

## Renewal (Tajdeed) of the Deen

Yusuf as-Sarasee, Al-Quds

<https://www.al-waie.org/archives/article/18262>

(Translated)

Allah (swt) made laws (sunan) and traditions for the lives of human societies that protect them from corruption, such as the law of the alteration of eras between people, the law of the prompt destruction of the arrogant oppressor, and the law of revival that can happen only with thought, amongst others. Similarly, Allah (swtswt) has made particular laws (sunan) for the Islamic Ummah that protect and preserve the existence of the Islamic Deen, so that the Deen is the final correct and appropriate one, for all times and places, and is a Deen that dominates over all religions and ideologies.

Amongst the many blessings of Allah (swt) upon the Islamic Ummah, Allah (swt) took the responsibility of preserving the Book and His Deen against distortion. For that, Allah (swt) has made a victorious group upon the Truth in every period. Whoever seeks the truth will find such a group. Accordingly, there is no era devoid of having people who advocate the Truth and stand witness before the people. Similarly, amongst the blessings of Allah (swt) upon the Muslims for the protection of their religion is that He (swt) sends someone at the end of every century to renew this religion for this Ummah as the Prophet (saw) said in a hadith reported by Abu Dawud, «إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ لِهَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ عَلَى رَأْسِ كُلِّ مِائَةِ سَنَةٍ مَنْ يُجَدِّدُ لَهَا دِينَهَا» **“At the beginning of every century, Allah will send one who will revive its religion for these people.”**

Thus, the renewer (mujadid) will arise to renew the matters of this Deen, clarify the correct understanding of Islam, remove from Islam what does not belong to it, and strive hard to solve the greatest problems faced by Muslims. This blessing is one of the greatest blessings upon the Muslims by the Grace and Mercy of Allah (swt) to sustain this Deen as a testament to humanity for being the final Deen until the Day of Judgment, whereby the Islamic Ummah stands witness over the rest of the nations.

And here, one needs to answer the question: Why does the Deen need renewal (tajdeed)? The answer to this is: Islam is a Deen implemented by people in their life, which includes the law to defend the Islamic thoughts and others, from both exceeding the limits and negligence in terms of implementation, including the emergence of realities that require the clarification of Shariah rulings regarding them. This is a matter where there is a possibility of penetration of thoughts foreign to Islam, as a result of defending. Also, the understanding may weaken, as a result of exceeding the limits and negligence. The linkage of the realities with the Shariah rulings may be disrupted if ijihad is not performed. These are the factors, and if they are prolonged, they will lead to ambiguity and separation between Islam and realities, which in turn require continuous revival.

Before commencing the discussion about the meaning of renewal (tajdeed) and its reality, let us first examine the idea of the resurgence of the project of renewal of the Deen in the modern days amongst some of the Islamic thinkers. It seems that their motive for the existence of this thought is not the Islamic motive. Instead, it is an emulation of the West. The Muslims have faced trials and tribulations at the hand of the capitalist European nations since the beginning of the nineteenth century CE. The Muslims emulated them in every matter. Amongst these matters was the matter of renewal and reformation of religion. Thus, we must look into the history of the emergence of the thought of reformation and renewal before the Renaissance Era for the Christian Europeans. So, we can see what it led them to in terms of their religious matters and, hence, help us reflect on the matter we face!

## **Emergence of the Thought of Renewal and Reformation in Europe**

Before the sixteenth century CE, Europe was crushed under the tyranny of the Catholic Church. This in turn led to revolutions and the rise of reformation movements in Europe. These revolutions ranged from Protestantism to Secularism, and they ideologically resulted in real revolutions against Emperors and Kings, as in the French revolution. This struggle ended with the change of thought and the ruling system in Europe.

The German priest, Martin Luther, had called for religious reformation at the beginning of the Sixteenth Century. He called for reforms in the Catholic Church in terms of its authority to interpret religion, infallibility, and privileges as those were confined to the Pope of the Vatican in Rome. Luther had called for the necessity of re-interpreting the New Testament i.e. Bible and the Old Testament i.e. the Torah, according to the new vision. This was the beginning of the thought of the religious reformation of Christianity in Europe, and the Protestant doctrine emerged from his call. Accordingly, Christianity was divided into three groups: Eastern Orthodox, Western Catholicism, and Protestantism. Countless Christian churches were born out of this new Protestant sect. Each had their independent doctrine, legislation, and methodologies. Accordingly, the Western Christian Church fragmented into multiple sects, with churches antagonizing each other, and this was due to the idea of Lutheran religious renewal.

