

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **The Premises of the Social Sciences**

If there are such things as general methodology and premises to the Islamic perspective on knowledge and the various sciences, there are also premises and methodological issues that are particular to each scientific field and discipline; and it is the responsibility of the contemporary Muslim scholar to determine exactly what these premises are so that these may be put to use, without confusion, as the need arises.

From the beginning, it has been my opinion that the new Islamic social sciences should be distinguished by these premises, and that they should attend to the explanation and clarification of the reasons for each set of premises and the extent to which they represent a truly Islamic perspective, respond to the Ummah's needs, and actually produce results.

There are several fields of study which need to be noted for the nature of the means and the methodology required to deal with them from within the overall framework of the Islamic perspective. Among them are those dealing with the study of the texts of revelation, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and the way that these have been preserved. Other fields include the *maqāṣid* or higher Shari'ah purposes, the understanding of human nature and society, ways of dealing with society and helping it to achieve its ideals, social institutions, social policies, the establishment and

development of society, and the achievement of Islamic ideals for society.

Each of the fields mentioned here may be divided quite naturally into several subjects and disciplines. Our concern, at this early stage in the Islamization of knowledge, is to determine the importance of the field known in contemporary Western terminology as the "behavioral sciences" which include psychology, sociology, and anthropology. It is quite important that a start be made toward "Islamizing" these sciences because they are the ones that represent, on the agenda of today's scholars and thinkers, the proper fields for the study of human nature, the nature of society, the meaning of man, and the fundamental assumptions concerning man's nature, constitution, and needs. Moreover, they are the ones that influence, through their premises and theories, all the other social sciences and humanities.

No doubt, subjects like education, political science, economics, administration, and communications as well as the philosophy of each of these sciences are based in the main upon premises posited in the behavioral sciences, the findings of its research, and the concepts it has developed in relation to the nature of man and the patterns of his behavior. Then, if no Islamic premises are developed as alternatives to these premises, no real Islamization of the social sciences and its various disciplines will be possible.

All the efforts to Islamize the various branches of knowledge rest upon a single precondition; a proper understanding of the *fitrah* and the dynamics of human relations. Since such an understanding can only come about through the behavioral sciences, their Islamization is quite logically the first step toward the Islamization of the rest of the social sciences. Likewise, if the Islamization of subjects like education, political science, and economics is accounted among the priorities of Islamization, then the Islamization of the behavioral sciences is clearly a step toward the achievement of success in those spheres.

In order that this endeavor be successful, it will first be necessary to establish graduate and postgraduate programs, centers for research, and teaching departments in these subjects so that scholars and thinkers may together begin to develop sound Islamic perspectives on the issues.

### **Islamization and the Science of Education**

Having exhausted themselves looking for solutions to their problems, having failed to address the issues of their weakness and their backwardness, and having lost all hope of ascendancy in the physical, military, legal, and political sciences, Muslims turned toward the sciences of education, administration, and economics. Finally, they turned toward media and mass communications.

Then, amidst the bitterness of their failure to Westernize or modernize themselves using approaches other than Islamic, a reaction took place within the Ummah toward Islam. The attention of Muslims turned toward the concepts of Islamic *aṣālah* (innovative application of original Islamic principles) and the adoption of Islamic ways in the life and social systems of the Ummah. This, it was hoped, would deliver them from their problems and enable them to regain their constructive energies and abilities. Among the most important manifestations of this attitude is the undertaking to Islamize certain of the major applied social sciences like economics and communications, and the establishment of teaching departments and centers of research at universities.

The objective of all these efforts is undoubtedly a sound one. It is important to note, however, that these two particular fields, economics and communications, are concerned with means. Therefore, even though it is imperative that these two fields be Islamized, the fact remains that unless the educational and intellectual foundations of Muslims are Islamically oriented, undertakings in these fields will never be of value to Muslim society. Clearly, unless Muslim society including its political institutions is put in order, changes of this nature will amount to very little.

It is for this reason that Muslim scholars need to direct their reformative energies first of all toward education and political science. The forms that this attention might best take would include seminars, conferences, curriculum development, centers of study and research, and specialized academic departments.

