BOOK REVIEWS

JOHN HICK ON GOD: A REVIEW ARTICLE

ARIFA FARID*

God and the Universe of Faiths was first published by Macmillan in 1973. It contains John Hick's revised versions of some of his earlier publications and lectures of the period 1961 to 1973. All this forms part of a single book which is devoted to some of his basic philosophical/ theological concerns.

John Hick, who was a Presbyterian Minister of the Church of England and a philosopher of religion in the British analytic tradition, had already gained popularity as a thought-provoking philosopher on account of his earlier essay "Theology and Verification" published in 1960. This was reprinted in many books on philosophy of religion including his edited book The Existence of God. This essay was a breakthrough as it helped students of religion find a way out of the mist of uncertainty and doubt created by the logical positivists' stance against the factuality of religious claims about God or the supersensible. A. J. Ayer's Language, Truth and Logic challenged the verifiability of the religious language. Religious utterances making claims regarding the supersensual were declared as emotive in character and devoid of any factual content. The concept of verifiability was advanced by Ayer and his colleagues which had found wide acceptance in scientific-minded philosophical circles. This concept had rendered religious language regarding God or the transcendent as meaningless or non-sensical.

*Arifa Farid, Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Karachi.
Logical positivism was represented in England most forcefully by A.J. Ayer. But such profound philosophers as Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein also remained under its spell for many years. It was the most dominant philosophical theme of 1920s and 1930s. Morality and religion especially came under its sickle and were cut into pieces. Due to the influence of logical positivism Russell remained atheist all his life. As for Wittgenstein, he found escape from both theism and atheism by dint of his view that religion at best is a form of life — a language game. He declared language itself as a social phenomenon and various language games as social conventions. D. Z. Phillips employed Wittgenstein's 'language game' theory by declaring religion as non-cognitive, yet meaningful in a different, limited sense, i.e. meaningful only to those who play this language game. Thus there was seen no factual content or truth-value in religious utterances regarding the supersensible. Other philosophers of religion, who were under the influence of logical positivism, argued that religious language evoke in us a "numinous awe" or "cosmic dependence". R. B. Braithwaite came up with his understanding of religious language as a language of "moral commitment". Religion became in the hands of these non-cognitivists an exclusively human enterprise and lost its meaning as a universal truth consisting of factual knowledge/beliefs about God or the Transcendent.

In the midst of such uncertainty about the truth-value of religious language, John Hick came to rescue religion and religious language from the charge of non-cognitivity by propounding his thesis regarding the verifiability of religious language. John Hick thus became a champion of the traditional point of view regarding religion as having a cognitive character and religious utterances regarding God or the supersensible as verifiable in principle.

In *God and the Universe of Faiths*, John Hick addresses himself to two important themes of philosophy of religion, namely (1) the questions of factuality of religious utterances and cognitivity of religious language about God, and (2) a critical evaluation of Christianity's claim to be the exclusive truth. Under this latter theme he reviews similar claims of other religions to conclude in the end that the absolute truth-claims of all great world religions are unwarranted and need to be mellowed down to allow all great world religions to seek comfort in their specific faiths as valid responses to the Ultimate God. This is what Hick calls "religious pluralism" (p. 9). From chapter seven onward Hick occupies himself with a critical evaluation of the Christian faith, its absolute truth claims — the doctrines of incarnation, redemption and atonement, etc. in order to pave the way for his favourite theme of "religious pluralism". The way in which Hick turns down the Christian hegemonic claims and prepares for a more
open-minded acceptance of other religions as equally valid responses to the Transcendent is termed by him "the Copernican Revolution in Theology" which is directed against the prevailing theology of the past two thousand years which Hick names "Ptolemaic Theology".