The Protestant Church accepted the emerging secularism thought in Europe, when the conflict between the clergy, Kings and Emperors on one side, and thinkers and philosophers on the other side began. They had revolted against the thought of divine right and replaced it with the thought of natural rights, and the necessity of separating religion from life affairs i.e. secularism. The Protestant Church in Britain was the first to accept the thought of the separation of religion from the state, after the Cromwellian rebellions of the seventeenth century CE. Consequently, the roots of the new capitalist ideology and secularism arose from Britain.

## **Invention of the Thought of Evolution in Europe**

After Europe had given up religion and separated it from life, it needed to enact laws and legislations independent of religion. Europeans took, from Romans and Greeks, the so-called natural laws to replace the Church's laws. The reality of natural laws is that they remain constant and do not change. However, the laws they legislated at that time were forced to continuously change and required patching up to adapt them to reality.

This matter created problems among them. The human laws in democracy change according to human desires and interests. This is contradictory to the constant, natural laws. So there was a need to justify this change, which was provided by the claim that nature itself contains the law of evolution. Accordingly, they generated an imagined idea and named it evolution. They considered it a law of nature. Accordingly, evolutionists claimed that the laws and systems of humans must evolve, as evolution is originally one of the laws of nature, which are continuously changing and evolving. So, the laws they enact must be compatible with the changing circumstances and realities. They also claimed that the systems that do not evolve with time will lead to the accumulation of problems that prevent them from keeping pace with the evolving reality, leading to becoming obsolete. Hence, they argued that there is a constant need to replace laws with modern sophisticated civilized laws!

This is because empirical science, according to the West, is the basis of correctness and righteousness. The Europeans took advantage of biological sciences to claim evolution as a law of nature in the life of living organisms. So, the school of natural transition was established in France by Georges De Buffon, the author of *Histoire Naturelle* (Natural History) in which he changed the definition of a species from a fixed, unchanging, universal class to "the historical succession of ancestor and descendant, linked by material connection through generation." Then, Darwin invented the theory of evolution in England after integrating his theory with the ideas of the school of naturalism and the ideas of the school of natural selection.

The thinkers of capitalism and socialism based on Darwin's theory claim that evolution, progression, and revival are amongst the laws of nature, and that this is what keeps the systems and thoughts alive, developing and evolving, and those who do not evolve will inevitably perish. This claim is an admission of failure of their laws and systems. If the laws and system are not appropriate, unable to address the problems and existing realities to solve them, then it is a failed and corrupt law and system. The process of altering them, on the pretext of evolution and modernization, is only an attempt to conceal such corruption and failure, under the slogan of evolution and modernity.

Had they contemplated deeply, they would have found that the measure of reformation and success, of any system or law, is its ability to solve the problems, through its principles and foundations, upon which it is established. If new issues and realities arise with the change in time and circumstances, and this system and law can treat the problems, without abandoning their principles and foundations, then it is considered as an effective one. However, if the lawmakers resort to arbitrary and pragmatic attempts to change and adapt the law to the new circumstances by making corrupt and invalid interpretations of the existing laws and resulting in the abandonment of its principles and foundations, then such law has deviated from its purpose and standards, which indicates the corruption and failure of such law in solving the newly aroused problems.

Accordingly, the claim of evolution and revival is an attempt to evade the consequences of corruption and the failure of systems and laws. It is a failure because of the presence of the criterion that defines the validity of systems and laws being in their ability to mold, stretch and patch, under the pretext of pseudo-evolution, rather than the validity being able to find effective solutions for problems.

### **Emergence of Reformation and “Renewal” Movement Amongst Muslims**

France invaded Egypt and then Jerusalem under the leadership of Napoleon in 1798 CE. France withdrew from them in 1801, and then Muhammad Ali Pasha assumed the authority of Egypt. One of his activities was to delegate a group of young Egyptians to learn European sciences. Some of them, who returned, were imbued with the European ideas such as democracy, freedom, and the capitalist system. They were mesmerized by the industrial and civilizational advancement of Europe. They began to spread new thoughts in Egypt and its surroundings. Amongst the symbols of this movement were Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, Khair al-Din al-Tunisi and others.

