# PAKISTAN IN QUEST OF NATIONAL CULTURE

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## Origin of the Problem

When some years ago Dr. Habib Jalibi published a book on Pakistani Culture it intiated a lively discussion in literary circles, but then the movement subsided and did not provoke a national debate. Then about six months ago the Pakistan Television Corporation opened a new forum on the T.V. screen for discussing the "Cultural Problems of Pakistan". Only three scholars were invited to project the national viewpoint, two of them openly opposed to the ideology of Pakistan, one being a recognized intellectual of the now defunct National Awami Party, and the other a Lenin-Prize holder. We do not know what was the criterion of selection, but the other intellectuals invited to participate in this forum as listeners or casual speakers were mostly atheists, communists, and persons hostile to Islam and its cultural heritage, and persons anxious to disintegrate Pakistan, into linguistic and regional nationalities. The forum was hurriedly wound up for reasons undisclosed to the public, but the debate on the issue continues unabated in the naional press, and through other media of mass communication. The following reflections may be deduced as a continuation of that debate.

## Motives Behind the Forum Discussion

When the main speakers in the forum were questioned as to way this debate had been started so late in the history of Pakistan, they replied that since Pakistan constituted a new political entity on the surface of the earth a definition of its culture became necessary to satisfy the curiosity of foreigners who often anxiously inquired about it. But this plea is not convincing in the least.

More than three dozen new states in Africa, numerous new states in Asia, and the states of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Southe Africa carved out of former British colonies, not long ago, have not yet taken the trouble to define their cultures and despite this have suffered no loss of face in the community of nations, and the whole world knows what they are and what they are not.

Hundreds of Muslim and non-Muslim states were established in history outside of recognized geographical boundaries, but the question of defining their culture never arose.

The State of British India as such never existed in history earlier, yet the new India born out of Partition like Pakistan, has not been bothered to define its culture.

Further, if Pakistan is a non-geographical name, similar names have been coined in Muslim History itself; examples are: Khilafat-i-Abbasiyah, Dawlat-i-Uthmaniyah, Dawlat-i-Mamalik, Dawlat-i-Murabitin, etc. These States were,however, never called upon to define their cultures.

The real motives behind these discussions, therefore, obviously seem to be:—

1. The Balkanization of Pakistan on the basis of four nationalities inspired by Russian diplomacy and intrigue.

2. Discrediting of Islam as a great moral and social force in history; and

3. Unrecognizing the identity of millions of refugees who fought for Pakistan determinedly and later made it their national home. (Their right to exist is denied because they do not possess an original regional base in Pakistan).

The idea of autonomous nationalities within an independent state was first conceived and advocated by Russia after the communist evolution of 1917. Russia was divided into about two dozen provinces, euphemistically called republics. Half of these are comprised in the predominantly Muslim areas of the Caucasus, the wide expanse to the northeast of the Caspian Sea, and Central Asia. All kinds of freedom, particularly religious freedom, are completely denied in these regions. Russia being an utter totalitarian state, the whole country is powerfully and centrally governed from Moscow. Russian is the State language of the whole country. Regional languages are just allowed to breathe, but not allowed to propagate local nationalism, and have to be written in the Russian Script. (Formerly the Muslim region used the Arabic Script). The Muslums of the Muslim region have not been allowed a free intercourse with the Muslim World for these last fifty years; and their Muslim identity has been systematically destroyed over this half century, And since these Soviet (pre-dominantly Muslim) republics lie right along the border of the Muslim World, from Istanbul to Kabul, Russia is extremely sensitive to the growth of a strong power in its neighbourhood, lest it should inspire a sympathetic reaction within its own Muslim territories on the other side of the border. This explains why Russia has been all this while encouraging India against us, instigating Afghanistan to keep the Pukhtunistan issue alive, and fomenting guerilla activities in Baluchistan. We also remember that Russia played a major role in dismembering Pakistan and creating Bangla Desh. All this it has done only to tighten its grip on its own Muslim Nationalities. These Nationalities are in fact enslaved communities. And the Russian

use of the term "republic" is a sheer political fraud invented to deceive the world. Now people who advocated and sell the Russian system of "Nationalities" within a nation deceive no one but themselves.

