Also by Kenneth Cragg

THE THEOLOGY OF UNITY (translated from the Arabic)
THE EVENT OF THE QUR'ĀN
THE MIND OF THE QUR'ĀN
(Published by George Allen & Unwin)

THE CALL OF THE MINARET (new edition)
ALIVE TO GOD: MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN PRAYER
(Published by Oxford University Press)

COUNSELS IN CONTEMPORARY ISLAM
(Published by Edinburgh University Press)

MUHAMMAD AND THE CHRISTIAN
THIS YEAR IN JERUSALEM
(Published by Darton, Longman & Todd)

ISLAM AND THE MUSLIM
(Published by the Open University)

THE PEN AND THE FAITH

Eight Modern Muslim Writers and the Qur'ān

by

Kenneth Cragg

London
GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN
Boston Sydney

George Allen & Unwin (Publishers) Ltd,
40 Museum Street, London WC1A 1LU, UK

George Allen & Unwin (Publishers) Ltd,
Park Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 4TE, UK

Allen & Unwin Inc.,
Fifty Cross Street, Winchester, Mass 01890, USA

George Allen & Unwin Australia Pty Ltd,
8 Napier Street, North Sydney, NSW 2060, Australia

First published 1985

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Cragg, Kenneth
The pen and the faith: eight modern Muslim writers and the Qur'an.
1. Koran——Commentaries
I. Title
297'.1226 BP130.4
ISBN 0-04-297044-X

Set in 10 on 11½ Plantin by
Phoenix Photosetting, Chatham
and printed in Great Britain by
The Anchor Press Ltd, Tiptree, Essex

Foreword

The substance of this book formed the Ian Douglas Memorial Lectures delivered by Kenneth Cragg (D.Phil Oxon.) in three major cities of India in October and November 1984 at the invitation of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies, Hyderabad, India.

The Ian Douglas Memorial Lectures Series was established by the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies in recognition of the significant contribution which the Revd Dr Ian Henderson Douglas (1920–75) made during the years of his association with the Institute. He is well remembered as a leading spirit in the development of Christian Muslim dialogue and for his careful and honest scholarship. These lectures are seen as a fitting way in which his dedication to scholarship and dialogue can continue to find fulfilment.

A special fund has been established to enable the Institute from time to time to invite some scholar from India or overseas to deliver a series of lectures which will then be available for publication. It is intended that the lectures shall address issues of religious concern within the general purpose of seeking better understanding among people of different faiths, especially between Muslims and Christians.

It was largely the imagination and dedication of Ian Douglas as Director from 1962 to 1967 that revitalised the Institute and gave shape and direction to its expanding programme. Through his tireless efforts support for the Institute was broadened among the churches in India and beyond. He worked constantly to bring together and sustain a strong staff, inspiring them to work together as a team. He reached out to establish friendships with the Muslims of India and good relationships with Muslim institutions, all of which still continues. His vision and efforts laid the foundations for a building programme which has resulted in the present facilities of the Institute in Hyderabad.

Dr Douglas left India in 1968 and settled in the USA, where he worked as co-ordinator of the Syracuse branch of the Empire State College, University of New York. He suffered a sudden heart attack on February 18, 1975 which proved fatal.

The Board of Management of the Henry Martyn Institute was unanimous in inviting Bishop Cragg, a gifted and thoughtful writer, to be the first guest lecturer in the series. He is widely recognised as a leading Christian scholar of Islam. His book *The Call of the Minaret* (1956), shortly to be re-issued in a revised edition, marked a turning point in this field of study. It moved away from a merely academic

approach to Islam and pointed the way towards a new understanding and a positive encounter within the deep themes of Muslim religious thought and experience. It has influenced a whole generation of Christian students who have become increasingly aware of the significance of the Islamic world and of the need to know more about their Muslim neighbours.

Kenneth Cragg has had a deep and varied experience living and teaching in Arab countries and also in the United States, the United Kingdom and West Africa. He spent fourteen years resident in the Middle East, apart from numerous visits while resident elsewhere. He taught philosophy at the American University of Beirut. The research for which he received his doctorate at the University of Oxford was entitled: 'Islam in the 20th Century: The Relevance of Christian Theology to its Problems.' From 1951 to 1956 he was Professor of Arabic and Islamics at Hartford Seminary, Connecticut. During those years, and until 1960 he was editor of *The Muslim World*, a journal devoted to the study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relationships. His teaching and pastoral work in Jerusalem and Egypt kept him in close contact with current developments. During this time he served as assistant bishop in the Archbishopric (Anglican) in Jerusalem.

In *The Pen and the Faith* the reader will find a selection of contemporary, or near contemporary, Muslim writers and a study of their 'way' with the Qur'ān, how their concerns move with and from their Islamic Scripture. The writers selected serve well to illuminate the diversity of Quranic understanding and to indicate how Quranic guidance is discerned and applied to critical situations in the modern world, as seen by politicians, academics or men of letters. The works from which the lectures are drawn, it is important to stress, are not only those of textual exegesis but also of imaginative literature, sociology and political science. Faith and theology are always, in some degree, biographical. Their meaning and expression must be sought in the life-story of the faithful in every area of action and reflection. The survey as a whole is intended to help to ventilate serious issues facing us all, as well as attempting a solid, academic presentation for its own sake. The lectures awakened warm interest at the time of their delivery and I am happy that they are now available in book form and in more detailed format than the oral situation allows.

The inaugural function was held on October 27, 1983 at Vidyajyoti, a Catholic Institute of Religious Studies, in Delhi. The first two lectures took place at that venue, the third and fourth at the Ghalib Academy, Basti Hazrat Nizamuddin, New Delhi. The fourfold sequence was also given in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, and at Bangalore. Different chairmen presided on each occasion. The list of these indicates the reach and quality of the interest and participation.

