

# ***The Islamic Way of Thinking***

*by Hasan Abdullah*

# THE ISLAMIC WAY OF THINKING

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# Introduction

Islam is a unique ideology based upon a unique Aqeedah which serves as the foundation for a unique system of rules. The distinct nature of Islam would lead someone to ask whether or not Islam came to also shape the thinking process, which is a process common to all human beings.

No doubt, thinking as a function of the human being is the same for all people. In this process, an individual transmits his or her sensation of the reality to the brain through the senses, and then connects this sensation to previous information about the reality to produce a thought. Thus, a reality must exist, which a person senses either directly or indirectly,<sup>1</sup> and this reality is transmitted to the brain through one of the senses.

However, thought does not result from the sensation alone but results only by linking this sensation with any previous information that the human being possesses which pertains to the reality at hand. Thinking does not only consist of the reflection of the reality onto the brain as the Marxists claim. The Marxists claimed such an idea for no other reason than to prove that matter precedes the Fikr, that the reality is the source of the culture, civilization, social order, and awareness, and that all evolved through the evolution of matter. Such a claim is false because the reality and the brain are not sufficient to produce thought.<sup>2</sup> Although these two elements produce sensation, the sensation differs from thought because sensation exists among humans as well as animals. However, the human being is distinct in the process of connecting the sensation with previous information to produce a new thought.

Thinking in this method is universal, like the processes of eating and walking. However, because human beings adopt different Aqaid, and the adoption of any Aqeedah builds a person intellectually in a specific format, then the Aqeedah serves as the intellectual framework that defines the outlook towards life as well as the reference and foundation upon which the person builds all other thoughts. Thus, the Aqeedah by its nature mandates a distinct way of thinking. And adopting the Islamic Aqeedah in a correct intellectual manner (based upon sound intellectual thinking and not based on imitation of ancestors, blind faith, instinctive emotions, or benefit) will undoubtedly change the individual into an intellectual ideological person who thinks in a distinct method with a distinct style and inclination. And this distinct thinking will manifest in a distinct pattern of behavior.

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## The Islamic Method of Acquiring Knowledge

The method by which the Muslim acquires knowledge and thought is critical in determining the impact of the Islamic thoughts upon the individual. If the method of acquiring knowledge was correct and based upon research, profound thinking, and analysis (as Allah (swt) ordered) then it will produce effective results, and such a person will turn into an ideological person who thinks in a distinct manner. Allah (swt) orders the human being to think about many aspects of His Creation in a profound and enlightened manner:

"Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding." **[TMQ 3:190]**

*"Do they not then consider the Qur'an carefully? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found within it many contradictions."* **[TMQ 4:82]**

*"Tell Me! The water that you drink — is it you who causes it to come down from the rain clouds, or are We the Cause for it to come down?"* **[TMQ 56:68-69]**

*"He is created from a fluid poured forth — proceeding from between the back bone and the ribs."* **[TMQ 86:6-7]**

*"Do they not look at the camels, how they are created? And at the heaven, how it is raised? And at the mountains, how they are rooted and fixed firm? And at the earth, how it is spread out?"* **[TMQ 88:17-20]**

In all of these ayahs, Allah directs the human being to think and analyze in order to build the Aqeedah of Islam within him through a definite conviction.

Thus, the method that Islam encourages in pursuing knowledge is based upon the intellect and entails thinking, research, and analysis. It is not built upon blind faith, emotional belief, or submission without any discussion. Such methods will not produce a dynamic Iman and cannot serve either as a foundation for a point of view of life or as a foundation to build other thoughts upon. A person who adopts Islam through these methods will remain a hostage to the concepts that he carried from his previous background. Although such a person may turn to Islam in a limited scope for such aspects as his ibadat, he will continue in his thinking to refer to other concepts. He will constantly shift between a superficial Iman that is not built upon a correct thinking process and indulging in discussion without a specific frame of mind, which will lead him either to diverging or straying from Islam altogether.