Our evaluation of the T.V., forum discussions cannot be said to be arbitrary. The Pakistan Government itself reacted against it very strongly, although late in the day. Perhaps it was the angry mood and displeasure of the Government that stopped these discussions. But what is relevant here is that the Government took strong exception to these proceedings and declared that the Government Media of communication (T.V., Radio etc.) would not be allowed to be used for anti-Pakistan Proganda. Maulana Kausar Niazi, the Ex-Central Minister, in particular, has done real service in refuting the propaganists of four nationalities and the people who are trying to give an anti-Islamic bias to the culture of Pakistan. Some senior Journalists and scholars, like, Messrs Z.A. Suleri, Jamiluddin Ali, Hasnayn Kazimi, and Dr. Farman Fatahpur, have also commented excellently in the national press against the deep harmful and un-patriotic implications of the T.V., debate. Mr. Suleri's observations are specially thought-provoking, and deserve an unreserved compliment from the nation. It is however unfortunate that the national press as a whole has not paid the attention to the subject which it ought to have.

In fact, Pakistan is being very intelligently undermined by the Socialists. They have penetrated deep intc the political and social life of the country, and now occupy important position of authority and control in the administration, in the communication media in educational institutions, and in journalism. Apparently they say that socialism is only an economic system and perfectly in harmony with the concepts of social justice in Islam. But secretly they do their utmost to uproot the creedal and cultural foundations of Islam. In the T.V., debate these elements were given a preponderant role. We would never advocate the placing of any control on human conscience. At the same time, we must say that a very small minority has no moral right to pull down the moral and cultural structure of the vast majority by underhand means. It should come out in the open and use the normal media of communication to win over the people to its own view point. But Socialism is a relegion, and religions are often unjust in their approach to other religions.

### What did the Three Intellectuals Say?

The declared aim of the T.V., discussion was to discover the nature, objectives and ideals of Islamic culture. It would be, therefore, very much profitable to give a resume of the discoveries made at the forum. We shall first quote the points made by the three main speakers and then offer our comments on them whenever necessary.

They defined culture as man's entire social heritage of knowledge, beliefs customs and skills which he acquires as a member of society; and further said that culture was bound with geography, that is, with the mores and folkways of the people in a given region.

If this definition was accepted without qualification than ancient heathen beliefs and traditions, accumulated ignorance of entries, superstition, poverty, feudal tyranny, peasant suffering, saint-worship, religious fraud, promotion of extreme heretical sects and anti-Islamic fronts – all this must be recognized as factual ingredients of culture and received as the imperative dispensation of history.

But according to scientific definition culture is the distinctive way of life of a group of people; it is their complete design of living. And since culture includes a set of designs for carrying on the life of society, it must have certain religious, legal, intellectual and aesthatic ideals which play the basic role defining the distinctive way of life in that society. In other words culture defines the norms and standards of human behaviour, and judges all social phenomena accordingly. It does not receive the past as a sacred heritage, and does not take the present for granted. All social phenomena must pass through a shifting process. All that conforms to the norms is accepted; all that does not is discarded.

They said that Pakistan, comprising several district geographical regions cannot have a unified national culture. It is in fact the home of several cultures rooted in the different constituent regions. They greatly stressed the territorial nature of culture. Arguing on the same premises they held that the present culture of Pakistan was the historical growth and final expression of the Moen-jo-daro, Harappa and Gandhara civilizations of the Indus valley. And one of them emphatically said that any attempt to import cultural influences from Muslim Western Asia, from the Arab world and from Muslim India, should be condemned and resisted. He further recomended that the names of tribal chiefs and political adventures of the Pakistan region, like Khushhal Khan Khatak, who rebelled against the Muslim sovereigns of Delhi, should be inscribed in our national roll of honour, while the names of Muslim sovereigns of Delhi, like Awrangzeb, who tried to usurp our liberties and snatch our political freedom, should be consigned to the list of our enemies and invaders of Pakistan. We need not dilate on the logical consequences of this theory, for they are too abhorrent to be described. Under a similar inspiration some people in Sind have declared Raja Porus and Raja Dahir as their national heroes and Muhammad ibn Qasim as their national enemy.