The themes of cognitivity of religious language and that of religious pluralism are not two separate themes but are ultimately interwoven to meet the contemporary challenges to religion and to expound a philosophy of religion named by Hick "transcendent theology" according to the spirit of the time. In the earlier six chapters Hick takes up the question of cognitivity or non-cognitivity of religious language. He rejects the non-cognitivists' various stances such as of Phillips, J. H. Randall, Braithwate, etc. who, in his opinion, have twisted the meaning of religious discourse apparently to meet the challenge of logical positivism. By declaring religious discourse "language game", "commitment", "awe-invoking", causing "cosmic dependence", these philosophers through their quasi-religious and pragmatic approaches have done greater damage to religion than the atheists or logical positivists. Hick brands all such religious philosophies as "autonomous humanism" in contrast to his own philosophy of religion/philosophical theology, viz. "Transcendent Theism". In contemporary culture, John Hick complains:

Religion has acquired a new meaning. It is no more a talk about God, His power, His mercy, His saving activity in human life. Religion is considered as a way of life. It is one choice among other choices to add some extra meaning to life. Its pragmatic significance is more emphasised than its truth-value. Its importance for human existence and culture is a matter of greater concern than submission to Divine presence as a reality. The questions of the existence of God, afterlife, etc. are pushed to the background, and religion as a cultural and social phenomenon is now gaining significance.

"Autonomous humanism" has emerged against the vogue of the positivists' radical attack on religious discourse by declaring God talk as meaningless.

The non-cognitivists have taken the course of autonomous humanism through which they pretend to save God talk from total meaninglessness and pose themselves as defenders of the religious fort. Hick is critical of their intellectual bigotry. Autonomous humanism of whatever brand one chooses presents religion as a cosmetic device to hide the ugly face of the ultra-materialistic culture. It uses poetic imagery regarding religion to cover the crude and shabby mundane way of life. Besides, "Autonomous Humanism" is bound to end in pessimism as it cannot identify any well-defined purpose of human life.
Against this, Hick offers his "transcendent" theism as a genuine spiritual alternative to meet the challenge of mechanistic materialism. Transcendent theism brings God back to the central place in religion. The existence of God is to be seen here not as a matter of choice or commitment of the believer, but as a cognitive truth to be seriously reckoned with. Says Hick:

> It seems to me preferable not to call that which stands over and against humanism, as its radical alternative, religion or religiouness in general, but (even though the phrase is an awkward one) transcendent theism. By this I mean belief in a transcendent personal God, together with the major corollaries of this belief. These corollaries include a view of man's place in the universe which can be compared point by point with that of humanism (p. 13).

Transcendent theism "affirms a divine purpose behind the entire natural process. . ." (p. 13). Finite human life through religious means seeks perfection in finite life, here and in hereafter.

Transcendent theism, in contrast to the pessimism of humanism, affirms that the divine plan in this universe is absolutely good and thus promises fulfillment against the hard travails of human life. "The present life thus constitutes a chapter in a story which is going eventually to have a happy ending" (p. 14).

Theism has to face many challenges. These challenges, Hick warns, cannot be met with by traditional natural theology seeking to explain all kinds of events through natural scientific means. It requires a more up-to-date theology such as transcendent theism. The first important challenge for transcendent theism is the validation of God hypothesis. "Transcendent theism makes assertions which are logically capable of being either true or false. Thus in claiming to be true it inevitably runs the risk of being false" (p. 14).

There is another challenge to theism posed by the problem of evil which lends support to atheism, as in the presence of suffering and evil the no-God hypothesis would have greater weight than God hypothesis. Thus, Hick explains, "the problem of evil constitutes not merely an absence of reason for believing in the reality of God but a positive reason for not so believing" (p. 15).

The third challenge pertains to the coherence of theism. The various paradoxes regarding divine nature and His intervention in this world have led many thinkers to believe that "the idea of God is so full of contradictions that there cannot possibly be any such Being" (p. 16).