1 Dr Rafiq Zakaria, MP and member Secretary, High Power Panel on Minorities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Weaker Sections, Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Lok Nayak Bhavan, New Delhi.
2 Syed Shahabuddin, IFS (retd), former Ambassador of India to Algeria and Mauretania, Editor of *Muslim India, Monthly Journal of Reference, Research and Documentation*, New Delhi.
3 Dr Christian W. Troll, SJ, PhD (London), Department of Islamic Studies, Vidyajyoti Institute of Religious Studies, Delhi.
4 Syed Ausaf Ali, Director, Indian Institute of Islamic Studies, Associate Editor, *Studies in Islam*, New Delhi.
5 Mir Akbar Ali Khan, former Governor of Uttar Pradesh and Orissa, President of Abul Kalam Azad Oriental Research Institute, Hyderabad.
6 Rt Revd Kariappa Samuel, Bishop of the Methodist Church in India, Hyderabad Episcopal Area, Chairman of the Board of Management Henry Martyn Institute, Hyderabad.
7 The Rt Revd Victor Premsagar, Bishop in Medak Diocese, Church of South India, Medak.
8 The Most Revd Arokyaswamy, Archbishop of Bangalore.
9 Mr S. M. Yahya, former Minister for Finance, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore.
10 Justice Mir Iqbal Hussain, former Judge, High Court of Karnataka, Bangalore.
11 The Rt Revd Solomon Doraiswamy, former Moderator of the Church of South India, Bangalore.

We enjoyed the co-operation of Vidyajyoti, the well-known Jesuit Centre of Religious Studies, Delhi; the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Oriental Research Institute, Hyderabad; the United Theological College, Bangalore; and Dharmaram College, a Catholic Centre for the Study of World Religions, Bangalore. I offer my deep gratitude to the heads of these institutions for their unfailing kindness and generosity.

The thought of Sayyid Qutb and Ali Shariati was also presented in a lecture at the Aligarh Muslim University, under the chairmanship of its Vice-Chancellor and with the co-operation of its Head of Islamic Studies, Dr Muhammad Iqbal Ansari. The theme of Ali Shariati alone was the topic at an invitation lecture at Osmania University, Hyderabad, by invitation of the Islamic Studies Department. Again the Vice-Chancellor presided, in the person of Mr Hashim Ali Akhtar. The Consul-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Hyderabad graced this occasion and presented an extended commentary on the role of Ali Shariati, which prefaced a lively discussion.

Among the other sessions during Dr Cragg's visit were a Faculty discussion at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (West Asian Studies Department), a lecture on 'Sufism and the Spread of Islam' to the Anjuman-e-Islam, Bombay, at the Akbar Pirbhoy Hall, and sessions in Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, Andhra Christian College, Hyderabad and St John's Regional Seminary, Hyderabad.

The Church in India in general and the Henry Martyn Institute in particular have profited greatly from the occasions from which this book has grown. Royalties are vested in the Henry Martyn School for the support of an ongoing ministry within the field of human relationships and the spiritual issues with which *The Pen and the Faith* is concerned. With gratitude for all who made the sessions possible, and to the present publishers, George Allen & Unwin, I am happy to commend it to 'the ken and the faith' of its readers.

April 1984
Hyderabad
Andhra Pradesh
India

SAM. V. BHAJJAN, PHD
DIRECTOR
HENRY MARTYN INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

Contents

5

Ali Shariati of Tehran

I

'I will end by purifying my pen with this verse from the Qur'ān: "The Hour draws nigh and the moon is rent asunder"' (Surah 54.1).[1] The writer is Jalal Al-e-Ahmad, his pen perhaps the most abrasive and passionate in contemporary Persian literature, his voice a sort of Voltairean 'Écrasez l'infame', only that his 'l'Infame' is the iniquitous and intrusive West, the curse and disease of the Iranian world. His *Gharbzadegi*, written in 1961, which concludes with this Quranic citation, is a highly popular and influential manifesto against alien factors within the Shah's Iran. His theme and title are of a nation 'west-smitten', 'struck' or 'mesmerised and undone' by a destructive invasion from without, afflicted and wellnigh prostrated by un-Islamic forces imported by fellow conspirators within.[2] With its passion and its urgency, *Plagued by the West* is a useful measure of the psychic and social situation which Ali Shariati – our major figure in this chapter – set himself to cure with analyses and intellectual treatment far more competent and considered than those of Jalāl Al-e-Ahmad whom we use to introduce him. For the two belong together as a single index to recent Iranian history and to the internal struggle for self-understanding within Shī'ah Islam.

For the moment we stay with *Gharbzadegi* and its author. This concluding quotation of Surah 54.1 is in fact the only time he cites his Qur'ān. But we have noted elsewhere that frequency of quotation, or facility with proof-texts, are by no means the only or necessarily the best measure of a writer's loyalty to the Qur'ān. What precisely Al-e-Ahmad intends by 'purifying' his pen his reader must guess. It cannot mean that he has some departing regret for the vehemence of his language. For his wit, sarcasm and demagoguery are all within a deep and deliberate indignation. His allusion is probably to a sense of the contagion of the unholy germs and cultural bacteria he has been handling. The Qur'ān, anyway, is always a hallowing and cleansing

reality which, indeed, 'none but the purified' should appropriately touch (Surah 56.79). To write or utter it makes for sanctity in him who uses it. Just as it draws out the skill of the calligrapher, the careful reverential diction of the reciter, so it makes wholesome the conclusions of the essayist, the more so when he has been dealing with the plague on behalf of those beset with fever in a wretched epidemic.

But the choice of citation is intriguing. There is in the opening of Surah 54 an apocalyptic note well suited to Jalal Al-e-Ahmad's acute reading of disaster in events. His repudiation of Westernised man brings him in conclusion to those Western prophets of absurdity and futility such as Albert Camus, Eugène Ionesco and Ingmar Bergman, whom he recognises, in their very despair, as 'apostles of resurrection', and he continues:

> I understand all these fictional destinies to be omens, foreboding the Hour of Judgement, warning that the machine-demon, if not harnessed and put back into the bottle, will place a hydrogen bomb at the end of the road for mankind. Therefore I will end by purifying my pen with this verse from the Qur'ān . . .[3]

The supreme – and supremely destructive – achievement of technology becomes for him, as for Western social analysts too, the fiery symbol of nemesis on a society which is enemy to itself. Jalal Al-e-Ahmad has at least this much in common with Western absurdists, seeking a way out.

What is the way out to be? *Gharbzadegi* is content to end in apocalyptic doom. Its whole thrust is accusation of outsiders as a ready substitute for interior self-examination. It is the latter which we come upon in Ali Shariati, equipped with a philosophical and religious acumen not evident in *Plagued by the West*. Shariati is minded to probe into the issues implicit in Al-e-Ahmad's tirade and does so with an alert awareness of Western experience and the need to go beyond angry rejectionism into the social and spiritual predicament of contemporary man, whether Persian or European or American.