It would not be out of place to recall here that half a century ago nationalist movements in Egypt, Turkey, and Iran worked in the same way to review their pagan past as the glorious age of their culture and political greatness, and discredit

the Islamic era of their history as the age of darkness. These nations however soon discovered that their real destiny lay with Islam and not with their heathen past. Our misguided brethren should learn a lesson from recent history.

One of the main speakers siad that the real culture of Pakistan was the culture of the rural areas. Village people constitute more than 80% of our population, and it is a mass society in which we live, hence now the rural culture must dominate the urban areas. Throughout the ages it is the intelligentsia, the dwellers of the city, who have endeavoured to develop the arts and sciences, and the higher forums and institutions of civilization, and have always possessed the power, ability and resources to lead the rest of manking. This process is followed even in the proletarian dictatorships of Russia and China, because it is the natural process of social evolution. But the speaker was happy to announce that it was being fortunately reversed in Pakistan. His two collegues were also extemely pleased with this great discovery. But it is a mere delusion to think that by merely donning rustic garments and imitating folk songs and dances in art councils, university theatres and ultra-modern hotel reception hails the condition of the downtrodden masses would be bettered, or that their culture would become our national culture, and even if it became it would be no consolation to them. The truth is that the aristocracy put up these cultural shows for their own enjoyment and edification, and not for the benefit of their unfortunate brethern in the villages.

The subtler aspect of this suggestion is that the culture of Pakistan should be derived from the soil of Pakistan, and not borrowed from outside. It is another way of developing the idea of four nationalities in Pakistan, and giving fillip to the Jia Sind and Pakhtunistan movements.

All the three senior intellectuals agreed that culture was born out of spontaneous growth, it was not planned. But there is not a single advanced culture in history that has developed as a forest growth. Here again the institution is that the ideology of Pakistan should not be inculcated in our people methodically because that would interfere with the principle of spontaneous growth. We do not deny the existence of this principle. What we deny is the claim that there has been no planning in the orientation of any culture. On the countrary, there is overwelming historical evidence that cultural planning has always grown in direct proportion to the development of Society. In fact, today in all advanced states, like other things, culture too is almost entirely planned. And one may ask: Is culture not hundred per cent planned in Russia and China, whose social philosophy is so dear to most of the participants in the forum? And what sacred law of morality, or what law of historical evolution would be violated if Pakistan does the same and plans the cultural life of its people in accordance with the social and ideological principles of Islam?

The three speakers laid the greatest stress on the territorial nature of culture. The fallacy of thesis hardly requires a systematic regulation. Yet it may be mentioned that no culture worth the name is conditioned by geographical frontiers. Europe, America and Australia are entirely governed by chiristian culture local variation making no essential difference. The jews, only twenty million souls and scattered all over the earth, possess a well-demarcated international culture. Budhist culture is predominant in South-East Asia. Islamic culture is deeply rooted in south, west and Central Asia and greater part of Africa, and is broadly represented all over the globe. Even national cultures, like the English,French, Arab, Iranian, and Chinese cultures, have become international cultures and they are not entirely shaped by the countries of their origin. And happen what may, an ideological culture like that Islam cannot be kept bound within any physical limits. And since the culture of Pakistan is basically Islamic the claim that it is born, nourished, and perfected in the soil of Pakistan cannot be accepted. The local colouring cannot be accepted. The local colouring cannot destory the basic core, which is stronger than all other factors which determine the composition of culture.