The fourth challenge relates to the conflicting truth-claims of different world religions. All great world religions claim to be exclusively
true. Yet they all cannot be true in the exclusive sense. The question posed to a common believer is, whether other religions' truth-claims possess validity, and if they do, then, how can a particular believer reconcile them with his own beliefs? Hick is optimistic about meeting these challenges. "These challenges to faith cannot be fully dissolved away, but it can be shown that they are nevertheless not fatal to rational religious commitment" (p. 17).

The non-cognitivist theories do not try to face these challenges in a direct manner. They choose evasive techniques which would consequently lead to the extinction of religion. Hick seeks to squarely face these challenges to make religion meaningful in a cognitive sense, and to show that religious claims bear factual character.

Thus after explaining in the preface and the first chapter the state of religion in the contemporary scenario and the various challenges to religion from chapter two to eleven Hick tries to meet these various challenges to his transcendent theism.

In chapter two he argues that religion is fact-asserting. This does not mean that there are no mythological or metaphorical utterances in religious language. But utterances like "God exists", "God loves man", "there is a life after death", "death is not the termination of the soul", etc. are cognitive in nature. They may be true or false. Hick especially expresses his misapprobation for the views which are ready to grant some credit to religion or religious phenomenon on account of their benefits for a certain culture or for humanity at large. The pragmatic approach might lend some additional support to religious belief or believer. But for a believer "God exists" is a basic truth. It is a fact-asserting utterance. It cannot be evaluated on the ground of its feasibility. Religion, in the contemporary culture, especially American culture, complains Hick, is looked at more as an ethical and socio-cultural phenomenon whose truth-value is a matter of least concern to its adherent. This attitude has caused great damage to religion. Hick fastens his attack on the neo-Wittgensteinians, especially D. Z. Philips who describes religion as a "language game", meaningful in a certain context, but having no cognitive content; only a form of life. The Christian believer, and for that matter, the believer of any other great world religion cannot subscribe to this view. More than two thousand years' history of religion contradicts Phillips' claim. People have adhered to religion because they believed in some kind of supersensible reality, the ultimate or God whom they consider the Lord of the worlds.

In chapter three Hick describes religious phenomena in terms of "experiencing as". This phrase is a modified form of "seeing as", an epithet Wittgenstein uses to describe our experience of the world. Just as
we never "see" the real object if there is any, but see it "as", similarly, Hick argues that we never "see", "meet", "experience" God or the transcendent in His/Its Absoluteness, but always see Him/It "as". Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit picture analogy becomes relevant here for Hick. The same picture can be seen both as duck or as rabbit depending on the perspective of the viewer. In the same way, believers of different great world religions experience God "as" this or that. The parable of the elephant and the seven blind men appropriately describes this phenomenon. Each one of these blind men experiences the elephant "as" the trunk, the tale, or its body, and believes that the elephant is exclusively that.

This parable and the duck-rabbit picture analogy provides Hick with his argument for religious pluralism according to which all great world religions experience and worship the same God, the Absolute, or the Ultimate, but they view Him/It differently on account of their limited access to the Absolute. They are, however, all justified in identifying or worshipping Him/It in their own manner, yet, unjustified in claiming that the other's religious vision of the absolute is false.

Hick draws many other parallels between the great world religions, such as their equal soteriological concern, their equal historical impact, the equal status of their redeemers, etc. But the crux of his arguments is that absolute truth-claims by various religions are unwarranted. The conflicting truth-claims again can be resolved if we were to consider the growth of various religious cultures on the earth as a necessary part of a divine plan to reveal Himself in different geographical areas and in different ages of history through different prophets, redeemers, etc. Also, conflicting truth-claims are only examples of "experiencing as" of the same Absolute or the Transcendent.