II

It is this perception which admits of our linking him in some sense with those religious concerns which are sometimes known in the West as 'liberation theology'. Not that any discernible affinity is in any way conscious. But it has for some time been a fascinating question to inquire whether, and if so how far, Islam generates in any of its exponents the sort of religious motivation in the facing of contemporary problems, both as to diagnosis and solution, which belongs to Christian

doctrine and action in, for example, Latin America. Ali Shariati will best represent the answer. For there was about him a comparable concern that religious faith should be committed to revolutionary change in society, honest and incisive in the criticism of what it sees, and bold and decisive in its will to transformation.

There are, obviously, quite radical differences between the postures, resources and criteria of the two faiths in their perception of the contemporary world and its disorder. But there has always been about Islam that sense of divine imperative which plays so large a part in the dynamism of 'liberation theology' in the Church. One only has to read such a work as José P. Miranda's *Marxism and the Bible* to appreciate the 'Muslim' quality of his insistence that the being of God is to command and the being of man is to be commanded. What direction from the one and obedience by the other presuppose is, of course, subtly different. But there is no mistaking that theology means a right society, that to acknowledge God is to require a conformed humanity. Miranda's sense of the divine claim registered in Mexico has features close to Shariati's sociological implications of *Tauḥīd*, or divine unity, interpreted as opposition to all usurping powers and forces as these degrade and deprive one's fellow man. Thus Miranda writes:

> The God of the Bible stops being God the moment his injunction ceases. And man has many resources at his disposal to cause this command to come to an end. He need only objectify God in some way. At that moment God is no longer God. Man has made him into an idol: God no longer commands man. . . . If in any way he neutralises his being commanded, it is no longer God whom he worships. . . . God, perceived essentially as a demand for justice, ceases to be God at the moment in which he is objectified into any representation and thus ceases to command.[4]

Such sentiments are eminently 'Islamic' in their equation between ignoring God and denying Him, between disobedience and *Shirk*, or 'alienation' from God of what is God's. And what is God's has so much to do with what is man's as justice, dignity and freedom from oppression. Miranda even goes on to jeopardise all those other Christian 'dimensions' of divine reality in nature and grace when he insists unilaterally on the theme of obedience:

> God . . . clearly specifies that he is knowable *exclusively* in the cry of the poor and the weak who seek justice. Transcendence does not mean only an unimaginable and inconceivable God, but a God who is accessible *only* in the act of justice . . . Beyond all metaphysical questions . . . the God of the Bible is known in the implacable moral imperative of justice.[5]

Shariati is one with Miranda at least in this conviction that to believe God 'One' is to be militant against what thwarts His Lordship in society and not to bring, in cultus, a mere conforming piety. He wrote:

> *Tauḥīd* may be said to descend from the heavens to the earth and . . . enters the affairs of society. It poses the various questions involved in the social relationships, class relations, the orientation of individuals, the social superstructure, the family, politics, culture, economy, ownership, social ethics and the rest.[6]

There is here the same impatience with abstract theology, the same accent of passion and protest, the same demand that worship, in an unjust context, must mean its correction in God's Name if it is not to become a hollow form and a virtual idolatry. Religion in both cases is hypocrisy if it is not a social imperative received as divine. *Shirk* has to be negated on the human plane and not in idly proclaiming *that* 'God is One'. In the ultimate analysis the only idolatry is in the conduct not in the concept. It is in this basic interpretation of ruling Quranic terms like *Tauḥīd* and *Shirk* that Shariati employs his Scripture. In his characteristic Shī'ah Islamic way, he is a liberationist.

Born in 1933, Ali Shariati, like Jalal Al-e-Ahmad, had a devout upbringing, being the son of a leading *'ālim*, and studying in Mashhad, the symbol of Shī'ah traditionalism. His later strictures on inept and obscurantist imams and shaikhs should not be read as unqualified anticlericalism. On the contrary, his sense of the secular world made him avid for a dynamic quality of religious custodians. The temper of his adolescence is well captured in Al-e-Ahmad's *Gharb-zadegi*. Shariati was himself imprisoned for his expression of comparable sentiments. 'We are like self-sown weeds,' he wrote of Iranian university students, 'a people alienated from ourselves we try to find solutions to every problem like pseudo-westerners.' Victims of Pepsicolonisation, 'we became caretakers of graveyards . . . beggars at the door of the innocence of martyrs'.[7]

Shariati's maturing passion saw no reason to spare either Shī'ah martyrology, or Safavid reputation, or modern secularity. The first relied on superstition and lavished all its emotion on a receded past whose tradition of lamentation for innocence atrophied the nerve to rebel. The second was really a pseudo-Islam since it lacked the true charisma of the Shī'ah Alids perpetuating the true genius of Muhammad. The third was hopelessly lost in rootlessness and

irreligion. Nor was Sufism any use. For it wrapped its devotees in a cocoon of apathetic piety quite incapable of vigorous action or even of recognising social ills. The 'virtues' of sanctity or fortitude which it sometimes nourished were pointless in a society of the oppressed and the humiliated. Even 'His Majesty, the Lord of the Age, whose advent we pray God to hasten', namely the twelfth Imam, would need to be allied with the forces of indignant change.[8]

Stirred by these activist emotions, Shariati travelled to the University of Paris where he developed a more penetrating awareness of the West than Al-e-Ahmad attained. He studied there between 1959 and 1964, taking a degree in sociology. He was much impressed with the thinking of Franz Fanon, author of *The Wretched of the Earth* and other works of revolutionary fervour, and chief mentor of the Algerian Revolution. While Fanon's philosophy of violence and psychic decolonialisation was sharply secular, Shariati was grounded in a personal Islam in which 'submission to the absolute rule of God . . . summoned him to rebellion against all forms of compulsion, dissolving his transient individuality in the eternal identity of the human race'.[9] Fanon had argued precisely this abnegation of the private self in the cause of corporate liberation. Even the misgivings of private conscience must be surrendered to the all-demanding claims of the revolution.