## Pakistani Culture

As already noted, Pakistani culture forms only a part of the great international culture of Islam, which has inspired and guided humanity for the last fourteen hundred years, as one of the principal cultures of the world. This culture is not territorial; it is ideological, that is, based on thoughts, ideas, beliefs traditions, and institutions. Its central principles are inscribed in the beliefs of Tawhid (unity of God), and Prophecy (Nubuwwah) of Muhammad (May God bless him and grant him peace). Tawhid demands not only an exclusive worship to the supreme and only God, Allah, it also implies that Allah alone has the right and might and wisdom to guide mankind, who are His creatures. His last message (the Quran) revealed to humanity through His last Prophet, Muhammad, contains the essential directives which mould and discipline the moral, spiritual and cultural life of the believers. All the religious,cultural, and social institutions of the Muslims are principally derived from this Book. The Quran has created common ideals, common patterns of thought, common international literature, common heroes and common history for the world Muslim community (from which Sindhu Desh and Pakhtunistan are not and cannot be excluded).

The second governing principle of Islamic culture is the personality of the Prophet Muhammad. He is the ideal human manifestation of the will and purpose of God in creation. The cultural principles enshrined in the Quran are visibly and perfectly illustrated in his character. Hence his life remains as the model, as the standard reference of moral and cultural behaviour for all Muslims and for all ages. He is the binding and unifying force of the international Muslim Ummah he gave

the concept of a world Muslim community which is constituted not by geography but by an ideology. This is one of his greatest contributions to the good of man. This is why a hero of Muslim Spain is equally a hero of Muslim Sind, and vice versa. And if a Pakistani, for example, disowns Tariq ibn Ziyad and Muhammad ibn Qasim as foreigners he is guilty of the audacity of rejecting the personality of the Prophet, because for him he too is a foreigner. Such a person cannot claim to be a Muslim under any definition of the term. In giving shape and definition to Muslim culture the entire Muslim world has participated under the inspiration of the Quran and the Prophet. Hence if a community gives a purely territorial definition to its culture it commits a cultural suicide, and loses its identity as Muslim.

All through these fourteen centries the entire Muslims World has been receiving religions, cultural and intellectual inspiration from the main centres of Islam in the Arab World and Western Asia. The process continues and will continue for ever. The hajj (annual pilgrimage to Kabah in Makkah) marks the highest mainfestation of religious and cultural unity of the Islamic Ummah. Even events on the outer fringes of Islam, as those in Philippines, Thailand, India,Ethopia, Cyprus and Central Asia, arouse immediate concern and sympathy in the rest of the Muslim World. Hence, Pakistani culture cannot help receiving foreign influences from Muslim lands, particularly when it is receiving them so generously from non-Muslim lands.

Pakistan came into being on the very basis of being an Islamic community, and not on being a distinct geographical entity. It is written in its very constitution that it is an Islamic Republic, and that it shall endeavour to enforce and promote the Islamic way of life, and not the Sindhi, Panjabi, Pakhtun or Balochi way of life. The several regions of Pakistan, which are claiming to be separate nationalities and distinct cultural entities, did not even dream to be so before the establishment of Pakistan; this fully explains their dishonest ambition to dismember Pakistan.

The people who took the most active part in the creation of Pakistan, and the very founder of the nation, Qaid-e-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, did not belong to the soil of Pakistan. Millions of these "foreign" Muslims sacrificed their lives for the new state because they believed in the oneness of the Islamic culture which united them with the original inhabitants of the Pakistan lands. The famous definition of Islamic Culture which the Qaid-i-Azam gave during the Jinnah-Gandi parleys in Bomby, a few years before Partition, will ever remain one of the noblest and finest definitions of the subject. It was that concept of Islamic culture which spearheaded the Pakistan Movement and led it to successful density. The Muslims of this subcontinent wholesheartedly supported the stand of the Qaid-i-Azam; now therefore, some people of this generation in some areas of Pakistan have no moral or legal right to unwrite our past of undo our future.