At this stage it might be useful to note that among the most manifest aspects of the Islamic personality in recent times has been the inconsistency between what it claims and what it actually does or has the capacity to do. Despite the faith of Muslims in the superiority of Islam and the fact that the Ummah is the carrier of the eternal message of Islam to all mankind, the Ummah has not represented Islam or even reflected Islam in its daily life, its institutions, or its practices. Islam is barely present in the life of the Ummah, except perhaps as a myth to be celebrated in song. Even at the individual level where Islam may be expressed as values, character and behavior, it is presented in an incomplete and unsound manner with the result that Muslims have lost the power to inspire others to look at Islam as something desirable or worth considering as a way of life for themselves.

If one is familiar with thinking on Islamic education in recent centuries and its superficiality, one will easily discern that a comprehensive and imaginative solution to its problems will never take place without serious academic study of the subject. Random observations, no matter how insightful, will never accomplish anything. So in spite of all the observations made by Islamic thinkers in regard to the noble objectives of Islamic education, there remains a lack of concerted academic effort in the behavioral sciences and, in turn, in the study of humanity, its nature, and the ways in which it took shape and evolved.

The methods by which values, principles and fundamental Islamic concepts are instilled in students are clearly inappropriate for their mentality and level of development. In fact, the manner used by the Qur'an and the Prophet to address the pagan Arab tribes (and Quraysh) is the one that has most influenced Muslim teaching. Thus, even today

Muslim teachers use this style, without bothering to consider the condition of those they are addressing. It is for this reason that Muslim children are subjected to the harshest sort of schooling and upbringing; as if they were mature sons of Arab tribesmen who, like those the Prophet attempted to educate, need to be made aware of the consequences of their arrogance and continued refusal to accept the truth.

When an adult is taught a subject like the articles of faith, the subject is introduced in a way that appeals before all else to reason. But when children are presented this material, it needs to be organized in such a way that it encourages and develops the personality that will remain with the child throughout his/her entire lifetime. It was for this reason that the Prophet of Allah said, "The best of you in *jāhūliyah* will be the best of you in Islam; so long as you develop your understanding of Islam." In other words, those who develop strong and sound characters in their childhood will grow up to have such characters when they mature. Then, having attained maturity, their understanding and faith will serve to direct their strengths and abilities toward noble and worthwhile objectives.

Instructive discourse directed to a child is first of all a process of building fundamental character. Such discourse when directed to an adult, however, is more of the nature of common sense advice and rational counsel. Among the most important matters with which we need to concern ourselves is the way that we approach our children from stage to stage during the period of their mental and emotional development. We need to study the ways to approach them and how these differ from the kinds of methods used in the instruction and guidance of mature adults.

There can be no doubt that growing children need to be addressed in a way that will implant within them the seeds of a strong character, that will enhance their sense of independence and self-reliance, and that will encourage them to fulfil their mission in life with pride and the desire to excel. In this way, their characters will develop the traits necessary to assist them in bringing the Ummah success in

its mission to mankind. It is equally as important that their instruction not be undertaken in a rough and admonitory manner that will only serve to arrest the development of the traits mentioned above and disrupt or impair the development of their relationship with the Almighty, the Merciful and Mercy-giving. In other words, the religious instruction children receive at the earliest stages of their development must be positive if it is ever to promote love for religion, pride in it, and the desire to contribute to it. One who has acquired such love and pride in childhood will grow up with patience, motivation, and the ability to make sacrifices. One, on the other hand, who has grown up fearing religion and in awe of its teachings will develop psychological and emotional defenses that will remain in place throughout adulthood. Such a one will never learn to do more than the required minimum. Thus, traits like sloth, unreliability, and lackadaisical attitudes come to dominate the personality. In recent centuries, this is exactly the kind of character that has developed in the majority of Muslims.