In chapters four and five Hick takes up the problem of theodicy, i.e. the problem of evil versus good. How can a good God create evil? If He did not create evil, then, how do we account for evil and suffering? Hick's response is acceptance of an Irenaean theodicy in contrast to the Augustinian theodicy. The Augustinian theodicy is based upon the original sin doctrine of Christianity and God's punitive act. Evil erupted on account of man's disobedience to God. By tasting the forbidden fruit man has once for all damned himself before the eyes of God. Thus he suffers moral evil, death and natural disaster as a result of his own disobedience. Hick rejects this hypothesis as inconsistent with God's mercy and love. An ever-loving God cannot rejoice in seeing his creatures suffer moral or natural evil, nor can His punitive act be justified in the face of His mercy. Hick chooses the paradigm of the second century BC philosopher Irenaeus as more appropriate for answering the problem of
evil according to which this world is a soul making place. Man has to suffer moral and natural evil, and disaster to prepare himself for the after life. God's Infinite Love is awaiting him in the after-life. Moral or natural evil is not punishment. It provides an environment for exercise of free choice.

In chapter four Hick grapples with the question of "God as a necessary Being". Here he distinguishes between "logical necessity" and "factual necessity". The idea of God as a logically necessary being has met much criticism since the time of St. Anselm, so much so that in contemporary analytical philosophy it has become a redundant and tautologous concept. As an a priori concept existence cannot pertain to It (God) and hence the concept or argument becomes self-contradictory also. Hick is here at pains to explain that for the Christian concept of God and, for that matter, of other religions' concept of God, the idea of factual necessity is more adequate than logical necessity. Hick derives the concept of factual necessity of God from a more careful reading of St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Both, according to him, have used the idea of necessity in the factual rather than in 'logical' sense. God's factual necessity implies His eternity and non-dependence on any other being. God is indestructible and incorruptible as He has no body that could be destroyed. He is not one fact amongst others, but is related asymmetrically to all other facts as that which determines them (p. 88).

Findlay, on the basis of self-contradictoriness of the concept of logically necessary being derives a disproof of the existence of God. He argues that only a necessary being can be the object of our worship. Since the idea of a logically necessary being is logically self-contradictory, therefore, religion has no meaning, as it has no proper object of worship.

Hick agrees with Findlay that only a necessary being can be the object of our worship or invoke various religious attitudes in man, such as commitment, etc. But against Findlay, for whom necessary being implies logical necessity, Hick argues that the idea of logical necessity of God is of no significance to the religious man. It is factual necessity which counts here. For the religious believer God is a factually necessary being. Hick says:

But the question whether the non-existence of God is logically inconceivable, or logically impossible, is a purely philosophical puzzle which could not be answered by the prophets and apostles out of their own first hand religious experience . . . the logical concept of necessary being cannot be given in religious experience. It is an object of philosophical thought and not of religious experience (p. 85).
In chapters seven and eight Hick again dedicates himself to reconstruction of Christianity's beliefs. Here he subjects the notion of Christ's two nature (one human, one divine) theory, Son of God and Incarnation theory, etc. to scathing criticism. He also argues that Christ's moral teachings cannot be ignored. Tennus taught imitating God's attributes, along with faith (the Christian faith). Morality should play a vital role in a Christian's belief. Christian belief should be cleansed of the incarnation doctrine, the doctrine of Jesus as the son of God. These doctrines developed much later in the Christian Church as a result of Greek influence. The language of divine sonship was available to the growing Christian community in the Old Testament and other cultural sources. But it had been used there as a metaphor. It never meant actual divine sonship. Hick says: "But 'Son of God' in these contexts is Old Testament messianic language and does not imply the trinitarian notion of God the Son, as this was to develop in the theology of the Church" (pp. 115–116).

Chapter eight is titled "The Essence of Christianity". Here Hick brings forth the moral thrust of Christianity. Christianity is a way to life and death; it is a way of salvation, a way to the ultimate good for which man has been created. The way to eternal life is the Christian way, a practical way, a way to be lived. But nevertheless it is not simply ethics. "Accordingly the Christian ethic by itself is not the Christian Way. The other element that is also essential is belief or faith, together with the activity of worship in which it most directly expresses itself" (p. 110).