Notwithstanding these narrow selfish slogans of regional nationalism, Pakistan has always aspired to become and remain a prominent member of the Islamic block. Its membership of the Regional Co-operation for Development, its hosting the Summit Conference of Islamic Nations in Lahore in 1974, and its sponsoring the establishment of an International Islamic Bank in Jeddah, are the surest proofs of its deep interest in the international heritage of Islamic culture.

**The Problem of Sub—Culture**

The culture of Islam is the dominant culture of Pakistan. No one doubts and no one denies it. Yet there are some people in this country who claim that they posses a separate and exclusive culture which does not share anything in common with the culture of Pakistan, and which is mainly based on the distinctions of language and geographical identity. We propose to consider this claim briefly.

In the first place, it is necessary to observe that only these two factors namely, language and regional identity do not necessarily suffice to make nation; otherwise there would have been thousands of nations in the world today. There must be some large and strong ideological and emotional basis too. Very often political defence, and economic considerations are decisive.

Further, we are aware that the Constitution of Pakistan has adopted Urdu as the national language. National unity and consolidation therefore, do require that Urdu be given distinct precedence over other languages in our intellectual and cultural life; for, if half a dozen languages are encouraged to compete with one another for the national honour, or to grow at the expense of Urdu, the country would ultimately disintegrate. A country with six principle languages cannot survive as a single nation. Even on merits Urdu is the only language that can successfully function as the national language of Pakistan. It possesses a vast vocabulary, an elegant literature, and an immense intellectual heritage and is most commonly spoken and understood in the country. It is eminently fit as a vehicle of expresion for higher arts and sciences. It is widely used as a language of international discourse in South, South-East Asia, and East Africa. It is reckoned as one of the principle languages of the world.

Then examples can be easily cited of multilingual countries where one language has been selected to prevail over other languages in the national interest. Originally large communities of people migrated from Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Holland, Greece, Norway, Sweden and Ireland to the U.S.A., and settled in areas sometimes bigger than Sind and the N.W.F.P., and sopke their respective languages for generations but since English had already been chosen as the national language,

all the other languages ultimately merged into it, enriching it enormously with their own precious heritage.

We have had another experience in the neighbouring country of India, where more than three hundred languages are spoken, out of which at least one dozen are higly developed, and posses rich and extensive literature. But Hindi has been chosen as the national language, and it is taught from the primary to the university stage in very large areas where it is commonly not understood. Most of the provincial languages have made great progress but none of them have completed or expired to compete with the national language. Moreover, despite this vast number of languages spoken in the country no talk of linguistic nationalities has ever been heard of in India. This is one of the secrets of the political and cultural solidarity of that country.

We must make it clear that Urdu is not a sacred language. But in the course of history, before partition, it had become the symbol of Muslim unity and custodian of Islamic heritage in this subcontinent. During the Freedom Movement speakers from the Muslim League platform were made only in Urdu, from Karachi to Sylhet and from Peshawar to Madras. And after partition when the Quaid-e-Azam, whose mother tongue was Gujrati, declared it as the national language of Pakistan, no one questioned it. It was only after his death that mischief raised its head. First the language question was raised in East Pakistan, where it soon became the rallying point of Bengali nationalism, and culminated in the break-up of Pakistan and establishment of the unfortunate Bangla Desh. In West Pakistan (Now Pakistan), similar linguistic nationalist movements were started. Here they have not succeeded as much, but they have played a great role in destroying the national consciousness and in sowing the seeds of national disintegration.

As regards the regional question, it is impossible to recognize it as such under any moral, historical or political principles. It is true that Pakistan comprises large and distinct geographical regions. But each region cannot be granted the right of self determination; for if it were then every village and every home would claim to become an independent state, and social life would be completely disorganised. There are many other large states in the world, like the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., India, Canada, China, and Australia, which contain large provinces (states) sometimes much bigger in population and resources than the whole of Pakistan; yet none of these provinces has ever claimed a separate national status and political independence like the Sindhu Desh and Pakhtunistan.