When we consider our religion, we realize that the Muslim has a special place with the Almighty and that, in spite of what happens, the Muslim will eventually be rewarded with paradise. The Prophet said: "Whoever declares that there is no god but Allah will enter paradise, even if he/she fornicates or steals." Muslim children are not responsible for their actions until they attain the age of maturity. Thus, there is no need to attempt to hasten their development, or to shoulder them with responsibilities that they are incapable of bearing.

In all of this the example of the Prophet, upon whom be the peace and blessings of Allah, needs to be kept in mind. The Prophet's treatment of children was always loving and encouraging. For example, his kindness to his nephew, Ibn 'Abbās, is well known. The Hadith literature has preserved for us instances of his delivering the Friday *khutbah* while holding his grandsons in his arms, of his making *sajdah* in salah (as the imam in the mosque) with his granddaughter on his back, of his kindness toward Anas ibn Mālik (who was a young boy at the time), and of his annoyance with the

bedouin who confessed to him that he, the bedouin, had never kissed his own children.

Certainly, when a message is presented to Muslim youth at the proper time and in the proper way it will have a positive effect on their growth and development. This was the case with the Companions of the Prophet who accepted Islam after they had matured, people like Abū Bakr, 'Umar, Khālid ibn al Walīd, Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās, Abū 'Ubaydah 'Āmir ibn al Jarrāh, and many others.

The correct starting-place for Islamic education, therefore, is not admonition and intimidation but caring and love, beginning with the love of Allah, the Almighty Creator, the Merciful and Forgiving. From there one may move on to love of the Prophet, of good deeds, of truth, justice, life, *khilāfah*, reform, jihad, and the desire to meet Allah and enjoy the divine countenance in the eternal abode.

In education, perhaps more so than in any other field, we notice how important it is that the objectives and higher purposes of revelation complement the efforts of academic inquiry and rational thinking in the social sciences. Thus, academic study of the human *fitrah* and relationships is an effective means of achieving the objectives, and realizing the higher purposes, of Islam. Our experience with Islamic education over the past few centuries proves to us that good intentions are not sufficient. Rather, it is essential that we learn how to actually achieve the good that we hope to see done.

It may be important at this juncture to mention that even after the time of the *khulafā'*, it remained the habit of the city-dwelling Quraysh to place their young children in the charge of bedouins who would raise them along with their own as desert Arabs. Obviously, the upbringing that children received at the hands of the bedouins was not only physical, but psychological as well. In the open expanses of the desert the child grew up with unencumbered horizons, free of the forms and other restrictions imposed on the individual by society. In such an atmosphere and at such an early developmental stage, traits like self-reliance, independence, and bravery will naturally become a part of

the child's essential character. Thus, this remained the practice among royalty and nobility in the early centuries of Islam, because they knew that it was the best possible sort of preparation for the responsibilities of leadership that would later become their lot. After the initial period of development in the desert, the children returned to the cities and towns to begin their formal studies with their tutors and instructors. That was the way their education was completed.

Any introduction to Islamic education must include mention of the methods used by the Prophet in his discourse with children and youth, and the love, care, and patience that he exercised in dealing with them. Indeed, there is nothing in the historical record to indicate that the Prophet ever struck a child or treated the young with other than respect. There is no room for misunderstanding in regard to the concepts of positiveness and love being somehow contradictory to the concept of discipline. Rather, it should be clear that discipline is something that children develop through practice, accustomization, and the example of others. In learning discipline, moreover, children are aided by the positive aspects of their character which urge them to seek success and the acceptance of those whom they love and respect.

Showing love to a child, then, must not be understood as being the same as "spoiling" the child. Likewise, it is quite important that admonishing the child not be understood to be the same as teaching the child discipline. Such understanding is both incorrect and reprehensible. What is needed in bringing up children is both love and discipline. If we are successful, we can raise our children to be successful.

Another matter of some importance is that our present-day leaders, scholars, and educators have to realize that the educational and reformatory tasks with which they are faced are different in several ways from those which faced the Prophet in the early days of Islam. The people toward whom he directed his message were strong and hardened, but the problem with them was that they were overly proud,

stubborn, and tribalistic. On the other hand, the Ummah today and its youth might best be described as infirm, dissipated, unambitious, and lacking confidence.