As a result of this new movement, that called for emulating Europe in its civilization and systems, another movement, i.e. a reformist movement, emerged. They called for the reconciliation between Islam and the Western civilization. The chief of the movement was Jamal Din Al-Afghani, who began to spread the idea of renewal and reformation amongst Muslims. Groups of Azhari scholars were influenced by Al-Afghani, and the most prominent of them was Muhammed Abduh, who became the head of Al-Azhar. Amongst his students was Muhammed Rashid Ridha, the author of Al-Manaar Magazine. Then this moderate reformist movement, which was trying to reconcile the capitalist civilization and ideology, with the Islamic civilization and ideology, continued to spread in the form of movements, groups, and individuals in various Muslim countries.

One of the prominent thoughts of the reformist school was the idea of religious renewal and reformation. If we delve deeper into this idea, we will find that it is similar to what the Christians of Europe did when they called for religious reformation. One of the prominent consequences of that was the acceptance of secularism, and the separation of religion from life. The reformist school resolved to take what the West had in terms of democracy in the ruling system, and the capitalist economic system. They wrapped these matters with the cover of Shariah, under the pretext of renewal and reconciliation. However, this reformist movement did not explicitly agree with the idea of secularism, as happened amongst the Protestants in Europe. Instead, they

wanted to benefit from what the West had in terms of economic and ruling systems, whilst preserving the creed, worships, and morals of Islam.

The reformists had attempted to renew the religion by searching in the Islamic Shariah about rules and ahkam, such that they would allow what the West had in terms of systems and thoughts. So, they found Ahadith of the Messenger of Allah (saw) which stipulated renewal. Such Ahadith were an entry point for them to change the matters in religion, so that they may conform to what the West had, all that under the guise of reformation and renewal. However, they turned to the Usul Fiqh (Principles of Jurisprudence) and found it closed to them, hence, preventing them from accepting the Western systems. However, they continued their search and digging, until they found a loophole, through which they could implement what they wanted. It was interpreting the ideas of Purposes of Shariah (Maqasid Shariah) and the Public Interests (Masalih Mursala) in a way that was compatible to accept utilitarianism, as it was the foundational idea that the West had in matters of economy and ruling. These re-interpretations allowed to make the West the measure of civilization, development, and wisdom and essentially required for the Islamic rulings to be compatible with that.

This is a quick historical account of the emergence of the idea of the renewal of religion in Islam. It was, to some extent, an attempt similar to what happened in the Christian West and to benefit from its experience. However, this matter is following the footsteps of European Christians in entering the lizard hole, which produced for them secularism, atheism, distorted creeds, and new religious sects, that had nothing in common between them. Do we Muslims accept replicating such an experience, that had destroyed Christianity by implementing them in the Deen of Islam? And are we then to call it the renewal of the Deen?!

### **Revival in the Midst of the War of Ideas**

At the beginning of the current century, America, the head of the Western civilization, adopted to fight Islam under the pretext of combatting terrorism. America's former secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, called to form a new agency to fight what he called a "war of ideas," having asserted, "You're not going to win this with bullets, you're in a competition of ideas." It is a renewed old war to deal more effectively with the threats of the twenty-first century CE. American writer, Thomas Friedman, also published a collection of articles on the war of ideas. He saw that the war should be within Islamic societies, by strengthening the moderates to carry out these tasks on behalf of the West and to get rid of the ideas of extremism, violence, and terrorism.

Since the Islamic tendency is getting stronger within the Ummah, the process of eradicating it appears impossible. The West has sensed what the sincere and aware Muslims are trying to achieve today i.e. reviving the call to establish Khilafah (Caliphate). The West has recognized the danger of this rising trend amongst the Ummah in this civilizational conflict when clear signs of the decline of the West, and the advancement of Islam have appeared. The West has also realized that the current regimes in our lands have become exhausted, and that there is a lack of trust between the regimes and their peoples. So, the West wants to rectify the matter before Islam reaches power. Accordingly, the West has resorted to dealing with Islam, and wants the renewal of Islam, to be similar to their experience, which resulted in the dissolution of their religion. Hence, they are conspiring to manage the understanding of the texts of Islam to ensure the desired evolution. The West is trying to disarm Islam of the components by which Islam confronts and challenges the Western civilization, particularly in politics, economics, and ruling.