Despite the wholly contrasted view of Muhammad Kamil Husain, whose pacific Islam concerns us in a later chapter, there *is* something strongly 'Muslim' in this instinct for necessary struggle in which absolute right overrides what might otherwise be scruple. It belongs with the Qur'ān's accent on *Jihād*, or contention on behalf of God, and its dictum that '*fitnah* [civil and religious sedition or violation of Islam] is a worse evil than killing' (2.191). Shariati liked to associate the case for militancy with the Quranic theme of *Hijrah*, that 'going out' from the unworthy *status quo* which had taken the Prophet and his *Muhājirūn*, or emigrants, from Mecca and their kin, to Medina and solidarity outside their kin, in the decisive act that originates the Islamic calendar. 'Life', he affirmed, 'is conviction and struggle and nothing more.' 'Look at the companions of the Prophet: they were all men of the sword, concerned with improving their society, men of justice.'[10] Only such militancy effectively countered the evils which Shariati saw as '*Shirk* on the human plane'.

He returned from Paris to teaching posts in Iran. His lectures at the Husainiyyah-yi-Irshad in Tehran made him a household name and his books became the cherished pride of like-minded activists, who borrowed them avidly from lending sources in clandestine clubs or risked imprisonment by owning them. He was himself imprisoned, though later released. He died in England under mysterious

circumstances in 1977 and it is assumed that he was a victim of Savak, the Shah's secret police. He was buried in Damascus.

III

The career of this meteoric and tragic figure in recent Iranian history presents the serious student of Islam with a vital question not easily resolved. It has to do with the Qur'ān in his hands. Is it the Scripture which truly inspires and determines his mind? Or is it that mind, shaped independently, which recruits the Book to approve, clothe, and commend the themes originated elsewhere? The alternative is a real one, even though it should not be harshly pressed. It occurs, of course, in every situation of exegesis, whatever the Scripture, and it belongs with all the Muslims studied here. What gives it special point in the case of Shariati is the radical reach of his ideas and the peculiarly difficult climate of Shī'ah Islam. If there is an ambivalence about his view of Muhammad – as we shall see – it stems, in part, from the need for prudence *vis-à-vis* religious authority and the complexity of fusing that authority with the role of the masses to which Shariati was wholly committed.

To elucidate his problem it is necessary to explore, if only in the broadest terms, the contrast between Sunnī and Shī'ah Islam in respect of politicisation. The former, as developed under the Ummayyads, is a more straightforward situation, with scriptural authority finalised in the text of the Qur'ān, entrusted to exegetical scholarship and passing down into a Quranic scholasticism in such stable figures as Al-Ashari – a scholasticism which Shariati deeply distrusted and despised as being incapable of radical action.

Shī'ah Islam, by contrast, possesses the Qur'ān in different terms. Whereas for the Sunnis only Muhammad's rulership, his political role, is perpetuated in the Caliphate – his prophethood having once for all mediated into time and history an authoritative text – Shi'ah Islam requires a continuing mystique of revelation, not in any way superseding the prophetic Muhammad yet also not possessing him unilaterally by text and scholarship upon it. Rather something in the charisma and status of the Prophet within the once-for-all Qur'ān still demands to be mediated via the Imams, who came to be called by the time of Muhammad al-Baqir, the fifth Imam, *al-Qur'ān al-nāṭiq*, 'the speaking Qur'ān'. That Imamate was held to perpetuate the *walāyah*, or guardianship, of Ali and the hereditary charisma it possessed was understood by the Shī'ah as alone sufficient to achieve and sustain the ideal Islamic society.

One recent Shī'ah writer in Malaysia, in this context, even reverses

the familiar view that Islam was originally 'religious' by virtue of Muhammad's preaching and then became 'political' at the time of the *Hijrah* when obduracy in Mecca against his preaching of divine unity and judgement required his appeal to the arbitrament of force, issuing in the Medinan state. For Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina 'Islam as a religious phenomenon was subsequent to Islam as a political reality'. He means that the Imamate, which emerged through the Alid cause and the rise of the Shī'ah, was '*the* religious phenomenon', inasmuch as only thereby was a genuine *religious* possession of the Qur'ān and its guidance possible. By contrast the sheer politicisation of the Ummayyad Caliphate was served only by a growing scholasticism, developing over following centuries into an 'orthodoxy' which lacked the authenticity only Shī'ah mystique afforded.[11]

Below we shall find Shariati in a similar quandary about the 'religious' and the 'political' in the career of Muhammad and in the subsequent institutions of Islam. For the question weighed heavily on his theory of 'the masses' in the structure and programme of Islamic ideology. But before documenting this it will be well to appreciate how far Shī'ah approaches to the Qur'ān in general conditioned his thinking. If the power, not to say the right, to interpret the Qur'ān without corrupting or distorting its meaning belongs only to the Imam and if only the Imam is endowed with the divine knowledge that, via Muhammad, mediated the Qur'ān, and if the Qur'ān is not otherwise possessed within the institutions of Islam, then a radical ideology like Shariati's can only be 'Quranic' by operating within the Shī'ah system of authenticity. But, by the same token, that system, as personified in the Ayatollah Khomeini, presents any reformer with the sharp dilemma of having to concede it as master, to woo it as ally and to surmount it as obstacle.

The sense in which the Shī'ah ethos could be revolution's ally was dramatically evident two years after Shariati's death in the triumphant return of the Ayotallah to Iran and the collapse of the Pahlavi regime. Its doctrine of *taqiyyah*, or dissimulation, could work both ways. When, under long adversity, the Shī'ah 'dissembled' allegiance to a wrong regime, for the sake of prudence and survival, they merely followed a tactic of quiescence making no inward surrender. The tactic, of course, might become a habit. But the doctrine required that when regimes became insufferable, defiance should move out into the open. To maintain *taqiyyah* then was to betray its very meaning. This was Khomeini's weapon against the timid. He disowned the 'ulamā' who continued to plead *taqiyyah* as traitors, the Shah's rule having reached a degree of oppressive iniquity quite inconceivably admitting of simulated docility by Muslims. Here, plainly, was a powerful force

making for the confrontation which Shariati strove to join and educate, an ally in resistance of a calibre well proven in Khomeini's long years of symbolic defiance and exile.

But the factor of authority with the Qur'ān remained a daunting one. Even the Ayatollah himself, with all his political prestige and spiritual status, insisted in his lectures on the *Fātiḥah* to students in Qum that Quranic interpretation was only 'possible' never 'certain'.

