed a strange term to apply to what was, in fact, a darkening of human intelligence and human imagination. The French “philosophes” of the 18th century of the Christian era finally cast aside the bonds of what was then described — and is still described — as superstition, that is to say the religious understanding of the world and of man’s destiny. The Renaissance had presented the image of man as self-sufficient, even as superman; the Enlightenment brought this image to its logical fulfillment, the supremacy of the human mind as the measure of all things. Man’s concepts and speculation, quite divorced from Revelation, become the arbiter of Truth. The Western mind is still dominated by that “enlightenment.”

There is an aspect of all this that often goes unnoticed. That is the divorce between theory and practice. The Christian philosophers had taken it for granted that

knowledge and virtue must go together. Belief and action could not be separated. The philosophers of the Enlightenment were purely theorists whose personal morality and conduct had no necessary connection with their theories. This might be illustrated by the example of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of its principal figures. In his writings he propagated a new view of children, of their value and of the duty to treat them well. He himself was so busy theorizing about children that he could not be bothered with his own offspring. He dispatched them to an orphanage to be rid of them.

Within a few years there followed the French Revolution, which attempted to put into effect the concepts of the “philosophes.” If I may again revert to the lessons I learned as a schoolboy and which other schoolboys received in the West, this, in spite of its monstrous cruelties and its destructiveness, was seen as a just revolt against an aristocracy which no longer fulfilled any useful function and against social injustice. That is a very partial view, and it misses the essential. The Revolution was above all a revolt against religion, a revolt against God in the name of a new God, or rather goddess — the “Goddess of Reason.” Now reason is a tool comparable to other tools which enable us to work on the material before us and by which we maintain our lives on this earth. But rationalism as an attitude of mind — I might even say a dogma — which proclaims that reason is more than a tool, that it has within itself the means of establishing all truths. There is a curious fallacy here. We can reason only on the basis of given facts or of universally accepted assumptions. If the facts have been misunderstood and if the assumptions which have been taken for granted are false, then you may reason as carefully and meticulously as you like; you will still be wrong. Perhaps I might employ in this context the example given by the ancient Hindu sage, Shankara. Supposing — he says — that a man sitting in a dark hut puts out his hand and touches a coil of thick rope. He mistakes this for a snake, indeed it feels to him like a coiled snake. From then on he acts entirely rationally, running away or shouting for help. The fact remains that there is no snake and that the man's reasonable actions bear no relation to reality. In the same way, if one mistakes the material world for the only reality, which is the thoughtless assumption made by modern man in the West, then no amount of sound reasoning on this premise can ever lead to Truth.

The triumph of rationalism was now complete so far as the intellectual leaders in Europe and the principal formers of opinion were concerned; but, of course, in any civilization or any culture, the mass of people is slow to move and difficult to change in their basic view of the world. What finally broke the hold of religion on the minds and hearts of ordinary people was science, or rather the emergence and development of an exclusively materialistic science which reduced all reality to mathematical concepts and a blind mechanical mechanism.

The final blow however was undoubtedly Darwin's theory of evolution, promulgated in the middle years of the last century. And yet to call this a "scientific" theory is incorrect. It was and still is more in the nature of a myth, without any secure foundation in the observed facts or in any kind of experiment. It was however a myth which explained the given facts in a way which excluded every notion of a reality beyond this world and which had — and still has — an immense appeal for minds already conditioned to a purely materialistic view of the cosmos. It was inevitable that someone should invent such a theory at that precise moment in history. Darwin happened to be the man who did so. This theory, still entirely unproven in scientific terms, dominates the contemporary mind and has reinforced a myth of human progress that was already emerging.

Let me illustrate this by a small incident which occurred some years ago when I was serving in the British Foreign Service in Trinidad. I was a guest at a diplomatic dinner. The young woman beside me was talking with a Christian priest, an Englishman, seated opposite. I was only half attending to their conversation when I heard her say something to the effect that she was not entirely convinced about human progress. The priest answered her so rudely and with such contempt that I could not resist saying to him: "She's quite right! There is no such thing as real progress." He turned on me, his face contorted with rage, and said: "If I thought that, I would commit suicide this very night!" Since suicide is as much a sin for the Christian as it is for the Muslim, I found this a very revealing remark. I understood for the first time the extent to which faith in progress has replaced religious faith.

I mention this because it seems to me that few Muslims, least of all those who constantly proclaim that Islam is a "progressive" religion, seem to grasp the full

implications of the myth of progress. If it is true, at least as it is understood in Western culture, then it follows that we in our time are wiser and better than the people of earlier times and that our understanding of our religion is superior to theirs. This opens the way to radical change, *bida'* in the proper sense of the term. That is precisely what has happened to the Christian Churches, and I am frequently asked why Islam does not “evolve” in the same way. When we behave badly, as we so often do, when Muslims fight each other and accuse each other of heresy, this is assumed to be a sign, not of our decadence, but of our backwardness, and people who are well disposed to us say: “Of course, we understand. You are only in your fifteenth century. You will evolve and mature as we have done in the course of time.”