In many ways the Ummah resembles the children of Israel during the period of their slavery in Egypt when the Prophet Mūsà was forced to wander with them in the wilderness of Sinai for a period of forty years while a new and stronger generation came of age. Only then were they able to leave the desert and go to the holy land where they reestablished a society of Islam, *tawhīd*, and prophethood.

It is important here to understand that the replacement of creative intellect with superficiality occurs when the collective mind of a nation is no longer capable of dealing realistically with changing situations so that it fails to keep abreast with developments and balks at accepting challenges. This is precisely what happened to the children of Israel and their rabbis. The result was that when a poor person among them committed a theft, they applied the severest penalty, but when a rich person did the same thing, they allowed him to go free. It was for this reason that the teachings and mission of the prophet 'Isà focused on bringing the Israelites back to the basics, to the positive aspects of love for one's fellow humans, and of sincerity and care.

Thus, the undertaking to reform education and upbringing in the Ummah today is not of the nature of training for a mature and developed people. On the contrary, it is a treatment for an infirm and feeble people who have lost their strength, determination, ingenuity, diligence, and love.

Muslim educators need to understand their mission well. They must strive together to produce a well-defined Islamic theory of education with clear-cut objectives and methods. In particular, they must distinguish between the psychological and intellectual aspects of education. In this they will have to consider the psychological makeup of the Ummah and the ways in which it needs to be reformed.

It is also of importance, in the light of what revelation tells us of the varied spiritual, emotional, and material dimensions of human beings, that Muslim psychologists

and sociologists renew their efforts to Islamize psychology and the other social sciences so as to provide the Muslim teacher with a knowledge and awareness of the human *fitrah*, how it develops, and how best to deal with it.

#### **Islamization and Political Science**

Political science revolves around the study of politics, the priorities, principles and institutions of the Ummah, the methods by which political leadership may be chosen, clarification of the general political agenda for the Ummah, organization of the Ummah's political system, statutes, and bylaws, the legislation necessary to maintain the system, the administration of that system, the direction of its energies, and its potential. All of these topics represent vital issues for the Ummah in the present day, from both an ideological and a constitutional point of view.

The study and the practice of politics hinge upon a proper understanding of these elements, the ways in which they interrelate, and the vestiges that they leave behind. Politics also demands the ability to present solutions and the capacity to keep abreast with change in a way that guarantees the well-being, development, and stability of the Ummah. Thus, the study of the historical models produced by the Ummah, though certainly not an end in itself, is something that might be beneficial, for they represent an important source of the kind of lessons the Ummah needs to learn if it is ever to move forward. In these studies it would be advisable to pay attention to the roles played by both the formal and the informal political institutions. Such a study could shed light on the reasons those institutions developed in the ways that they did and thus assist in the renewal or creation of appropriate institutions, systems, and organizations. Indeed, unless the Ummah is able to develop for itself political institutions that suit its particular circumstances and values, it will never achieve its ends.

What we need to understand is that the political leadership of the Ummah as well as its political institutions and processes need to reflect the true nature and thought of the Ummah. Otherwise, no leadership or public political

institution can ever hope to prosper, develop, or survive. If we ever expect to put the politics of the Ummah back on the right course we must realize that the key to all this is the kind of education and upbringing that we provide for our youth. Certainly, both the systems and the leadership of the Ummah reflect its thought and personality. Moreover, the nature of a system will never change unless its psychological and ideological foundations undergo change. Thus, if we seek to alter the systems, leadership, and institutions of the Ummah, we must start at the foundational level, in the way that the Ummah thinks and feels.

Correct Islamic politics must first of all be the product of a healthy Ummah that is capable of producing sound and true ideas. The political leadership and institutions of such an Ummah must of necessity be based on the trust the Ummah has in them, on the participation of its members in their administration, and on the mature advice that the Ummah presents to them.