And he will not escape this spiral except by either compromising between what he adopted from Islam and whatever erroneous concepts he already possesses in order to bridge the gap, or by separating Islam from his thinking by restricting Islam to his rituals and thinking in a secular or pragmatic manner, or by deciding not to think at all except in his livelihood in order to save himself from diverting. All of these options are incorrect and, in reality, will not get the person out of this spiral. Eventually, this cycle will drain the person's power, particularly his intellectual capacity,

which is the most valuable possession of man in this life. Such an endless spiral results from an incorrect method of adopting Islam and acquiring knowledge.

# How Muslims Study Islam Today

Examining Muslims today shows that the Muslims acquire Islam through three principle methods

## The Scholastic, or Academic, Method

This method emphasizes delivering Islam as a curriculum in a scholastic format in which information, and not concepts and thoughts, is the substance. The student-teacher relationship is the approach of this method, and giving instructions constitutes its style. If the student graduates, he will resemble a book that carries information and spits it out, and Islam would consist of nothing more than information dictated to him. Such a person would repeat quotations from scholars and their works without any critical thinking or consideration to the evidences and arguments simply because he cannot do so. His capability would be confined to relaying the information that was handed to him just as a database would download information when programmed to do so.

Studying Islam in this erroneous method will produce neither a thinker based on Islam nor a mujtahid, but will produce human textbooks whom the extent of their contributions will be limited to copying the works of others and writing some commentaries on them. Such a method could be useful in studying an information-based discipline such as geography or history. However, it cannot be taken as a method of studying the Aqeedah and the thoughts because the Islamic Aqeedah and its thoughts must be acquired intellectually through a dynamic process of relating the thoughts to the situation until they become firmly-rooted thoughts and not just theoretical information carried by the person like the words on the pages of a book.

## The Emotional Method

The essence of this method entails bringing stories and preaching Islamic personalities. It depends on the emotional approach and not the thinking process in order to push a person to function. Because this approach realizes that emotions by their intrinsic nature can get out of control, it depends on programming the individual in a specific way. The individual who acquires Islam through this method will start learning that discipline and obedience towards the shaykhs and the mas'oolen is a part of Islam.

This method is, relatively speaking, a new method because it was influenced by the psychological-based sciences that came with disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and education. This approach does not regard man, life and the universe as the subject of thinking and research but instead places the human psyche and its development as the ultimate objective. The scope of thinking and research remains restricted to the psyche of the individual through promoting its positive aspects and treating its negative aspects. Also, it connects such individuals with the mas'oolen and the shaykhs emotionally in the same manner that a person is connected with his father or therapist. As a result, those who acquired Islam in this way are attached to certain personalities whom they regard as holy and follow as examples without any thinking.

Such a method does not produce intellectuals, thinkers, or mujtahids, nor does it claim to produce them. It could be used in dealing with the young children or with those who do not think and therefore look forward to those who would think on their behalf and relieve them of the burden of

thinking. This approach could also apply to those who do not think and are seeking a group of people to associate with in order to enjoy the social environment and activities that this group or tribe provides them, such as friendship, visits, and collective activities involving ibadat, trips, and sports. Therefore, this method cannot initiate the revival of the Ummah, nor can it provide the Ummah with the thought and the awareness needed for such a revival.

### The Sufi Method

This approach is influenced by the notion that the human being consists of two components – the spirit and the material aspect – that are mutually antagonistic. Thus, the human being has a spiritual momentum that must be elevated, and the only way to do so is to deprive the body of its physical needs. This process continues until the person attains a level where he merges with God and he sees God in himself. From the vantage point of this method, Islam and its rules as mere signs and symbols guiding the person in his path towards God. The value of these rules and symbols lay in comprehending their concealed or hidden meanings, what the Sufis call the "Haqiqah" or the reality. This "Haqiqah" is distinct from what they refer to as the apparent meaning, which they use to denote the Shariah.

Sufism upholds the idea of Fatalism in which everything is predestined and man has no will of his own. Thus, the Sufis claim that a person must surrender to his situation and cannot change it. Furthermore, Sufism encourages the human being to live in seclusion and give the natural phenomena in the universe a metaphysical interpretation. The Sufis also encourage passiveness, total surrender to the reality, and being careless about the reality because, according to their claim, these qualities characterize the one who suppresses himself, his desires, and his physical inclinations. These qualities are needed for the one who wants to conceal his mind because they constitute the first step towards evanescence and merging into God's entity.