Chapter nine is dedicated to elucidation of a new revolution in religion, especially Christian religion, which Hick terms "the Copernican revolution in theology". Its main theme is to see Christianity as a way of responding to God rather than the exclusive way which was the assumption of his Christian predecessors for many centuries. Hick's new "Copernican Theology" rejects the "Ptolemaic Theology", which had given a central place to Christianity amongst all the religions of the world, proclaiming itself as the sole or exclusive redemptive way. The Ptolemaic theology claimed that outside Christianity there was no salvation.

Some conscientious Christians who do not like to declare eternal damnation on other faith holders call them "anonymous Christians", or "Christians in-the-making", etc. Hans Kung declares that people of other faiths will be saved by their prophets from eternal damnation, but Christianity will always enjoy a central place in religion. Hans Kung's central and the most striking suggestion is that the world religions, by which he means all religions other than Catholic Christianity, should be regarded as the ordinary ways of human salvation and the Catholic Christianity as the extraordinary way. In Kung's opinion other faiths are
pre-Christian which may seek God through their own ways "until such times as he is confronted in an existential way with the revelation of Jesus Christ" (quoted by Hick on p. 129). All These attempts to include other faiths in one's own, according to Hick, are attempts to draw epicycles within the "Plotemaic Theology" in the manner of "Plotemaic Astronomy" which would not allow any other astronomy and would explain new celestial events by framing epicycles within the "Ptolemaic Astronomy". Such vain attempts do more damage to knowledge and belief rather than doing any benefit. Hick's Copernican revolution of theology proposes wholehearted admission of other religions as valid and authentic responses to God, the Ultimate, the Real.

In chapter ten "The New Map of the Universe of Faith" Hick develops his arguments for the validity of religious pluralism, against exclusivism ("no salvation outside Christianity") or inclusivism ("all other religious faiths can be considered as epicycles within the central faiths of Christianity"). The questions of conflicting truth-claims, Hick argues, should not bother us. Great world religions are not "essentially rivals" (p. 137). They began in different times and different geographical areas to cater to the religious need of their people. One single faith could not be proclaimed in the ancient life scenario as "in a single mighty act" for the entire human race through "any human mediation". But the essence of all these religions was the same though their prophets or redeemers were different. Communication was not as effective in those times to allow such divine strategy. But now time has changed. The new communication technology allows quick spread of knowledge. A global religion should emerge. This global religion, in Hick's view, should allow cultural differences to prevail and concentrate on the central theme—worship of God, the Transcendent, the Real.

In chapter eleven, Hick again takes up the incarnation question and argues against it. In chapter twelve Hick explains the mythology involved in the incarnation theme. Here he explains the purpose and usefulness of myths: "Myths are also responses to problematic phenomena" (p. 167). The last chapter, i.e. chapter thirteen is dedicated to a theology of death. Eschatology, (the end) ressurection, salvation themes are discussed. The world is a place of soul-making. Ressurection is beginning of a new life in God's presence to overcome faults or failings of one's entire life. God's infinite mercy and love is available in this new life to men after ressurection. One should not fear death. Death is a temporary pause of functions like sleep in our ordinary earthly life. This pause is necessary to gain energy to face the challenge of a new day. Similarly death prepares us for afterlife. New challenges are to be met within this afterlife with
God's infinite guidance and love at our disposal. Death is not a punishment as Augustine thought. Death is not termination or extinction of human life. Death is a relaxing moment provided by a merciful God for enabling us to walk on the path of truth.

After God and the Universe of Faiths Hick wrote and edited many other books on the same subject. His edited book The Myth of God Incarnate, 1977 especially was a very daring enterprise. Hick who was a Presbyterian Minister of the Church of England had to face the charge of blasphemy. There was a great uproar in the General Synod for writing such a provocative title. Serious controversy started on the question of Christ's incarnation and other related themes. A marked change in conservative thinking nevertheless was brought about on account of this academic venture of Hick.