> The Qur'ān is not a book that someone can interpret comprehensively and exhaustively. For its sciences are unique and ultimately beyond our understanding. We can understand only a given aspect or dimension of the Qur'ān. Interpretations of the rest depend upon the *ahl-i-'iṣmah* who received instruction from the Messenger of God.

He went on to disown those who, lacking all qualification, tried to impose their own ideas on the Scripture. Such people were trying to beguile Muslims into falsehood on the pretext that it was Quranic. It is, he said, forbidden in Islam to use personal opinion in exegesis of the Qur'ān or to try and make it conform to one's own ideas and interests. He reiterated that even his exegesis remained tentative. The *Ahl-i-'iṣmah*, the immaculate ones, the family of Ali, the Twelve Imams, alone possessed the secret of the meaning, and could not convey their witnessing to men.

> The Qur'ān has seven or seventy levels of meaning, and the lowest of those levels is the one where it addresses us. . . . The Qur'ān descended from level to level, from degree to degree, until finally it assumed verbal form. The Qur'ān is not verbal in substance. It does not pertain to the audio-visual realm. It does not belong to the category of accidents. It was, however, 'brought down' so that we, the dumb and the blind, might benefit from it to the extent of our ability. But as for those who can benefit more fully, their understanding of the Qur'ān is different and their orientation to the principle from which the Qur'ān was descended is different . . . When we wish to study the Qur'ān and its interpretation, we have recourse to the commentaries currently in use that contain indications likely to be of use to deaf and blind persons like ourselves. The Qur'ān contains everything but only he who was addressed by it fully understands it.[12]

The enigmatic dimension here is, of course, in strange contrast to the Qur'ān's own insistence on its Arabic form as being for the purpose of

clear understanding leading to intelligent obedience (cf. 12.2, 13.37, 20.113, 41.3, 42.7 and 43.3). But the general aura of mystery and elusiveness it conveys could certainly be used, as Khomeini emphatically used it, to deter and disown all deviant and venturesome exegesis. Yet the utter centrality of the Qur'ān to Muslim life and experience made it an indispensable recourse for any would-be reformer, revolutionary, or pioneer of social change. It may well be that this situation explains Shariati's care to avoid complex textual tangles and to base himself squarely on ruling Quranic concepts which could be borrowed and explored, in his own idiom, without unduly inviting censure or incurring argument over minutiae.

IV

Those inaccessible *Ahl-i-'iṣmah* might have their own incommunicable insight, giving pause to all simple perusers of the text. Shariati called for 'an Islam of the aware' in a different sense. He meant 'the aware' who registered injustice and alienation, who had shed the blinkers of idle piety or scholastic complacence, and were alive to the crisis of contemporary man, chronically misread and exported by the West. But awareness meant a philosophy of action in the given situation, a tactic in pursuit of social righteousness. Here Shariati's problem seems to have been how best to recruit the potential of religion and especially the aura of the religious leadership, and at the same time neutralise their propensity to obstruct or divert objectives which, in any other context, might be described as 'lay'. Shi'ah Islam needed, as it were, to be saved by itself from itself, transformed from itself through itself. In this subtle and exacting task, Shariati saw a crucial role for 'the masses', the people. His inspiration here may have been partly Marxist. But it was also a deeply Islamic instinct deriving from the (Sunni) confidence that Muhammad's community would 'never converge on what was error or wrong' – the principle of *ijmā'*, or consensus, taught by *ijtihād*, or enterprise. Whatever quarrel there might be around 'the gate of *ijtihād*', a painful familiarity like his with the toils of Western sociology and the questionings of Western literature surely qualified him to bring such 'enterprise', while his lively imagination and strong moral impulse spurred him to do so.

Ventures of change, then, must move with and from the masses. It was here that he was most at issue with the philosophy of Khomeini for whom the masses were a political lever for religious leadership to operate, but not, in their own right, the protagonists. It was to make the masses central in his vision that Shariati developed a novel thesis about Muhammad himself, whom he saw as essentially a *religious* figure

whose message addressed autonomous man as a person and allowed 'the people' to respond with *their* own effective 'movement' of change. This was the *Hijrah*. When, subsequently to this essentially 'popular' *démarche*, Muhammad emerged as a political leader and ruler, this was due to his stature and eminence as the Prophet of God whose *religious* mission, in non-political form, had released the people-movement which fulfilled his goals but only by *their* free initiative and *ijmā'*.

It was certainly a novel reading of the historical Muhammad with which few mere historians would concur. But it had obvious relevance to the strategy of change in a context likely to be dominated by 'clergy', a clergy liable to claim a monopoly of authority. It could readily be sustained by appeal to those frequent pre-*Hijrah* passages in the Qur'ān which enjoin upon Muhammad the sole obligation of *al-balāgh*, or the giving of the word. Thus, for example, Surah 5.99 says: 'The apostle's one duty is to give the word' (cf. 16.35, 24.54, 29.18, 64.12, etc.). Reckoning belongs to God. Shariati argues from these passages that Muhammad left to the people the onus of response. It is hard to square this with the post-*Hijrah* engagement with force through which submissions came steadily into his cause stimulated by his increasingly evident sanctions of political and military success. Nevertheless, focusing on the Meccan situation prior to 622, Shariati writes:

> The mission and characteristics of the Prophet are clearly set forth in the Qur'ān and they consist of conveying a message. He is responsible for conveying a message. He is a warner and a bearer of glad tidings. And when the Prophet is disturbed by the fact that people do not respond and he cannot guide them as he would wish, God repeatedly explains to him that his mission consists only of conveying the message, of inspiring fear in men, of giving them glad tidings, of showing the path. He is not in any way responsible for their decline or their advancement. For it is the people themselves who are responsible. In the Qur'ān the Prophet is not recognised as the active cause of fundamental change and development in human history. His mission being completed, men are then free to choose.[13]

The stress, surely, in the penultimate sentence, must be on the word 'active'. For it is the pride of Muslims that fundamental change *did* result from the mission of the Prophet. One of the most frequent themes in contemporary apologetics has to do with the concreteness and active achievement of Muhammad, often contrasted with the case of Jesus, a teacher who was not involved in the world of affairs.[14] Shariati can hardly be countering this view. His point is to claim that

Islam always invokes the people and sees issues turning on *their* role. People are the norm of God's law, rather than 'personalities', however charismatic.