Some people who either failed in the life or who just look to the Deen as an escape from the current situation may use this approach as an outlet of contentment or solace. This is an extremely dangerous approach because it kills the awareness and the thinking in the Ummah and propagates passiveness and total surrender to the status quo without any attempt to change it.

# Characteristics of the Current Islamic Thought

Islam today is acquired and studied through these methods, and it is obvious by their nature that they cannot establish any Islamic thinking. As a result of their prevalence, idleness in thinking, and superficial and emotional thinking are encompassing the current thinking of Muslims in spite of the tremendous number of Muslims studying Islam in universities, masjids, and institutions, and the increasing number of Shaykhs. These methods naturally lead to such a situation because Islam is no longer viewed as an ideology that shapes the point of view towards life. Rather, Islam is taken either as rigid or static information, or as stories to appease the emotions. Following are some characteristics of the current thinking of the Muslim Ummah that have emerged as a result of acquiring Islam through these methods.

## Superficial Thinking

Thinking can be characterized as either superficial, profound, or enlightened. The superficial thinking results from a lack of deep and comprehensive study of the situation, and the individual who resorts to this thinking is content with looking at the surface of any event or situation. This superficial though reflects in the current political thinking of the Muslims. When Muslims look to the existing states in the Muslim world, they think that these states are independent and that the rulers have their own will simply because they each have their own borders, flag, constitution, and membership in international organizations. However, if the same person who reaches this conclusion would spend time studying the reality of these states, how they were developed, and their relationship with the West, he would not conclude that these states are independent.

Another example of superficial thinking is claiming that Democracy parallels the Shura that Islam calls for based solely upon the fact that Islam recommends consultation and gives the Ummah the right to choose the Khalifah. However, closely examining the ideological basis of Democracy in a profound way will reveal that Democracy is a specific system based on the notion that the human being has the right to make his own laws and decide for himself his own standards of right and wrong. This notion contradicts the basis of the Islamic system, which states that only Allah (swt) has the right to make laws and decide what is halal and haram while the human being has only the right to understand and implement these laws. Not only do the Democratic and Islamic systems differ in the source of their laws but in the process of extracting the laws from the legal sources. Whereas in Democracy the process of extracting laws is governed by the prevailing interests of the society, in Islam the process of extracting laws is done through ijihad, which is a specific process that is dictated by the Arabic language and the strength of the evidence from the legal text. Furthermore, the institution of Shura as defined by Islam is distinct from the functions of the Congresses and Parliaments of the West.

Still another example of superficial thinking among Muslims is seen in the evaluation of some individuals and movements by their external features without attempting to study what they call for, how they think, how they were established, and other factors, in a profound and critical way. No one can be a good person by the mere fact that he is a member of a specific group or because he has a long beard or holds a religious position. By the same token, no group or institution can be considered Islamic simply because it carries the name of Islam and its founders are Muslims. Both

cases require probing beyond the apparent features and scrutinizing any individual or group that claims the name of Islam.

Because this type of thinking requires very little effort, most people find its utilization easy. And with the passage of time, individuals will gradually be content with this type of thinking if left to their own devices. This type of thinking has to be fought because of its lack of productivity, both for the individual as well as for the Ummah.

Contrary to the superficial thinking, the profound thinking is produced by conducting a deep study of the issue at hand as well as by analyzing and scrutinizing both the situation and the information related to the situation deeply. In examining a table, the superficial thinker would focus only on the apparent features, and would thus conclude that a table with a brownish color and four supports exists. A deep thinker would scrutinize the table more profoundly, which would result in information about the table's physical composition, the specific type of wood used, and other physical parameters such as its hardness and its dimensions. Thus, the deep thinking is sufficient in fields such as chemistry or physics. However, due to its nature, the profound thinking does not require from the individual in the lab to think about other issues beyond the material at hand, such as where the material came from or its relationship to the surroundings.