This effort has recently come ashore in the form of fighting "Islamists" political Islam by claiming that Islam is just a moral, devotional, ritualistic call. It claims that there is neither state, nor Shariah nor Jihad in it. This call is opposite to the call of the renewal of the Deen according to the Islamic concept. Thus, the model adopted by the disbelieving West to distance the Muslims away from establishing the Khilafah and the ruling by all that Allah (swt) has revealed is the model of 'Islamism.' Accordingly, the West puts severe pressure on the Islamic

movements to abandon Islamic political activities, threatening by extermination, whilst allowing them to perform charitable, moral, and devotional works alone under the pretext that there is no politics in Islam.

The policy of the colonialist disbeliever to confront Islam is to find tools that are in harmony with its policy i.e. trying to create new laws and principles in Islam, under the guise of the renewal of the religion. This so-called renewal has proposals, such as renewal of the creed of the Deen, the need for a new jurisprudence, pragmatic or practical jurisprudence (Fiqh Al-Waqi'), jurisprudence of necessities (Fiqh Dharoora), jurisprudence of balance, the lesser of two evils, flexibility of Islam, call for renewing the Deen by approaching Purposes of Shariah (Maqasid Shariah), in a twisted and undisciplined manner and the call for a contemporary reading of the religious texts.

### **Innovation and Revival**

As a result of the dominance of Western concepts in this era amongst Muslims, there is a confusion between two Shariah concepts, namely: the concept of renewal and the concept of innovation (Bid'a). These are the two concepts that are dealt with by Islam in juristic research and it is not permissible to have confusion about them. Islam acknowledges the renewal and calls for it. On the other hand, Islam forbids the innovation and deems it as a misguidance. The difference between the two concepts becomes clear by reviewing the evidence. The hadith says, «إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ لِهَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ عَلَى رَأْسِ كُلِّ مِائَةِ سَنَةٍ مَنْ يُجَدِّدُ لَهَا دِينَهَا» **“At the beginning of every century, Allah will send one to the Ummah who will renew its Deen.”** It is not permissible to invoke this whilst keeping away the other divine texts that are related to this subject, like the saying of the Prophet (saw), «وَأَنَّ كُلَّ مُحَدَّثَةٍ بَدْعَةٌ، وَكُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ» **“Every newly-invented thing is an innovation and every innovation is going astray, and every going astray is in the Fire”** and the saying of the Prophet (saw), «مَنْ أَحْدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ» **“If anyone introduces into this affair of ours anything which does not belong to it, it is rejected.”**

Innovation is of two forms: if someone introduces and affirms something which is not affirmed by the Shariah, then he made an innovation as the Prophet (saw) said, «مَنْ أَحْدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ» **“If anyone introduces into this affair of ours anything which does not belong to it, it is rejected.”** Similarly, if someone denies something affirmed by the Shariah, then he has made innovation as Allah (swt) says, ﴿أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ﴾ **“So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part?”** [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah 2:85]. Thus, innovation is the alteration of the Deen by introducing something foreign into it that the Deen did not have. The concept of innovation is the alteration of the Deen by adding or removing something. It is related to adding to a matter that originally came with a Shariah definition of how to do it, i.e. the method. It may be specific to worship such as Salah and Hajj. Thus, the Maghrib prayer has three raka'at and whoever increases it to four or five raka'at, then he has made an innovation. His act is prohibited. Similarly, creating social distancing in a congregational prayer, on the pretext of existing Coronavirus disease, is an innovation. It is forbidden because it alters the Shariah method of lining up in rows. Another example is the tormenting of the body and depriving it of the enjoyment of the good things, thinking it will elevate the soul is an innovation (bid'ah) taken from Indian philosophy.

Amongst the innovations is the attempt to bring new evidence into the science of Usul Fiqh, such as introducing the concept of benefit and harm of the capitalists, under the cover of repelling the corrupt and drawing closer to the interests. Whoever wants to introduce modern Western kufr systems into Islam, under the guise of Maqasid Shariah, to confuse the people about their Deen, then he has made innovation. Innovation during the previous generations was by adding things into the Deen that do not belong to it. As for innovation in modern days, it is done by removing things from the Deen, such as its political and economic systems.