Since faith in progress has become such an unquestionable dogma and since belief in any kind of afterlife has declined, the notion of paradise and, for that matter, of hell as we understand these terms has been replaced by the bleak conviction that everything will come right in the future, long after we ourselves are dead and gone. There will arise a kind of heaven on earth, though we —unfortunately! — shall not see it. Many lives have been sacrificed on the altar of this false faith. Those who are most opposed to religion always claim that, in the past, religion led to ceaseless wars. Yet I do not believe anyone has succeeded in counting how many millions of men, women and children have been slaughtered in this century in the name of progress and of “creating a better world.” This false faith reached its fulfillment in Marxism-Leninism.

The fact that Marx’s theories, his pseudo-scientific theories, were already out-of-date by the early years of this century did not, as we all know, prevent a great number of intelligent and well-intentioned people from adhering to them with passionate conviction; this in itself is proof of man’s need for a total truth to which he can give total devotion. Yet in terms of this theory, when put into action, no amount of human suffering counted for anything in relation to the glorious future when the Marxist paradise on earth was achieved. Human creatures, with their private interests, their customs and their stubbornness stood in the way of the realization of this Utopian dream; but they were no longer seen as human, they were merely obstacles in the middle of the road, obstacles to be destroyed and bulldozed

into mass graves. This is the way of all Utopian dreams when we try to bring them to fruition. That is why I am sometimes appalled when I meet young Muslims who dream of re-creating in our own time the perfect Islamic society as it was in Medinah in the time of the Prophet (SAW) Except at that time and then only for a very short while, there can be no perfect society in this world.

Basic human nature does not change. How could it, since the worlds of Allah (SWT) are not subject to change? There is within it an empty space which can only be filled by faith in God. When mankind is deprived of a transcendent object of worship, an object guaranteed by a direct revelation from above, then it will always find something in this world upon which it can focus adoration. As I have suggested, we have seen this in the fanaticism which has characterized the great political movements of our century, including Nazism. We have seen it in the ambition of Huxley, the most distinguished scientist of the 19th century, to create what he described as a “priesthood of science.” For many in the West, faith in scientific truth or in what purports to be truth has the qualities which we would normally associate with religious faith.

Now, however, faith in political solutions is diminishing, as too is faith in the irrefutable truths of modern science. There is therefore a widespread hankering for religious faith in the proper sense of the term. But this does not necessarily mean a readiness to return to traditional religion; in effect Christianity since I am speaking of the Western world. Satan is not so easily diverted from his purpose. The addiction to personal freedom to the extent of ignoring all bounds and, in accordance with humanism, exalting the *nafs*, the ego, makes traditional religion, with its constraints and its humbling of the ego, unpalatable. It is easier, less demanding and more comfortable to invent new religions, and this is why we have, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon sector of the world, a proliferation of cults designed to assuage this hunger, though with plastic food, not real nourishment.

The cults which are often related to “New Age” religion take various forms, but they have one thing in common. They deny transcendence, or rather they ignore the possibility of a transcendent Reality. They are therefore likely to take the form of some kind of nature religion, such as belief in the “Earth Goddess,” or else they

borrow some elements from Buddhism, from Hindu Vedanta or even from Sufism. These borrowed elements are, so to speak, brought down to the horizontal level, that is to say the *dunyawi* level, and incorporated into doctrines which flatter the *nafs* and encourage it to roam where it will. They may also include elements of erotic mysticism, seeking in sexuality a substitute for religious experience. They have not broken free from the errors of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment.

The Westerner today does not know who he is or where he is going. He seeks an identity, even a religious identity, and he seeks an orientation, but the decay of traditional religion has led to a situation in which the average man or woman is astonishingly ignorant of religion as such. This is why cults which you would not expect to attract even a foolish child are often accepted by mature people who are by no means foolish.

Meanwhile, so far as the majority is concerned, faith in science has not really diminished, although it may have changed in nature because of changes in the scientific perspective itself. We call this “scientism” because it is not in fact based upon the complex theories and speculations of contemporary physicists, many of whom leave some space for the “unknowable” or even for the Divine dimension, but upon a vague notion that science can explain everything and answer every possible question. This is said to be “the Age of Knowledge;” it is in truth the age of ignorance; ignorance, that is to say, of everything that really matters. The denial of Revelation and the denial of intellectual intuition (which is dismissed as a subjective feeling, not as a glimpse of authentic Truth placed in our hearts from above) has impoverished modern Western humanity to an almost unimaginable extent.

There is no longer any sure guidance. The Christian Churches have failed the people because they have themselves fallen under the spell of every modern illusion and have readily absorbed the errors of the time. They have, so to speak, followed in the footsteps of the mob, instead of standing aside and offering an alternative and radically different perspective. They have for the most part, accepted the general view that faith is something irrational and contrary to common sense; they have lost their intellectual dimension. At the same time, despairing of ever persuading their flocks to believe in a transcendent Reality and in an afterlife “better and more

lasting” than our brief existence here, they have given themselves almost exclusively to the affairs of this world.

I should hardly need to add that, for those who are sickened by the errors of modernism, of rationalism, and of scientism, and who wish to break free from these illusions, there is a home, a shelter always available: Islam. Let us hope however that the leaders and the wise men of our *Ummah* do not fall into the trap into which Christianity has fallen and do not, from a desire to be “up-to-date” and “progressive,” follow in its footsteps. We must pray that Allah (SWT) will protect us from committing any such betrayal.