This view is argued by reference to the familiar words of the final Surah (114) where God is named 'the Lord of men, the King of men, the God of men' – the word being *al-nās*, in each case. For Shariati 'the masses' would be the proper translation. God is 'the God of the masses'.[15] 'The Qur'ān', he wrote, 'begins in the Name of God and ends in the name of the people.' It was, in the event, the masses, that is to say the people believing, who were the vindication of Muhammad's mission. Surah 94,1–4 is cited in this sense – with its 'lifting of Muhammad's burden from his back' and 'the lifting high of his repute' (lit. 'mention'), that is, his coming in to his own through the people's espousal of his message.

Thus even the exalted 'personality' of the Prophet is in league with 'the masses' and does not contravene the dictum that 'personality is not in itself a creative factor in Islam'. Muhammad, in any event, is exceptional. Shariati sets him in splendid isolation. The Arabian peninsula and Mecca within it were far from the contagions and cultures of this world.

> The peculiar geographical location . . . decreed that just as none of the vapours that arose over the oceans ever reached the peninsula, so too no trace of the surrounding civilisations ever penetrated there.[16]

This extraordinary verdict is surely meant to be symbolic. For it is not factual. Shariati sees Muhammad free of all external influence, immunised by Arabia's apartness, and 'unlettered' so that no mould of schooling should shape him. Even his father and mother were taken from him, the one before birth, the other in early boyhood. Detached in this way he is more manifestly universal. 'Destined to destroy all racial, national and regional forms and moulds, he should not himself be subject to the influence of any such form.'[17]

For all his strong realism, Shariati was clearly capable of hyperbole. Or was this the Persian factor detaching from the Arab/Arabic particularity necessary to the incidence of the Qur'ān? Or was it his way of deflating the cultural factor given that Western culture was so proudly dominant? Or was his ideology getting the better of his sociology, the ardent cause repressing the academic discipline?

V

It is time to assess Shariati's way with the Qur'ān in his handling of the feature of Western culture which most occupied him and with which, as we saw, Jalal Al-e-Ahmad prefaced his quotation from Surah 54.1, namely

existentialism. He had a certain sympathy for its heightening of personal awareness and approved its actual, or implicit, repudiation of machine-dominated, bureaucratic materialism. It had recovered a sense of human primacy, of the intimate, inescapable fact, and burden, of selfhood. It had concentrated experience on the inner reality of the being of man and so radically challenged complacent, servile or convention-ridden patterns of life. In all these ways it could merit a certain Islamic acknowledgement. There were situations and traditions which very much needed to be confronted by such an assertion of human autonomy, the demands and stresses of freedom.

But only to assert autonomy was to lack a goal. Alienation *from* the order of society was bound to languish in purposelessness and absurdity unless, and until, it was integrated into that sense of human meaning and destiny which the Qur'ān proclaimed. Here Shariati quoted familiar pivotal passages. God had not created the world 'in jest' (21.16), nor 'in vain' (38.27). There was a primordial human nature, God's design in man (30.30) which was not to be thwarted by human perversity or delusion. 'Everything indeed was perishing', as the existentialists discovered, if not 'oriented towards God' (as Shariati read Surah 28.88: 'Everything is perishing except His countenance'). But so oriented it could and should be. Sartre and his kind were sad negative evidence of the human void when the human is desperately misread as in their philosophy. Man, Shariati wrote, 'is a theomorphic being in exile, the combination of two opposites, a dialectical phenomenon composed of the opposition "God-Satan" or "spirit-clay".'[18]

So existentialist 'choice' was authentic. But 'choice' had to be 'struggle', social and spiritual struggle, migration inwardly and outwardly from wrong to right, from false to true. Shariati deplored the way in which the existentialists were non-programmatic, exiles brooding on exile and not obeying any vision of liberation. Man in Quranic terms was the responsible 'caliph' of God, His viceregent, always and everywhere 'on behalf of God'. Existentialists were in danger of making autonomy vacuous, a mere indulging in intellectualism enervating the will. It was sounder to espouse a programme than to ponder a prison. Otherwise

> my freedom might turn into vagrancy, in which case it would no longer be clear that I was well served in being set free. If freedom has no purpose and touchstone, it is vagrancy. Next it will turn into futility, and after that it will take the form of . . . looking for hashish in Nepal or the Khyber Pass.[19]

Programmatic Islam, Shariati believed, had found the way to unify the intellectual and the activist, the sophisticated and the simple, in the

community. Noticing that Latin American revolutionaries had done the same, and Franz Fanon too, he saluted this equality in action between vision and programme in ideology.

> Among the companions of the Prophet and the *mujāhidīn* in the early days of Islam, who is the intellectual, who the activist, who the cleric? Absolutely no such classifications exist. Everyone promulgates Islam, fights, and also farms, cultivates dates, or herds camels. Each person is simultaneously worker, warrior and intellectual.[20]

In this context, he took occasion to observe that in every case official religion has opposed such movements because of the vested interests that clerical castes acquire and out of which they 'narcotise the people'. This returns him to his view that 'the people' are the real 'family of God and of the Prophet'. 'The people were a single nation' (2.213).

If existentialists truly wanted autonomy and choice they should come out into struggle. So also should the dogmatists sheltering in their credal certainties and the mystics aspiring in their *zāwiyas*. Writing of his tactic among students in his Husainiyyah-yi-Irshād, Shariati wrote:

> I wanted to create a struggle in their intellects, so I did not give an answer . . . I said: 'Dear Sir, I have come to disturb the comfortable. Did you imagine I was heroin or opium to make everyone feel easy? I am not one of those who have all the answers written out.' If someone really wants to perform a service . . . he should plant contradiction and conflict in stagnant people. By God, it would be a thousand times over a greater service to sow doubt among some of these people . . . We seven hundred million Muslims have a certainty that is not worth two bits. What comes into existence after doubt, anxiety, and agitation has value: 'Belief after unbelief.' . . . The prophets came essentially to produce controversy. Otherwise the people would have gone on grazing peacefully in their folly.[21]