The highest level of thinking is the enlightened or comprehensive thinking. This type of thinking is needed in areas or fields which require thinking deeply about a specific situation or issue in addition to thinking comprehensively by connecting the issue or situation at hand to other situations or issues. Areas such as political analysis and jurisprudence require this type of thinking. In the field of jurisprudence, the person must utilize the enlightened thinking in order to think about the situation, refer back to the legal texts addressing the situation, understand and analyze the texts according to a specific methodology, and then apply this understanding to the situation. In the example of the table, an enlightened thinker would think deeply about the table with all of its physical features, in addition to thinking about where and how the table was constructed, where the material used to construct the table came from, and the relationship of the table to the rest of the furniture and the overall setup of the room.

To more vividly illustrate the distinction between the three types of thinking, some examples are needed. Calling to establish a Palestinian state in the West bank and Gaza would constitute superficial thinking. As a result, a superficial person will perceive only the surface value of this slogan and will look to those who call for such a state as heroes and saviors. However, thinking deeply about this state in terms of its resources and internal situation would lead a profound thinker to conclude that such a state is impossible to emerge and sustain itself, and that the call to establish such a state is a mission impossible. And an enlightened thinker would not only scrutinize the Palestinian state itself but would connect this situation with the plans of the superpowers in the region and their relationship with the different parties in the Middle East. Based on this comprehensive research, the enlightened thinker would conclude that the issue extends beyond the impossible and dreaming about impossible things. From this context, the issue of the Palestinian state will be viewed as part of a wider plan that calls for establishing a Palestinian entity, either as a buffer zone or as a connection between Israel and the other neighbors, where the one who calls for such a state is only a player in this game.

Another example to illustrate the distinction between the three types of thinking is seen in the Missionary invasion of the Uthmani Khilafah which began in the 17th century. A superficial thinker

would look at such a situation as a group of people who came to the Islamic State, opened up various missionary organizations, associations, and schools, in order to preach Christianity and endorse education in various sciences. The deep thinker would scrutinize these Missionary movements and examine the reality of their organizations and their ideas. Based on this profound study, such a person would conclude that these Missionary organizations were in fact calling for Nationalism, Western Culture, and other corrupt ideas that seeped into the thinking of the Muslims. And the enlightened thinker would scrutinize the nature and reality of these movements and what they were calling for, in addition to thinking about the origins of such a movements, their ultimate objective, and their relationship to the West and its objectives. Such a comprehensive thinking process which would encompass all the issues related to the Missionaries would conclude that the Missionary movement was a continuation of the West's objective of diverting the Muslims from their ideology with the overall objective of dismantling the Khilafah and colonizing the Muslim world.

The superficial thinking has to be fought, and the Muslims must be trained to think not only profoundly but comprehensively because such an enlightened thinking process is the only way for the Muslim Ummah to understand its situation and its course of action in this life.

The development of profound and enlightened thinking can materialize by presenting case studies and continuing to work with the individuals until they will never be content with their until they think in a profound and enlightened manner.

### Thinking Based on Imitation

When the thinking level declines, the individual will be unable to conduct any original research on his own. In this situation, the individual will adopt already-existing ideas established by others when faced with any case or issue that requires any type of original thought or research. Whether in political, legal, or any other issues, such a person will turn to others to provide him with the answers. And after taking the answer or opinion from others, he will defend and justify this opinion as if it was his own without researching the related evidences, only because of his trust in the one who established the opinion.

This type of thinking is widespread among Muslims in spite of their large numbers, whereas the amount of original thinking is almost non-existent. Such taqleed (imitation) is acceptable in fiqh for those unable to conduct ijtehad and is also acceptable for the mujtahid in some where he does not have to exercise his own ijtehad. However, this type of thinking is not allowed in the Aqeedah, as it is well known that Muslims are prohibited from adopting their Aqeedah through taqleed. Such an approach towards the Aqeedah originated from the non-Muslims who simply follow their ancestors without initiating any type of thinking or research into their beliefs. Furthermore, the definition of Iman leaves no room for the taqleed in the Aqeedah because Iman is defined as the conclusive belief that agrees with the reality and is based on conclusive evidences. Taqleed cannot establish such an Iman because it requires thinking about the issue and building one's case based on daleels that establish the conclusive belief. Therefore, it is incorrect for anyone to say "I believe in Allah and the Messenger" because his father or shaykh said so.