As for the renewal of the Deen, it is a practical necessity and is a Shariah obligation. It happens every century, by repelling all the impurities from this Deen, removing things that do not belong to it, and adding what had been removed previously, in such a way that the Deen is restored completely, just as it was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (saw). What is intended by the renewal of the Deen is not that something new is brought into the Deen that has no basis in Islam. Essentially, bringing something new that does not belong to Islam is an innovation to Islam, and it is reprehensible. Hence, what is intended by the renewal is to restore what has died, to build what has been lost, and to remove what has been added. In other words, it is the purification, the crystallization, and the correction of the Islamic thought to rejuvenate it.

One of the most important matters that the renewal deals with is identifying and removing the forbidden innovations that were introduced throughout the different Islamic eras. Because they are heresies attached to religion, which is not from it. But if the innovations are not from what the hadith of the Prophet (saw), «مَنْ أَحَدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ» **“If anyone introduces into this affair of ours anything which does not belong to it, it is rejected,”** in the sense that it is from the command of Islam and does not contradict it and has a basis, then according to the concept of disagreement it is not rejected, but rather acceptable because it is from the command of Islam. This innovation is not rejected, rather it is acceptable according to the principle of Mafhum Mukhalafa (Concept of the Opposite Meanings). This is because this innovation belongs to the matters of Islam. Thus it is not a prohibited innovation. Instead, it is a good innovation (بدعة الحسنة) that can be metaphorically named as Bid'athul Hasana (بدعة الحسنة) (Good Innovation). Such innovations are part of Islam and come under the subject of renewal. It is a recommended innovation that falls under the good practices of Islam.

Thus renewal is attached to the good practices of Islam as the Prophet (saw) says, «مَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً حَسَنَةً فَعَمَلٌ بِهَا بَعْدَهُ كُتِبَ لَهُ مِنْ أَجْرِ مَنْ أَعْمَلَ بِهَا وَلَا يَنْقُصُ مِنْ أَجُورِهِمْ شَيْءٌ» **“Whoever introduces a good practice in Islam, he will receive its reward and a reward equivalent to that of those who follow it, without that detracting from their reward in their slightest...”** [Reported by Muslim]. What is intended is the commendable good practices commanded by Allah (swt), even though there was no example present during the time of the Messenger of Allah (saw). One such is the saying of Umar (ra) about praying Taraweeh in congregation, «نِعْمَتِ الْبِدْعَةُ هَذِهِ» **“What a blessed innovation it is.”** The nature of action being a good or bad action is determined by the Shariah, which establishes the evidence for that action. Otherwise, the action is a reprehensible innovation.

The difference between the renewal and the good practices in Islam is: One who introduces a good practice is doing that only because Shariah demands it, whilst the Shariah does not specify particular method to perform such a practice. He does this in a particular way only to encourage people to emulate it in good deeds. On the other hand, renewal includes good practices and is more than that, because renewal includes the revival of what has been dead from among the good practices, and the removal of what has been added from among the innovations, in addition to solving the new problems and emerging issues that evaded them.

Amongst the revival that Muslims are always obliged to treat are the most important issues concerning Islam in that particular era. It can be a need to solve by reviving the good practices. An example of that is the idea of 'Kharaj tax' as done by Sayyidina Umar Al-Farook (ra). He realized that there must be an additional and constant source of wealth for the treasury for provisioning and spending on the interests of the state and the army, and to feed the poor and others. Another example is the devising of the science of Usul Fiqh by Imam Shafi, as it was needed by Muslims at that time, as there was an increased division from the differences between the fiqh of Imam Abu Hanifa and the fiqh of Imam Malik besides the existence of problems where the required solution necessitated devising principles and rules for the Islamic Fiqh. Another example is the idea of 'Waqf/ endowment' created by Muslims to fund the needs of Muslim society and the collective obligations, that were addressed on that, where wealthy

people endow some of the properties, lands, and wealth as 'ceaseless charity' (sadaqah Al-jariya) for benefiting the Muslim public.