It is for these reasons that the political thought of the Ummah is in serious need of revamping. Certainly the same is true in regard to education. Only if this is done will the Ummah's political and educational systems reflect its particular religious and psychological constitution, and only then will the nature of political life in Islam be understood, or its objectives be grasped. Academic studies in political science must help the Ummah to regain its wholeness and social sensibilities, to perform at a societal level, to renew the vitality of its institutions, and to direct its political leadership towards serious Islamic commitment. If this happens, the political leadership of the Ummah will finally gain the trust and support of the Ummah.

It is essential that Islamic political thought and institutions deliver the Ummah from the failings and humiliation that have left it with a clearly discernible slave mentality, bereft of free will and independent action. The intellectual and political leadership of the Ummah must call a halt to the culture of psychological and academic terrorism that has taken concepts like truthfulness, objective thinking, and pride in one's identity and

transformed them into slavery, *ṣaghār*,<sup>1</sup> fatalism, *taqlīd*, and finally into misery and degradation. Rather, we must ensure that people come to understand Islamic thought as the champion of honor and decency as well as the representative of truth, goodness, sacrifice, *khilāfah*, and reform.

The present depressed state of the Ummah, its weakness, its decline, its dread of its enemies, its capitulation to their ambitions and machinations, and its infighting are all reflections of the Ummah's slave mentality, that developed as a result of infirm thought and twisted psychological upbringing.

Moreover, in the field of Islamic political studies a distinction must be made between the letter of revelation, the interpretations of academic studies, and the decisions of legislators and politicians. Academic studies undertaken by thinkers and scholars are quite different from the word of revelation, nor are they the same as the decisions of social legislation and political activism. Rather, they represent a rich source of ideas for the Ummah, and a means by which its vision may be clarified. The different points of view held by scholars in regard to political and social legislation do not detract in any way from the opinions held by supporters of either side in such issues. Thus, no one opinion should be taken as anything more than an aid to the Ummah's understanding of the issue at hand. Therefore, the greater the number of ideas produced by the Ummah's scholars, the greater the chances that the Ummah will consider social and political legislation in an objective and mature manner, and in accordance with its convictions and outlook. In this way decisions about social and political legislation will actually reflect the convictions of the public as well as the greater interests of the Ummah, even if they do not always conform to the opinions of certain individuals or parties.

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<sup>1</sup> The mistaken interpretation of this concept led to the institution of humiliating non-Muslim subjects. See chapter two, p. 50. (Trans.)

Certainly, among the most important tasks confronting scholars of political science is to define the constants in the makeup and thought of the Ummah. Scholars will also need to explain how best to deal with these constants in the legislative and administrative spheres, and how best to deal with challenges without overturning the entire executive and constitutional framework of the Ummah.

It is now very clear that neither Eastern nor Western institutions will suit the political needs of the Muslim world. The Ummah of Islam, unlike these others, considers service to truth and justice to be its sacred duty. Likewise, the truth that it seeks in *wahy*, *fitrah*, and reason is objective. Consultation is considered by the Ummah to be a fundamental method for arriving at the truth, when following the direction of truth is considered the best way to achieve the Islamic "good" on both the public and the private levels. Here we can see that the Western party system is not interested in arriving at the objective truth, nor has it been devised to achieve the dynamism of Islamic *shūrā*. On the other hand, the totalitarianism represented in the Eastern Marxist states is even further removed from these essential Islamic concepts.

Both materialism and rationalism form the foundations of contemporary Western civilization. If there are any religious aspects to Western civilization they are remnants of a heritage which refuses to die and one which, by the way, borrowed heavily from Islamic civilization.

In the light of this rational materialism, democratic systems came about that considered the voice of the parliamentary (or party) majority to be the best possible way to achieve what is best for the individual and society. Democratic decisions, then, are the decisions of a majority taken in the interests of their own political party. Marxism, on the other hand, came about as a reformational movement that deified the human mind to the point of denouncing organized religion and openly declaring its own atheism. Thus Marxism viewed economics and material prosperity as the goal of all human aspiration and history. With this understanding at its ideological foundation—that

the life of the individual is relatively unimportant when compared with the material progress of humankind in history—it should come as no surprise that totalitarianism and dictatorships held sway in Eastern Europe for so long.