It may be questioned whether Shariati here – shock tactics apart – is doing justice to Islam and the Qur'ān, 'a Book in which there is nothing dubious' (2.2), about *al-Fauz al-mubīn*, 'the evident victory', pointing to *Al-Yaqīn*, 'the utterly certain'. But it is also a question – by the same token – whether he is doing justice to the existentialists. For it is precisely their fundamental questioning which he does not answer except out of the splendid assurance of the Quranic view of man (which is also the Biblical view of man). Was it not just such confidence which

Sartre and his kind willed to put in doubt? Are they to be reproached for lacking a will and a programme when these are the very comforting illusions activists cherish? Should not believers, Islamic or otherwise, be implanted with contradiction and have doubt sown among their Scriptural warrants? To urge lack of drive and purpose against existentialists might be likened to deploring the Buddhist's refusal to fuel the fire of appetite. The charge is missing the whole point of the position it accuses, which is that religious confidence is within the meaninglessness of life and can, therefore, afford no rescue from it. Such a fundamental scepticism is not fully measured by a response which speaks out of a conviction, Quranic or Biblical or other, that does not allow itself to be questioned, but relies upon a 'divine' status sanctioned by doctrine, culture and tradition.

It may well be that there is, in fact, no viable or agreed criterion for religious faith outside its own givenness, whether reason, experience, intuition or consensus – all of these being adjudicators which are themselves on trial. Perhaps it has to be, at the end of the day, a faith in faith and that, in the case of Islam, the givens of Muhammad's prophethood, the Qur'ān's descent, the *Sharī'ah*, are the decisive facts which do not admit of being 'established' by other than their own authority. But if thinkers of the quality and passion of Shariati are to react comprehensively to the temper of the world that confronts them from outside – whether in existential doubt, or Marxist materialism, or the perspectives seen through the lens of sociology – they must be open to these ultimate questions of why their Islam deserves and possesses the allegiance they bring to it. This is not to say the allegiance is either not sincere or not appropriate. On the contrary. But it *is* to say that being conscious of its total liabilities and obligations must be part of its sincerity.

Meanwhile, it is evident that Shariati faced with courage and high intelligence, immediate problems of thought and action which left little opportunity for these more ultimate questions. His handling of the Qur'ān wisely centred on the deep and positive truths of *Tauḥīd* and *Shirk*. Whereas the Sufis, whom he partly admired and partly castigated,[22] interpreted *Tauḥīd*, or unity, as the absorption of personhood in the undifferentiated 'One', by the *fanā'* or 'passing away' of the empirical self through the discipline of *dhikr*, Shariati saw it as the strife to bring all things within the rule of God. Divine unity was not a mathematical dogma about transcendence. It was the assertion of the 'unrivalledness' of God against all that flouted His will and sovereignty. What flouted these was social wrong, political tyranny, injustice, oppression, materialism and – not to be forgotten – religious obscurantism and lethargy.

Shirk, or the alienation from God of what belongs with God – that is, the antithesis of *Tauḥīd* – was, therefore, much more than crude idolatry, the worship of literal idols, or pagan superstition. The Qur'ān should be read as the dethroning of all that denied the divine Lordship. Such denials were at their most subtle and their most heinous in the chronic self-deifying of human institutions and powers. Marx, for example, was right in identifying an alienation of man in the patterns of the productive system and the exploitative instincts of capitalism. But he compounded that alienation by erecting the pseudo-deity of economic order in a classless society. His dialectic of material forces took no account of divine authority, indeed excluded belief in such authority as no more than an outgrowth of a doomed order which had basely generated it. Thus his doctrine of goals and means in history was essentially idolatrous. The true Muslim would have to see him as a *mushrik*.

VI

Shariati's thought, developing *Tauḥīd*, *Shirk* and *Hijrah* in these ways, was a most apt and eloquent reading of the Qur'ān, and free of those jejune naiveties sometimes offered by text-quoters countering 'the enemies of Islam'. In circumstances of great tension under the Shah, and treading a difficult path in relation to the clergy, he brought a vigour and a focus to Islamic liberation and to a Shī'ah interpretation of man and society, the state and reform. He gave contemporary form to the long Shī'ah tradition of resistance and aspiration, while countering in modern terms its long proneness to acquiescence and inertia. Against what he saw as bankrupt and materialist humanism, whether capitalist or Marxist, he wanted to re-affirm the spiritual nature of man and marry that spiritual nature to an effective programme of social action. Brooding on the failure of Western civilisation, he wrote:

> Over this dark and dispirited world, humanity will set a holy lamp like a new sun. By its light, man alienated from himself, will perceive anew his primordial nature, rediscover himself and see clearly the path of salvation.[23]

Islam had a vital role in this renewal. Its *Tauḥīd* was a total spiritual view of the universe and within it man's unity in Adam was a single, noble essence to master earthly reality in heaven-given wisdom. Surah 5.32 declared the inclusiveness of humanity, both for good and for ill. A private piety, nourished by personal devotion and *dhikr*, might

produce deeply reverent personality, but if, in pursuit of its intimate Paradise, it repudiated the world, then it could well conspire with tyranny and oppression.

Alternatively, the avid socialist who sacrificed his whole being to that one idea ignored whole dimensions of the human meaning and blighted even his own ends for lack of a spiritual vision. The existentialists did stand for a total self-awareness and so were delivered from illusion and pretension, but only at the price of atrophy of will. Shariati wanted to find 'a return to man', to authentic humanity, by surmounting the negative factors in religious devotion, socialist action, and existentialist inaction, believing that the positives in each would then be released in unison. The mystic would save the socialist from thinking only of economics and politics. The socialist would save the mystic from evading real responsibility. Both would give the existentialist drive and purpose, while he would give them the true measure of their freedom.

Islam, he thought, truly understood, exemplified the harmony of spirit, action and freedom which these three, mutually related, could attain. It set man under God within a spiritual universe. It summoned him to social justice and communal responsibility. For did it not hate the usurer even more than the *mushrik*? It confronted man with his essential selfhood, unconfused by enervating illusions whether from religion or from ideology. Deploring what he called 'the inherited religious sensibility in both Shī'ah and Sunnī Islam', Shariati continued:

> To the extent that the man of *Tauḥīd* perceives his poverty, he perceives his wealth: to the extent that he feels humility, he feels a pride, a glory within himself: to the extent that he has surrendered to the service of God, he rises against whatever other powers, systems and relations exist. Thus, in Islam, there actually exists a paradoxical relation between man and God – a simultaneous denial and affirmation, a becoming nothing and all, essentially an effacement and a transformation into a divine being during natural, material life.[24]

This remarkable passage in *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies* may be thought to bring Shariati, no doubt unawares, to a close approximation to the Christian understanding of the paradox of baptism, of a self that dies in order that a self may live. Paradox is deep in the Christian faith but usually finds little acceptance with Muslims. Some repudiate it altogether. But Shariati sees clearly that the claims of social righteousness are costly to fulfil and require an end to the kind of insulation that unworthy religion buys, and also disallow the kind of impatient, merely activist, response which socialism is ready to bring.