To distinguish renewal from innovation, every new idea must be in origin from the Sharia. Thus, the action of Sayyidina Umar about Kharaj was based on the verse in Quran that says, ﴿وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَدِهِمْ﴾ **“And [there is a share for] those who came after them,”** [TMQ 59:10]. That is, there is a share of Booty (Al-Fa'ie) for the Muslims who come after the victory i.e. in the kharji land property, and the Companions of the prophet (saw) accepted that. Similarly, the origin of the charity endowments is the hadith of the Prophet (saw): «إذا مات ابن آدم انقطع عمله إلا من» «... صدقة جارية» **“When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: Sadaqah Jariyah (ceaseless charity)...”** Thus the endowments fall under the ceaseless type charity. The science of Usul Fiqh has roots in the Quran, Sunnah, the footsteps of Companions of the Prophet (saw) and the 'ulema. Imam Shafi (rh) compiled the rulings and principles and arranged and expanded them to create a new science. Thus, these mentioned new matters are innovations that had an origin in Sharia and fell under the principle of the opposite meaning 'Mafhum Mukhalfah' to the saying of the Prophet (saw), «مَنْ أَحْدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ» **“If anyone introduces into this affair of ours anything which does not belong to it, it is rejected,”** i.e. anything which belongs to it is accepted. Meaning, if it has origin in Islam, it is an acceptable innovation, and it is a recommended revival. What is new about it is that it keeps pace with the calamities, needs, and issues of Muslims, and provides reviving solutions to them from the Shariah, according to the considered principles related to the revelation. Now all matters that have no origin, or a thing based on gaps in the assumptions of the principles such as the interests (Masalih) and Purposes of Shariah (Maqasid Shariah), then they are actually solutions influenced by other than Islam. Therefore, they do not fall under the realm of Shariah revival, but are an innovation.

What obliges Muslims these days in the matters of required renewal is to seek the resolution for the distortion of trust in the thoughts and rulings of Islam, created by Western civilization, after the intellectual invasion of Muslims, particularly in the ruling, economic, and political fields. Thus, there must be a Mujaddid (reviver) and Mujtahid to carry out such important tasks in this era.

### **The Relation of Renewal with the Claim of Evolution:**

Because of the extreme danger of a positive view of the term “evolution” globally, including Muslims, we must clarify the confusion and aberration in this term and replace it with another term that is appropriate and real to stop using this illusory term.

Evolution is a transformation of something from one form to another, which means the gradual alteration of the thing into the best and preferred form. In the West, evolution is associated with modernity, civilization, and progress. Thus, modernization and civilization are terms that are considered close in meaning to the meaning of evolution i.e. they are synonyms, even though they do not refer to the same reality. The evolution of religion means the alteration of the religion in such a way that it keeps pace with civilization and modernity, or the removal of what hinders it to transform into the best.

On the other hand, renewal means restoring a thing i.e. returning the thing to the form that it was created with. Thus, renewing a cloth means repairing it and removing what attaches to it so that it appears as if it is new. Similarly, renewing a machine means cleansing and repairing it so that it can return to perform what it was created for, to look as if it is a new machine. Thus, renewal is to return something to its original and initial form such that it can perform the task it was created for.

The difference between evolution and renewal, from the intellectual point of view, is that: evolution does not intend to preserve the essence of a thing and to return it to what it was originally before. Rather it means changing something in a way that keeps pace with modern

civilization and removing the ideas that hinder this change and the transition to advanced modernity, even if the essence and origin of that thing changes. On the other hand, renewal is to reform a thing and to remove what attaches to it that does not belong to it to preserve its origin and essence.

So, the meaning of evolving the religion is to change its thoughts in a way to keep pace with civilization and modernity and to remove what hinders it to transform into the better. Accordingly, it will add some thoughts to the religion even if its originality changes in order to be civilized and modernized. On the other hand, renewing the religion means making a good understanding of the religion and to return it to a state just as it was when the revelation was revealed. This is achieved by correctly comprehending the reality of the divine texts and by removing what attaches to it that does not belong to it and is causing weakness in its understanding. Thus, it is a purification, crystallization, and cleansing process of thoughts of the religion from the factors producing blurring, distortion, and diversion of the original thoughts.

Some people have called the term 'evolution' in the past such that it gives the meanings of perfection (Ihsan) or making better i.e. with the meaning to be proficient in understanding things and occurrences and quality in mastering actions. However, this meaning is a mixture of the concept of perfection and the concept of evolution. This is because whilst perfection can happen in old matters and new matters, evolution can only happen in the new things that are better than the old matters. This is because evolution is the transformation from one state to another that is better than the former.