At this point it might be of interest to point out that the West's rejection of revelation deprived it of spiritual and moral guidance, and this is why it fell into the trap of materialism. Ultimately, it is the limited nature of human reason and understanding that is the real cause of the social, ethical, and economic problems that beset the West.

Another point to remember is that Islamic thought differs from Western thought in its fundamental approach to humankind. Islam recognizes all the various aspects of human life, and takes as its objective in this life the exercise of free will in deciding between good and evil, right and wrong, truth and falsehood. This approach or philosophy is what makes the truth objective, falling outside the person of the individual and his/her will. As such, then, it becomes something that he/she is to strive for and seek. It is for this reason that the Islamic concept of rule, *al hukm*, is not the same as the democratic concept of majority rule, but rather the concept of mutual consultation or *shūrà* in all matters of importance to the Ummah, and of the free exchange of ideas in seeking the truth and solutions to problems. In this process only the teachings of *wahy*, the laws of nature, and the needs and requirements of the Ummah are to be taken into consideration.

The approach and the purpose of *shūrà* are therefore other than those of democracy, though in some aspects there are resemblances between them, like the need to abide by the majority decision when there is ambiguity concerning the truth, or when a decision must be made on an issue on which there is no clear consensus or *ijmā'*. Of course, the supposition here is that the majority opinion will be the right one.

The institution of *shūrà* and its systems must reflect the nature of this concept (*shūrà*) in searching for the truth in the texts of Revelation, the dictates of *fiṭrah*, and the laws of the universe. It is for this reason that *shūrà* will, of

necessity, differ from democratic institutions and processes which strive for autonomous decisions springing from the interests and opinions of those belonging to the ruling party or coalition.

Then, if the Islamic political system differs in its approach and purposes from the Western democratic system, the institutions of the Islamic political system must reflect those differences. It is therefore essential that an Islamic political system embody the freedom of choice and all that follows from it, like the freedom of faith, thought, and organized social action. At the same time, it is essential that the system reflect the convictions of the Ummah and its ideology. None of that will be possible, however, without truly representative leaders who are both elected to office and in possession of the personal qualifications that will enable them to benefit from the advice and counsel given them by supporting institutions.

The foregoing exposition should have clarified the reasons for the importance of comprehensive vision in the attempt to understand these systems and compare them with others. This should also assist us in chalking out the major features of an original Islamic system that will benefit from the experience of others rather than attempt no more than to imitate them when it is clear that their approaches and their objectives are significantly different from those of the Ummah.

So then which system best expresses the Islamic spirit in the field of politics? And how is this system to be brought about?

The Islamic system will undoubtedly be distinguished by ideological and constitutional conditions and qualifications for which guarantees will have to be provided. Likewise, experience will be necessary in methods of education, raising political awareness, and working within the Islamic political system and its supporting political and legislative institutions. The organization of political parties will have to be based on competence and flexibility so as to ensure that the Islamic vision is represented by appropriate counsel and experience. What this may well mean is that the Islamic

system will comprise several levels of authority as well as several consultative and legislative bodies, depending on the practical needs and exigencies that may arise.

The means of political expression and organization must be flexible enough to allow the elected representatives of the Ummah to be politically active in constructive ways. Thus, political parties in the Islamic political system would resemble parliamentary groupings which submit neither to restrictions nor to previously determined party positions. The responses of such groupings to events would be based on their objective convictions, perceptions, and understanding, as well as on advice generated through *shūrā*.

Perhaps one of the most important steps taken recently by ruling parties in certain Islamic countries was, in addition to allowing the formation of political parties other than their own, that they took certain personalities from the leadership of the Islamic movements into the ruling parties. Thus, practicing and sincere Muslim leaders have been able to gain the confidence and respect of the masses for their wisdom and understanding of political realities.

The developments we see in the contemporary political life of what are commonly known as the "developed" nations of the world clarify for us how the Ummah may expand its role in regulating political life and protecting it from corruption. We may also learn how to build political forums and develop political activism in a way that guarantees greater independence for the political leadership, more objectivity in their decisions, and better representation of the Muslim public and their interests in general. All of this should encourage Muslim scholars and legislators to think of suitable alternatives that better serve the interests, needs, and nature of the Ummah. When this is accomplished, the need for imitation and grafting will have disappeared.