Regarding the political thinking and the intellectual issues, the prevalence of taqleed in these areas is a strong indicator of the declined status of Muslims. The Muslim cannot shift aimlessly from one opinion to another while having no opinion or original thinking of his own. Rather, he must build

his culture and thinking based on original research and study. If the Ummah carries a creative way of thinking, its members will no longer constitute a discordant mass of bodies that will shuttle from one opinion to another like cattle.

Furthermore, the members of such an Ummah will no longer accept for themselves to follow personalities, which will translate into a creative Muslim Ummah.

Because of the taqleed and the lack of thinking and creativity, the thinking of Muslims was reduced to a personalized type of thinking that became connected with personalities and not ideas. Nowadays the idea carries no value unless it is connected to a well-established or high-ranking personality. And any existing research in this case will focus on the person and not the thought (i.e., the discussion will emphasize "Who said what" rather than "What is being said."). Any person who opposes the opinions of such personalities will be attacked severely, and the "character assassination" will dominate the focus of any discussion. At the end, the individual will view the correct idea as the idea that comes from a personality that he respects, and the wrong idea is the idea that comes from a person that he does not respect. And the only way to explain the fallacy of any idea in this context will be to focus the discussion on the personalities.

Such an approach indicates the lack of thinking among Muslims. When the Muslims had a high level of understanding, they would evaluate the personalities based on the ideas they carried and not vice versa. Ali (ra) used to say, "Recognize the truth first; then, afterwards, you will be able to recognize the people who adhere to the truth." Furthermore, they realized that digging into the intentions of the individuals and discussing their personalities was not their function because only Allah knows the intentions and what is hidden in the hearts of men. Even when some Muslim scholars began documenting the reliability of hadith reporters, they never probed into the hidden or attempted to decipher the intentions of the reporters. Instead, they addressed each reporter from the perspective of his truthfulness, accuracy, and his memorization capability in relaying the report.

Therefore, the entire discussion should focus on the issues and the ideas where the evidence, and not a personality, serves as the reference. Only through independent thinking and encouraging the sound and original research can Muslims break free of this imitation and the intellectual tribalism that results from it.

### Thinking in Areas That do not Require Thinking

In everyday life, there are areas that require deep and comprehensive thinking, such as political events or conducting research in the lab, or searching for the evidence in a legal matter. In addition, there are situations that need to be addressed by thinking, such as how to deal with an attack and what specific strategies and measures to undertake. Such an incident was demonstrated by the Prophet (saaw) during the Battle of Al-Khandaq, in which the Prophet (saaw) initiated numerous tactics which required extensive thinking about the situation in order to effectively counter the attack upon Medina.

On the other hand, there are situations and issues which do not require thinking. One does not need to conduct lengthy experiments and engage in extensive study to prove that water fulfills the need of a thirsty person or to prove that any nation must protect itself against its enemies. Such issues are plainly obvious from everyday experience. Also, when a Muslim hears the Adhan, he does not need to think about how to perform the wudu because this action is so well-known to him that he

automatically does it without any need to think about the movements. While a new Muslim may initially require a few demonstrations of the wudu, he does not need to philosophize the wudu every time he needs to perform it.

However, Muslims lost this fine line that separates what requires thinking from what does not require thinking. As a result, Muslims began discussing in a very lengthy and detailed fashion issues that do not require such detail. A shaykh would exhaust one year explaining the rules of wudu to the people, although a few practical would suffice. In addition, other individuals would write volumes upon volumes of literature about wudu, taharah, the movements of the salat, and other such issues.

Similarly, Muslims have begun discussing trivial issues that keep them occupied from discussing more critical issues that affect their status quo. Nowadays, one finds extensive research and books written discussing the beard, its length, its shape, and whether we are allowed to dye it and with what color. Also, one would find lengthy research on moving the index finger during the tashahud, whether it should be raised or wiggled, and whether the finger should be straight or slightly bent. On the other hand, no serious and comprehensive discussion or research exists about issues such as the oil industry, who has the right to own it, and its relationship to the state. To illustrate this trend, a journal published by the religious establishment of Saudi Arabia a series of articles discussing in extensive detail the possibility of landing on the moon and whether or not the earth revolves around the sun, while ironically no article exists discussing the Hukm Sharii of the Peace Process or the Hukm Sharii regarding the exploitation of the Ummah's resources by the current regimes.