Thus, the theory of evolution in the West assumes that every new thing is an evolved one i.e. it is better than its former. This theory assumes that there is no relapse in history. However, the reality and the facts of history inform us that perfection and betterment may happen in an old matter and they may occur in the new one as well. Perfection has no connection with the past, nor with the new one. Instead, it is related to how to understand and perform things. Thus linguistics, creed, and jurisprudence are old sciences and there are no 'ulema today who are closer in comparison to the classical 'ulema, who excelled at these sciences, and were perfect in understanding and compiling them.

As for the mixing of the issue of evolution with modern industries, then the evolution seen in the industrialization of the West is the result of the existence of a new ideology in Europe. This ideology led to the revival in all fields including the industrial sciences. There is no connection between time and evolution, as is the case of the sciences amongst the Muslims that were progressed and evolved previously. Instead, the Muslims relapsed and fell behind with the decline of thought amongst them.

Thus, we must not use the term 'evolution'. Instead, we should use the term that is best, accurate, and precise, which is the term "Ihsan" (perfection).

### **When is Renewal or Progress Obligated?**

When the problems in society pile up one by one, and the laws and systems are unable to solve them with no way out, people search for the causes of such problems. They will find that the solution is to revive or develop systems and laws, irrespective that they are societal thoughts and concepts.

This is true when such systems, laws, and concepts do not emerge from a decisive correct intellectual basis. Instead, they are just collections of legislations, systems, and concepts created by humans themselves. In such a situation, it is justified to require evolution and modernization in the quest for the best solutions to treat human problems, and bring forth so-called elevated concepts that can keep pace with civilization, modernization, and progression. On the other hand, if thought and legislation emerged from the decisive and correct intellectual basis, as it is the case of a divine Deen from the One Who created humankind, Allah (swt), then



it can not be appropriate to demand evolving and altering it. Instead what is required is to renew and restore it.

Thus, Islam is the Deen of Allah (swt) that does not contain falsehood, either explicitly or implicitly. It is from the One Who created humankind, the One Who Knows what is best for the people in terms of thoughts, systems, and legislations. It is not permissible for humankind to touch the creed of this religion and its essence, and what it brings in terms of Shariah Ruling, because all of it is considered part of the divine revelation. Accordingly, evolution and modernization have no scope in the religion of Islam, as it is a divine Deen from the All-Wise, the All-Knowing.

What increases our insistence that the Deen of Islam does not need evolution is that the demand to include ideas of the Western capitalist civilization into Islam under the slogans of civilization, modernization, and development is, in fact, a demand for blind emulation of a dominating civilization. Knowing very well that the capitalist civilization and its ideology are human made means that they are definitely exposed to all kinds of slips, defects, shortcomings, and deficiencies. Furthermore, besides the corruption of this civilization in its foundation and intellectual principles, this civilization also failed in its practical implementation, and created catastrophic consequences and criminality, throughout the world, against non-European peoples and nations.

Why it is obliged to restore the religion, whilst it is the divine Deen that does not change nor evolve? The answer to this is: The renewal is not related to changing the divine texts of the Quran and Sunnah, nor is it related to changing the Arabic language or developing it. Instead, what is intended by that, as we have mentioned before, is that Islam is a Deen implemented by people in their life. So, it is natural to have conflicts between Islamic thoughts and other for the people, and they may exaggerate or be negligent in the implementation of a thought. Similarly, will be the case of new realities arising in need for extraction of Shariah rulings for them. This may result in the possibility of introducing foreign thoughts into Islam. This results in the weakening of the understanding of Islam because of excessiveness, negligence, and failure to link the realities correctly with Shariah rulings. If these are the factors, that are to last long durations, then they will eventually separate Islam from reality, and hence, the necessity of the continuous restoration of the Deen.

As for the changes the Arabic language as experienced over time as many languages have varied and changed over time: This is the law of Allah (swt) regarding languages, as Allah (swt) says, ﴿وَأَخْتَلَفُ الْأَلْسِنَتَكُمْ وَاللُّوَيْنَكُمْ﴾ **“And the diversity of your languages and your colors.”** [TMQ 30:22]. Thus, the Arabic language in which the revelation was revealed is not the same Arabic language of today. Instead, it has changed and differed through the ages and has become a group of colloquial dialects. The restoration of the language is not intended to work on returning all the Arabs, in their entirety, to speaking the classical language i.e. the language of the Quraysh, in which the revelation was revealed. This is an arduous path, besides being not required by the Shariah. Instead, what is required from us is to understand the revealed texts with the tool that was revealed, which is the language of the Arabs at the time. Any change that occurred to the language after the discontinuation of the revelation is not evidence nor is it to be considered.