Looking at the increasing size of the Muslim Ummah and the way that its population is spread out over the globe to include many different lands, peoples, cultures, and historical experiences, we may readily understand that perhaps the most suitable form of government would be one

that distributes the responsibilities for ruling in Islamic lands at the local, state, and central levels in a flexible federation. Such an arrangement would facilitate matters for the leadership and provide the populace with better opportunities for participation in shouldering the responsibilities of government.

The Islamic premises to Islamic political science and to Islamic political action need to transgress the present understanding of *khilāfah* as merely a historical institution which needs to be copied and practiced in the same way that it was practiced by the early generations of Muslims. Instead, *khilāfah* should be understood as a dynamic system that aims at achieving lofty objectives through the establishment of values and principles in daily human life, and through attending to the religious and temporal interests of its citizens. On that basis, there is nothing to prevent earnest Islamic inquiry into systems, procedures, and institutions for the purpose of redesigning them in ways that better serve the real interests of the Ummah.

Many who study the *khilāfah* and find it to be a rigid system based on the centrality of power and authority have not truly understood this political system. Whatever system of government the Ummah chooses for itself in order to realize its spiritual and temporal aspirations is the one that should be understood as the *khilāfah* system, and thus deserving of the Ummah's support. Students should pay no attention to historical forms, because to adhere to forms while ignoring the essence is the result of inexperience.

Among the premises of Islamic political science is knowledge of the role played by the purposes and objectives of Islam in the life of the Ummah, in its organization, in its potential, and in the differences of its interests and perspectives. The concepts of myth and reality, on the other hand, form the framework of Western political thought on this issue, which views values and principles with disdain for the reason that they do not reflect the reality of present-day situations and needs.

So, if the Westerner is to be excused for his pessimism (owing to the corruption of revelational sources available to

him in his culture), there is certainly no place in Islam for myth. The objectives, principles and guidance brought by Islam are not supposition or imagination but rather derived from creation, *fiṭrah*, and the truth on which the heavens and earth were erected.

Islam identifies other sorts of opposites: good and evil, truth and falsehood, guidance and deviation, rectitude and corruption. But Islamic society does not recognize myth as opposed to reality. Rather, there is truth, guidance, and rectitude in opposition to falsehood, deviation, and corruption. Conditions in society will then differ on the basis of how much influence is exerted on individuals and society by these opposing variables.

Another important factor will be the clarification of contemporary Islamic thought from all the controversies and circumstances that beset the Ummah from an early date in its history and became the reason for specialized or localized interpretations of the sources of revelation in ways that served the political interests or ambitions of one group or another. Indeed, this was how the elements of *tawḥīd* and *shūrà* were separated early on from governing the affairs of the Ummah. Instead, scholars sought out texts and historical precedents that would serve to substantiate the political claims of their patrons, with the result that the Ummah lost its ability to shoulder the responsibility for the mission of Islam and establishing its order on earth.

The Islamization of political life really means the Islamization of ideas and education; and the Islamization of the fundamental polity, its leadership, and its organization. The meaning of Islamization is adherence to the fundamental values and purposes of Islam by means of practical, sound, and realistic *shūrà*, and by educating the Ummah and the political base in the fundamentals of that adherence and its forthright ways.

Another matter of importance for us to realize is that in the final analysis the important thing is the social and intellectual perceptions that are reflected by political decisions. Ideally speaking, such decisions should be the result of interaction between the texts of revelation and the

higher purposes of Islam with *fitrah* and reality, by means of the leadership's perceptions, decisions, and practices. It was in illustration of this relationship that the Qur'anic text was revealed:

Obey Allah, and obey the Prophet, and those in authority among you (4:59).

