

divine into the actions and choices of human beings. That is a form of fundamentalism that not all Muslims would accept. How do we know that the Quran is a true revelation? Because it was revealed by a true prophet, Muhammad, who was a 'perfected human being' and who was able to receive divine revelations? But how do we know that he is a true prophet? Well, because of his true revelations. It is a truly circular argument.

For Allawi, the true enemy facing all Islamic societies is secularism, which he implies leads to immorality. However, I would suggest that it is indeed secularism, and the separation of religion and state, that can bring about a stable society where citizens are free to exercise their religion of choice. Revelations cannot possibly be made the bedrock of any polity. Thomas Paine wrote that supposing 'that something has been revealed to a certain person, and not revealed to any other person, it is revelation to that person only ... [It is] hearsay to every other, and consequently they are not obliged to believe it.' Reasons given for political decisions must meet a certain standard of objectivity since they must appeal to all citizens.

Freedom of conscience requires secular government, and secular law is made legitimate by the consent of those who must obey it. Citizens participate in government when they make and enact the law. In an Islamic theocracy, sovereignty belongs to God. One has but to obey unquestioningly the dictates of those who interpret the Holy Book. In a democracy, sovereignty rests with the people; freedom is the cardinal principle.

Allawi has said that his aim is to make his work accessible to the general reader, but I fear that it will be heavy going for all but the dedicated student trained in philosophy, political science and modern Islamic history. While his expositions of the ideas of Muslim thinkers are exemplary in their lucidity, Allawi