Thus, the renewal is by returning to the correct linguistic understanding of the Shariah texts, that have undergone changes because of the existence of differences amongst the Arabs, from the time the revelation stopped until today. This is because the considered address of the Shariah is the address upon the situation for which the revelation was revealed i.e. upon which the Arabs were addressed, according to their understanding of the language as Arabs. It is not permissible to change or evolve such an understanding with the passage of time. Instead, it is an obligation to preserve the understanding completely just as they were before the discontinuation of the revelation. Accordingly, it is obliged upon the Mujaddid (renewer),

Mujtahid, Mufassir, Faqeeh, and all the 'ulema to master the language and the dialect the Quraish and the Arabs had in use at the time when the revelation was revealed, so that every one of them is capable to correctly understand what is intended by the words of Shariah

Linguists in the early centuries, with the start of the appearance of corruption of the dialects, consequently traced the classical Arab tribes famous for their eloquence in Arabic, and through them codified and recorded the rules of Arabic language and Arabic poetry, which is called Arabic literature. And they created linguistic knowledge necessary for the understanding such as the sciences of Balagha (eloquence), Nahw (grammar), Morphology (sarf), fiqh Al-lugha (linguistics), philology, dictation, Rasm, dictionaries and others. Therefore, linguists and Islamic 'ulema have spared us the trouble of this matter, and what is required is to learn those sciences and rely on them to understand the Shariah texts, so that we can understand them just as was understood by the Companions (ra) of the Prophet (saw). This is the necessary perfection (Ihsan).

Also, the renewal happens by understanding the reality upon which the shariah rulings were revealed, before the discontinuation of the revelation i.e. to understand the context (Manat). The understanding of the legal text by the jurist (faqih) or the mujtahid may be correct and unquestionable according to the linguistic and Shariah rules of those texts. However, the problem may lie in his understanding of and differentiating between realities and their relationship to the text. So, the defect occurs when such divine texts are related to other than the addressed reality and its Shariah context. Accordingly, the 'Ulema have recorded the causes for the revelation of the Ayat of the Quran and the backgrounds of the hadiths. They have written the Seerah to support understanding the reality of the divine texts.

Hence, the restoration in this matter occurs by tracing the places, monuments, circumstances, environments, and natural conditions that were prevalent during the time when the revelation was being received. The renewal in this regard will be of immense value like the renewal of the knowledge of Shariah weights and measures such as the amount of one sa'a, dinar, Dira', Qullah and others, or like knowing the tools of war and fighting, clothes and eating utensils that were used then, how the cities and villages were built or the water wells and methods of agriculture and industry and others. All such things benefit in understanding matters like the rulings when travelling, rulings of water, paths, buildings, preventative measures and others. All of them support the Mujtahid or faqih to scrutinize the context and understand the reality upon which the sharia revelation was revealed.

What is happening now in the lands of the two Sacred Masjids i.e. the destroying the Islamic monuments, under the presumed pretexts, is a sin. They destroyed important Islamic monuments such as the house of the Prophet (saw), the homes of the Companions (ra), the monumental masjids, and others. These are crimes against Muslims and their history. What is required is the preservation of all the Islamic monuments, particularly the things that were present during the time when the revelations were received as they are related to the realities upon which the sharia texts were revealed, which help us to understand the context of Shariah rulings, the Seerah of the Prophet (saw) and the history of the Muslims.

Thus, the required renewal amongst Muslims today is to understand Islam just as it was revealed during the time of the Messenger of Allah (saw). Renewal can be done by adhering to the Shariah and intellectual regulations, to acquire perfection in the understanding of the Shariah texts and their contexts, the way rulings are built on the related divine texts, and then its application to such a new reality that is comparable to the reality on which the divine texts were revealed. When a new reality that has no Shariah rulings derived by the previous 'ulema arises, Mujtahids and Fuqaha undertake the Ijthihad to derive the Shariah rulings for the newly arised situations based on the disciplines of the science of Usul Fiqh.