Intelligent and responsible nations continually try to learn from the working of history, and avoid the sins for which numberless empires and nations had to pay with their very existence. One of such lessons is the fact that small territorial

units have seldom been able to establish their economic viability or political independence and integrity. They exist wholly at the mercy of great powers and fall at the first stroke when any great political upheaval takes place in the area.

We also must remember that small geographical regions or large regions with small populations, were inspired with the passion for political independence by the European imperialist powers, who after the First World War, began to abandon their colonies in Asia and Africa, because of intense political ferment inside the colonies and hostile world opinion outside. The policy of the imperialist powers was to keep the newborn states permanently under their economic subjection, and also to keep them weak by fanning mutual jealousy and hatred between them. Thus, the Arabs who were offered by the British and the French the establishment of an Arab Empire on the impending ruins of the Ottoman Empire, rebelled against their brethern, the Turks, had destroyed their power in the Arab world completely. But what happened next? The Arab lands were divided into more than a dozen states and amirates, placed under the protection of the British and French conspirators. These states obtained their freedom only after the second world War, after immense humiliation, suffering, bloodshed, and destruction. But even now in spite of their fabulous wealth of oil, they are, because of their littleness and unnatural orientation, extremely vulnerable to European and American military action with which they are threatened everyone.

Then the French established the first Christian state in Labanon, in the heart of the Arab world, seven hundred years after the final disgrace of the European powers in the Crusades. After that the Anglo-French-American unholy alliance forcibly implanted a Jewish state in Palestine, and thus established a permanent springhood from where Western imperialism can scuoop upon the Arab World at will. This has been the ultimate result of regional and narrow territorial nationalism in western Asia.

The continent of Africa presents a worse picture, before leaving it the European colonial powers created there more than three dozen artificial states, very few of which are capable of justifying their economic or political existence. This is why at least half a dozen coupd' estats are inflicted on these states every year by American and European intrigues.

But our own history offers the saddest lesson in this regard. East Pakistan, claiming that it was a separate geographical entity, possessing a separate culture distinct from that of Pakistan, and completely discarding the Islamic ideology, seceded from Pakistan with the active instigation and armed support of India, and unashamed backing of Russia and Britain, and became Bangla Desh. It had beguiled its people that rivers of honey and milk would flow through the land as soon as it

had secured independence. But after the dream of independence was realised Bangla Desh became a vertiable hell. Utter political, economic, and social anarchy has gripped the land. Articles of daily use have become alarmingly scarce, and prices are sky-rocketing and gone out of the reach of common man. Political murders and vindictive killings are taking a heavy toll of life, and robbery has become a useful economic persuit. Educational institutions are hardly functioning. Commerce is completely disorganized. Industry has come to a standstill because its infrastructure was destroyed and looted by the Indians. The Government is totally inefficient and corrupt. It has squandered away the national resources by its mismanagement and dishonesty. Its earnings have fallen to a low that threatens the very existence of the state. Militarily it is zero and entirely at the mercy of India. The judgment of history seems to be that Bangla Desh will never rise from its ashes. This is the price of regional arrogance and prejudice.

One should not misconstrue that we are advocating the streamlining of cultural life. We simply wish to emphasize that characteristics of regional dress, food-habits, customs, manners, festivals, dialects, languages and artistic creations do have their place in the national life; but in any case they do not constitute more than a subculture; and a sub-culture cannot over-ride or supplant the national culture.