The kind of obedience and experience referred to here will never come about through mere academic inquiry into the texts of revelation, but rather through practical interaction between the text and reality as represented by committed Islamic leadership acting on behalf of the Ummah, reflecting its true situation, and responding with true *hikmah* to its needs and the challenges it faces. Otherwise, the texts of revelation (the Qur'an and the Sunnah) become destructive, divisive, misleading, and conducive to unrealistic thinking.

The Ummah must never lose its resolve to establish committed Islamic leadership for itself. Indeed, only through such leadership may the Ummah benefit from the teachings of revelation. If we are successful in reforming our thought, we will undoubtedly be able to reach the concepts and means upon which the broad Islamic social base may be established. Then, from that base, able and committed Islamic leadership will surely spring forth.

The Islamic thought which showed so much promise when it produced the genius of al Māwardī, Ibn Taymīyah, al Fārābī, and Ibn Khaldūn, needs now to spring up anew, to develop, and to complete its methodology in order to provide the means by which the Ummah may play its proper role in civilization.

### **Islamization, Science, and Technology**

At an earlier stage in the life of the Ummah, under pressure from the cultural and scientific pressure that was exerted upon it by the West, educated Muslims confused two things: firstly, the objective nature of truth and universal laws: secondly, the personalization inherent in the

way that individuals and societies make use of these truths and universal laws. Thus, educated Muslims accepted everything Western civilization and science produced, supposing this to be objective and neutral.

The truth of the matter, however, is that Western civilization, like all other nations and civilizations, sprang from its own particular set of beliefs, psychological elements, and historical factors. Its development was also influenced by its loss of confidence in revelational sources when it discovered that these had been tampered with and altered. Thus, the material needs of humankind became so important that the individual and his/her desires attained a sort of sanctity. In this way, all ties to spiritual life were severed. It is for this reason that while Western society provides its people with an abundance of material goods and comforts, it is plagued by psychological problems and social strife that constantly destabilize society and threaten it with destruction.

It is therefore extremely important for Muslims to realize that not all of Western knowledge and science is objective in nature. If it is not difficult to see how the social sciences are clearly subjective, it should not be difficult to see how the hard sciences are really any different in this respect. If there is a difference, it is one of degree only. Indeed, scientific studies are not undertaken in a haphazard manner. On the contrary, these spring from decidedly human objectives and from subjective considerations undertaken by minds shaped in the Western mold and determined to achieve their objectives. All the sciences of foreign civilizations need to be seen in this perspective.

There is no way to speak truthfully about objectivity in science other than from an Islamic perspective. This is because Islamic thought, in its study of the particulars of nature, the laws of nature, and natural phenomena, does not proceed from limited rationalist vision only, but combines this with the comprehensive and universalist knowledge of revelation so that all science and knowledge emerge with their objectives properly designated, thus satisfying for humankind both temporal and spiritual needs.

The Islamization of knowledge in general and of the hard sciences in particular does not necessarily mean that the material or professional particulars of a science will be any different. Rather, its significance is in its providing guidance to scientific research and endeavors so that these are directed toward the achievement of what is truly in the best interests of humankind. Thus, Islamization means correct direction, correct objectives, and correct philosophy. In this way, Islamic knowledge is reformatational in nature, constructive, ethical, rightly guided, and *tawhīdī*.

The challenge confronting Islamization is that it present to humankind a vision in which science is put to the service of humankind and *khilāfah* in order to fulfill the responsibilities of reformation and constructive custody of the earth.

It is strange indeed that in the shadow of Western civilization there should be nothing greater for humankind than to compete in the arms race or to produce swifter and more deadly means of destruction. In this arrangement, truth always resides with those who possess the most arms, power, and wealth. Certainly, the present situation is one that goes against the grain of humankind's *fiṭrah*. In fact, humankind has now reached a juncture where divine guidance has become all the more important to its future, where the comprehensive vision of Islam is urgently needed, and where the establishment of constructive and reformatational civilization is essential.

Without a living example, however, it will be difficult for humankind to comprehend the vision of Islam or apply its solutions to their problems. Thus, only if Muslims discharge their responsibility to themselves by applying this vision and those solutions will humankind ever understand the efficacy of the Islamic solution.