Such a distorted thinking process exists despite the fact that Islam teaches Muslims how to prioritize their issues. Within this context, a man found a date and came to Umar asking him what he should do with it. The man was referring to a rule in Islam which states that if one finds something, he needs to identify it for a period of time, and if no one comes to claim it, then the object is the property of the one who found it and he would have to pay 20% of its value as Zakat. Umar told that man, "Eat it, Oh disgusting person." In another incident, after the murder of Husayn ibn Ali, a man came to Abdullah ibn Umar during the following Hajj and asked him whether he can kill a mosquito while in the state of ihram within the borders of Al-Haram. Abdullah ibn Umar asked him, "Where did you come from?" and the man replied, "I came from Kufa." Instead of answering him, Abdullah ibn Umar addressed those sitting next to him: "Look to those people! They shed the blood of the grandson of Rasulullah (saaw), and now he wants to ask about the blood of a mosquito."

### Thinking in Metaphysics

In order to address this issue, one must realize that the thinking process requires that the individual sense and comprehend the issue at hand. No one can think about issues that are beyond the scope of their senses unless an authentic evidence regarding such issues comes from a source that the rationale has already established as credible. Within this context, Muslims believe in the Jinn, the Angels, the Day of Judgment, Paradise and Hell-fire, and other aspects of the Ghaib. The belief in such realities is built upon the conclusive evidence that is established through the intellect, to be distinguished from metaphysics, which is based upon pure speculation.

Recently, the metaphysical thinking has seeped into the thinking process of the Muslims.

Nowadays, the Muslims manifest the metaphysical thinking in two aspects:

### **1. Thinking in issues that lay beyond the senses and are part of the Ghaib.**

Failure to understand the limits of the thinking process and the human mind has resulted in Muslims discussing issues related to the Ghaib using their own mind and senses. As a result, issues such as the jinn occupy a very large space in the thinking of Muslims, to the extent that some even claim that they can communicate with the jinn. Another example of such an issue is the discussion that revolves around the Attributes of Allah and whether or not they are part of His Entity. Although Muslims must believe in the existence of such realities, this belief must be limited to the text of the evidence and cannot venture beyond it because the thinking process requires sensation in order to occur. Attempting to initiate the thinking process upon realities that the human mind cannot comprehend or sense will result in speculative imagination devoid of any thought.

Many reasons contributed to such a level of thinking. One important reason is that discussing the current situation of the Muslim Ummah may lead to some problems with the ruling elite. As a result, people would shift towards such issues because they may not be problematic to the ruling establishments. In fact, the ruling elite may even encourage this type of thinking to distract the Muslims from the real issues facing them. Another reason is that the low level of thinking that exists among Muslims may push the individuals to discuss such issues because metaphysics does not require serious thinking, which is difficult for many people to initiate. All that metaphysical thinking requires is bringing stories and unleashing the imagination without the need to establish any concrete evidence to build a case or argument, which is something that anyone can do with relative ease and comfort.

What Muslims fail to realize is that the Qur'an and the Sunnah themselves shifted their thinking away from the direction of metaphysics. Allah (swt) in Surat Al-Kahf, after talking about the number of people who were inside the cave, said:

*"(Some) say they are three, the dog being the fourth among them; (others) say they were five, the dog being the sixth – guessing at the unseen; (yet others) say they were seven, the dog being the eighth. Say (O Muhammad), 'My Lord knows best their number; none knows them but a few.' So debate not (about their number, etc.) except with the clear proof." [TMQ 18:22]*

Furthermore, a man came to the Prophet (saaw) asking him about the time of the Day of Judgment. The Prophet (saaw) asked him, "What did you prepare for it?" Thus, the Prophet (saaw) shifted the man's thinking from the Ghaib to the practical aspect of the issue.

### **2. Neglecting the reality of Cause and Effect and Behaving based on Qadriyya Ghaibiyya.**

Qadriyya Ghaibiyya refers to shifting the connection of the actions from the Hukm Sharii to what someone may imagine as the Knowledge of Allah. Examples of such a mentality are claiming that the current backwardness and decline of the Muslims is their destiny that cannot be addressed or changed, or using the Du'a as the only means of changing the situation of Muslims without initiating any action, or claiming that the jinn and the shayateen are the cause of some diseases and that the way to cure the disease is to communicate with them.