The question which arises is whether the paradox demanded of the self

may not be taken truly and reverently into our understanding of God. 'Shall the creature outdo the Creator?' Browning asked.[25] The world in which self-giving is alone the true realism in being rightly 'on behalf of God as One' in the human situation is, surely, so constituted within the divine intention. When man, in a true *islām*, must find 'transformation' only through 'effacement' it is so because God has made His will to turn upon the human readiness – a readiness which means this radical experience within the self. Since the readiness and the experience, as Shariati shows, are crucial to the realisation of *Tauḥīd*, they are, therefore, bound up with the very nature of God, recognised by man. In that sense *Tauḥīd* means human regeneration, since it will not be operatively acknowledged in the world, such human, personal transformation apart.

May we not ask, then, whether there is not in God and through Him some initiative of grace and love which might undertake the cost of just that human remaking which His being all-in-all, His *Tauḥīd*, makes requisite? If so, may it not mean a divine counterpart to that glory through self-giving which Shariati identifies with a creaturehood truly and realistically doing the Creator's will? May not such a divine counterpart be found to participate, to exemplify the role, to give us the earnest of its fulfilment and so to inaugurate a human community to which its reproduction can be hopefully entrusted? If so, are we not close to what the New Testament understands by the reality of Christ and the society of His church?

Whether that sequence of thought is acceptable or not, we are left firmly by Shariati's thought with the truth that *Tauḥīd*, the real Oneness, of God cannot be a bare assertion. It has to be an enterprise. It is not a concept of number but an issue of sovereignty. It is an active subduing of 'whatever powers, systems and relations' deny or defy it, and such subduing does not happen, so Shariati strenuously insists, without that active commitment to inward righteousness and self-transforming love which Christians call grace and which they understand only to be feasible in this human world by virtue of that same divine *Tauḥīd* undertaking and enabling their human cost.

To urge that this is to take paradox into our thought of God will not avail against it. For the paradox is already there in what He has willed of man and yet given into his freedom, as the crux of His true worship in a right society.

We can only guess what Ali Shariati's genius might have given to Quranic relevance in the contemporary world had his life not been tragically cut off in his prime.

NOTES: CHAPTER 5

1 The translation uses the present tense though the Arabic has past tenses, often used to express immediate intensity. Purists might disapprove. A. J. Arberry has: 'The Hour has drawn nigh: the moon is split.'
2 Jalal Al-e-Ahmad, *Gharbzadegi*, trans. by Paul Sprachman as *Plagued by the West*, Modern Persian Literature Series, no. 4 (New York, 1982). On a malady analogy he suggests 'Westitis' (cf. neuritis, arthritis) as a rendering, or 'West-struck' or 'Westoxination'.
3 ibid., p. 111.
4 José P. Miranda, *Marx and the Bible, A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression*, trans. from the Spanish by John Eagleson (London, 1977), pp. 40–1.
5 ibid., pp. 48 and 60. Italics mine. 'Implacable' is a word used, of Islam, by Gai Eaton in his *King of the Castle* (London, 1977), p. 20: 'an implacable religion rooted in the transcendent'.
6 Ali Shariati, *On the Sociology of Islam*, trans. from the Persian by Hamid Algar (Berkeley, Calif., 1979), p. 32.
7 ibid., pp. 87, 33, and 22.
8 ibid., pp. 49f.
9 ibid., p. 122. Thus Franz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. from the French by C. Farrington, New York, 1963, p. 73. 'Violence is in action all inclusive . . . At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction.' And again, 'Political education means opening their minds, awakening them, and allowing the birth of their intelligence . . . there is no such thing as a demiurge . . . the demiurge is the people themselves and the magic hands are finally only the hands of the people.' (pp. 157–8).
10 ibid., p. 81.
11 Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shi'ism* (Kuala Lumpur, 1981), p. 4. His view is that the continuity of the Quranic revelation is not in the fact of the Book and the strictly *political* rule of the Caliphate (as Sunnis believe) but in a charismatic polity which both rules and possesses the secret within the revelation and interprets it through a hereditary gift resident in the Prophet's 'family'. Only such a succession to Muhammad could accomplish the ideal Islamic society.
12 Ayatollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations*, trans. from the Persian and annotated by Hamid Algar (Berkeley, Calif., 1981), pp. 365–6, 391, and 393–4.
13 *On the Sociology of Islam*, p. 48.
14 Thus, for example, Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity, Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago, 1982), p. 2: 'The Quranic revelation and the prophetic career of Muhammad lasted for just over twenty-two years, during which period all kinds of decision on policy in peace and war, on legal and moral issues in private and public life were made in the face of actual situations. Thus the Qur'ān had from the time of its revelation a practical and political application. It was not a mere devotional or personal pietistic text.' (See Chapter 6.)
15 *On the Sociology of Islam*, p. 117.
16 ibid., p. 54.
17 ibid., p. 58.
18 ibid., p. 95.
19 Ali Shariati, *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies, An Islamic Critique*, trans. from the Persian by R. Campbell (Berkeley, Calif., 1980), p. 118.
20 ibid., p. 105.
21 ibid., p. 113.

22 He expresses a profound admiration for such great Persian poet mystics as Shams-e-Tabrizi and Jalal al-Din-Rumi, yet observes that their presence made no difference to the Islamic society of their day and place.
23 *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies*, p. 95.
24 ibid., p. 120.
25 Robert Browning, 'Saul', *Collected Works* (Oxford, 1905):

> Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
> That I doubt His own love can compete with it?
> Here the parts shift?
> Here, the creature surpass the Creator, the end, what began?

THE PEN
AND
THE FAITH

Eight modern Muslim writers and the Qur'ān

Kenneth Cragg