## Heart – Searching

After this brief dicussion now we feel that we must consult our own consience and see how for our professions are compatible with our actions. Is it not a fact that the Fraukenation of provincialism has taken a firm hold of the minds of responsible leaders, public servants, educationists, and the intellegentsia in every province, and that other people who have lived in the area over the quarter of a century, are still discriminated against in every sphere of life? Is it not true that unabashed political and economic ambition of some provinces has directly helped the development of the sentiment of nationalities in Pakistan? Is it not true that the people of some provinces which have been the greatest heneficiaries in the national life of Pakistan have adopted a boastful and over-bearing attitude towards other people and walk in the country as masters and patricians? Is it not a fact that in some of the provinces systematic efforts are being made to enlarge the personality of the province into the status of a nation? During the recently-concluded "Sind through the centuries Conference" held at Karachi, we heard from the lips of most of the Pakistani delegates in private that the real aim of the Conference was an unveiled attempt at reviving the heathen past of Sind to glorify the image of the "Sindhu Desh". Mr. A.K. Barohi, pure Sindhi and one of the ablest scholars of Pakistan, presiding over one of the sessions of the Conference, referred to this general feeling, and asked if the "Dancing Girl" of Moen-Jo-Daro, represented on the insignia of the Conference, was the only thing that could symmbolize the culture of Sind?

And since we are discussing the problem of culture we should like to ask one more question. Is it not a fact that, in spite of the Advisory Council for Islamic Affairs, the Islamic Research Institute, the Islamic Univeristy of Bahawalpur, Islamic Studies Departments in the Universities, and wholesale propaganda for the promotion of Arabic in Pakistan, no real effort has yet been made to expound the ideology and culture of Islam and inculcate it in the people of this country?

Three relations are not directed against any person, organization or establishment; they are humbly addressed to the whole nation. We are indeed much pained to have made certain pinching and distasteful observations in this essay but they are truths and had to be spelled out honestly for common information and common good. Discussion and criticism are the very breath of a democratic society, and essential conditions of reform and progress. Errors, excesses, hypocrisies & injustices must be brought to public notice and corrected. Our only aim in writing these lines has been to arouse sensible, serious and intellegint thinking in Pakistan to consider the grave cultural crisis with which we are faced today and give the nation an honest and intelligent lead by clearly defining what Pakistani culture is and how deeply centred it is in the faith and tradition of Islam.

## Problem of Modernism

At the T.V. cultural forum many things were discussed, but two important topics were left unattended. One was definition of the characeristic features of Islamic culture, which forms the basis of our own national culture. The subject was broached casually, but was not given the attention and care that it deserved. Rather, some of the speakers dismissed it hastily as frivolous and irrelevant. (we have discussed it briefly in an earlier section of this paper).

The other topic was the impact of modernism on Islamic culture. It was not referred to even incidentally. As observed earlier, the basic principles, the characteristic patterns and moulds, and the recognized norms and standards of our culture are Islamic. Modern knowledge, science and technology, growth of humanist tendencies all over the world, the development of an international code of morality, and the global exchange of habits of dress, food, etiquette, likes and dislikes, have however tremendously affected traditional norms and values of culture in every society. The Muslim world is also seriously confronted with it.

It is certain that essential features and principles of Islamic cultural life will not change. But the application and detailed operation of these laws will surely require a new approach to them. There is a host of problems relating to marriage forms, polygamy, divorce, matrimonial rights and obligations of partners, custody of

children, women's right to equal participation in national life and to economic independence, female workers in factories and farms, ever-increasing tendency towards sex permissiveness palpably reflected in University campuses, television productions, film industry and elsewhere, economic inequality and political exploitation, to name only a few. On all these matters which constitute important ingredients of culture Islam has to give a fresh direction, which must be at once appealing, convincing and workable. The present position is that the onslought of modernism, that is, the demand to subordinate tradition to harmony with current thought, is sweeping away all traditional cultures like a steam-roller. In this universal cataclysm regional and territorial cultures hardly stand the chance to survive. But Islamic culture which is rooted in a religious system that has stood the test of history and weathered the worst storms in its career, can face the odds successfully. But problem is not as easy as said. The whole Muslim world will have to pool up its intellectural and moral resources to fight this battle; and Pakistan, being an integral part of this great brotherhood, must be ready to make its own contribution to this fight. This is the real cultural issue before us today.