Hick later produced many other books on his favourite themes of incarnation and global theology with fresh arguments and new insights.

As his project progressed he got engaged in inter-faith dialogue with representative scholars of other religions with the global theology and religious pluralism agenda in hand. Three Faiths - One God, Problems of Religious Pluralism, The Myth of Christian Uniqueness, are some of his famous titles. Finally Hick in 1989 came up with his masterpiece, An Interpretation of Religion, on which he won the Grawemeyer Award. The subsequent works, The Metaphor of God Incarnate and The Rainbow of Faiths, were also devoted to the same theme.

In his later books Hick reviewed and restated his arguments with greater force and enhanced insight but in a rather humble posture. He invited representatives of other world religions on various inter-faith dialogue forums, and he is still involved with the same project.

God and the Universe of Faiths brings many insights and concerns, especially perhaps to a Muslim reader. Hick's rejection of the doctrines of Christ's incarnation, Christ's atonement, and the original sin are pleasant surprise to the Muslim readers for the Qur'an had rejected these doctrines as false more than fourteen hundred years ago. The Christian-Muslim debates on these doctrines had started in the Prophet's own time and on the instruction of the Qur'an itself. (See the Qur'an 3:63.) These doctrines now stand refuted by Hick, a Presbyterian Minister of the Church of England. Muslims obviously welcome Hick's efforts in creating some understanding between Christians and Muslims by refuting these most controversial Christian beliefs.

Hick is also appreciated for his defence of the cognitivity of religious experience and religious knowledge, and for his criticism of various new trends in religion such as pragmatism and the language game theory which rob it of its true meaning. But a Muslim finds it difficult to accept Hick's
new global religion agenda especially when he knows that a global religion had already been sent by God some fourteen hundred years ago.

Hick claims that the technological advancement in the twentieth century has made it now possible to communicate the idea of a global religion or a global perspective in religion. "A world wide revelation might be possible today, thanks to inventions of printing and even more to radio, T.V. and communication satellites. But in the technology of the ancient world this was not possible" (p. 136). In the earlier phases of history due to lack of communication facility God did not deem it fit to reveal Himself on earth through a single "mighty act" or through "human mediation". Hence prophets were sent in different parts of the world to guide various communities resulting in plurality of religions. Respecting this plurality, Hick recommends change in perspective of believers by accepting that (1) other faiths are valid response to the Transcendent, (2) the Transcendent/the Ultimate/the God is the object of worship in each case.

The Muslims' argument is not substantially very different from Hick's when they plead the case of Islam as the religion. The Muslims also, basing themselves on the authority of the Qur'an, admit that other world religions, especially the Abrahamic religions, had originated with divine revelation. These religions were for the guidance of specific communities. However, the basic message was the same for all communities. Time was not ripe for revealing the religion in its completeness before the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and the Qur'an. Communication became fast in the 6th century CE and the time was appropriate for the religion, and Makkah and Madinah were the appropriate places from where the message of the One True God could be communicated fully world over through the Prophet of Islam and the Qur'an. Were it not so the message would have died or at least become distorted in time. But surprisingly the final message of God, that He alone is the true Deity, the only proper object of worship, is intact to this day. That Necessary Being alone could be or should be the proper object of worship is a proposition that is admitted both by Findlay and Hick. Only for Findlay Necessary Being does not exist, whereas for Hick He very much exists. The Muslims' claim is also in line with Hick that it is the factually Necessary Being who is the object of their worship. This Necessary Being truly exists and is not a figment of anyone's imagination. Now the role of the Prophet is no more than that of a communicator of guidance from Necessary Being (God) Himself and the proper way of worshipping Him. What Hick is communicating as a philosopher today was communicated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) more than fourteen hundred years ago in his special capacity as a messenger of
God. The Unity of God is an admitted truth for Muslims. There is nothing new or astounding in Hick's message as far as Muslims are concerned. From the Muslim point of view, Hick's stance amounts to an endorsement of the erstwhile stance of Islam.

The religious pluralism agenda of Hick is also admissible from the Muslim's perspective to the extent that religious tolerance is a part of a Muslim's religious life: "There is no coercion in religion" 2: 256). is a principle of the Qur'ān itself. But when the final truth "there is no God but God" has come from the Lord [one God], then calling people to this truth in a goodly manner is also a Qur'ānic principle. If the final truth is known clearly and people at large are attuned to accept it then why should they be left with distorted truth? When light is available why should people be left in darkness? Why should that which can be stated and understood in clean terms be allowed to remain shrouded in mythology? Shouldn't mythology give place to factually based literal expressions when minds are mature enough to grasp the literal expressions? Modern man's mind, in any case, is attuned to facts and not to myths any more.

And finally Hick's solution to the problem of evil needs to be carefully reviewed. He chooses Irenaean theodicy as against Augustinian theodicy to eliminate the original sin dogma. In this stance he is to a great extent in conformity with Islamic theodicy according to which man is born on the fitrah of Islam. No original sin has been transmitted to mankind. Man is not a fallen creature. Man's first act of disobedience, which was his first free act, was forgiven by God when he turned to God and God chose him for Himself. The Muslims also believe that this world is a place of soul-making. The travails of life, sufferings, both natural and moral, prepare him for God. There is a great reward in this and in after-life for those who follow the straight path, and there is punishment for transgression.

Hick, however, cannot reconcile himself with the idea of punishment or hell beyond this life. God's infinite mercy cannot allow eternal punishment or Hell which symbolizes evil. The Christian idea of God's infinite love and mercy is tantamount to negation of Hell. A Muslim thinker Muhammad Iqbal's insight in solution to the problem of good and evil is worth mentioning:

God and evil, though opposites, must fall within the same whole. There is no such thing as isolated facts; for facts are systematic wholes the elements of which must be understood by mutual reference. Logical judgment separates the element of a fact only to reveal their independence. (See Muhammad Iqbal, Reconstruction of Religions Thought in Islam, ed., M. S. Shaikh, Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 68.)
The Fall does not mean any moral depravity. It is man's transition from simple consciousness to the first flash of self-consciousness, a kind of awakening from the dream of nature with a throb of personal causality in one's own being. Nor does the Qur'an regard the earth as a torture-hall where an elementally wicked humanity is imprisoned for an original act of sin (Ibid., 67–68).

There is no such thing as eternal damnation in Islam. The word 'eternity' used in certain verses relating to Hell is explained by the Qur'an itself to mean only a period of time (78: 23). Hell, therefore, as conceived by the Qur'an, is not a pit of everlasting torture inflicted by a revengful God; it is a corrective experience which may make a hardened ego once more sensitive to the living breeze of Divine Grace. Nor is heaven a holiday. Life is one and continuous. Man marches always onward to receive ever fresh illuminations from an Infinite Reality which "every moment appears in a new glory" (Ibid., 98).


Since the end of the Cold War, Western strategists have spent a great deal of their time on the nature of the emerging world order. Francis Fukuyama's *End of History*, Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, and several other seminal works have attracted the attention of scholars, politicians and members of the reading public around the world. Each of these texts is the sampling of intellectual fruits by one strategist or another who is pre-occupied with the present state of affairs in the world. The collapse of the former Soviet Union and the fragmentation of the old coalition against that ideological empire have combined to heighten the need for a new world order. This book by Samuel Huntington is the latest addition to the growing list of works trying to decipher the future course of international relations. It is an elaboration of an earlier article on the same subject published in the Summer, 1993 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, an important forum for debates on U.S. foreign policy.

Huntington's book is significant in four important respects. But before we go to the discussion of how significant this work is in the universe of American strategic thought, let us examine his rationale for writing this book, given in the first chapter. In that part of the book Huntington argues for a new paradigm in international relations theory. Contending that the post-Cold War period begs for a new way of looking