Muslims must believe that Cause-and-Effect is a natural law that Allah (swt) set in this universe. The effect will occur only if the cause exists. For example, victory cannot materialize unless its causes exist, such as the army's firm conviction in its objectives, the shrewdness of the leaders, and the level of preparation and planning. Also, curing a disease has a cause, which is the correct medication. The Prophet (saaw) said, "O servant of Allah! Seek medical treatment since Allah created the disease and the medication." In one incident, a man came to the Prophet (saaw) asking him to make Du'a to his camel to cure her from a skin disease. The Prophet (saaw) told the man, "Add to your Du'a some tar," indicating that the Du'a by itself will not accomplish the objective. In another incident, the Prophet (saaw) told a man who wanted to unleash his camel while depending on the tawakul to protect her, "Leash her, and then have the tawakul."

By the same token, reviving the Muslims from their current status quo will occur not by Du'a and ibadah alone but through initiating the change and working towards creating the revival. Allah (swt) says clearly:

*"Allah does not change the situation of any people until they change what is within themselves."*  
**[TMQ 13:11]**

However, instead of facing their problems and acquiring the correct ways and means in order to reach the solution, Muslims chose the easy route and began depending on the Ghaib, thinking that this is the Iman.

Similarly, they began thinking that any other approach constitutes shirk or denying Allah's Will, although Allah ordered the Muslims in many ayahs to acquire the requirements and the causes to achieve their objectives and mentioned explicitly that He does not change His Law. For example, Allah (swt) mentions regarding the preparation:

*"And prepare all you can of power, including steeds of war to alert the enemy of Allah and your enemy..."* **[TMQ 8:60]**

The Prophet (saaw) also instructed the Muslims to acquire these ways and means and said, "Act. Each one will be facilitated towards what he was created for." Thus, these requirements and complying with the law of Cause and Effect is not shirk and does not constitute weakness in the Iman. Rather, such an approach manifests the correct tawakul and the correct Iman. And through this approach, the discussion of the course of action for Muslims will be based on the Hukm Sharii and not the Will or Knowledge of Allah, which is part of the Ghaib.

This type of thinking also manifests itself in believing that some individuals, either in their life after their death, possess some supernatural powers that can reach the level of curing or bringing good luck. All of these concepts are non-Islamic and constitute shirk. By believing in individuals with such capabilities, Muslims do not differ from those who sanctify individuals to the level of Godhood.

### Mixing between the Scientific and Intellectual Thinking

As previously mentioned, the intellectual way of thinking is a process which involves the reality, a sound human mind, senses which transfer the reality to the mind as a sensation, and previous information which the mind links to the sensation to produce a thought. Thus, the intellectual

method entails thinking about the reality at hand or the issue as it is. However, the scientific method is based upon performing experiments and reaching a conclusion based on the data collected. Any kind of scientific research does not depend on the situation or the reality as is but necessitates subjecting the material under scrutiny to an environment different than its natural environment and then observing the impact of these imposed conditions on the material. This process is referred to as the scientific experiment, which constitutes the cornerstone of the scientific method of thinking.

The scientific method is a branch of the rational method because, like the rational method, the scientific process requires a reality, senses in order to perceive the reality, and a human brain in order to perform the research and analysis to arrive at a conclusion.

However, the difference lay in the type of reality involved, and as a result the type of research and analysis performed in the scientific process will differ from the rational process. The scientific method cannot be used in all disciplines because not everything can be subjected to experimentation. While areas of knowledge such as physics, biology, and engineering, can be discussed based on experimentation, areas of knowledge such as philosophy, history, economics, law, and doctrines of belief cannot be discussed using the scientific method because such disciplines are not tangible material that can be subjected experimentation and measurement. For example, scientifically testing the effect of an ideology on the progress of a nation would require subjecting one nation to an ideology and stripping another nation of the ideology in order to determine whether an ideology would result in progress.<sup>5</sup> Such a study is beyond the scope of the experimental method because one cannot forcibly subject nations, individuals, or societies to conditions in such a manner. However, one can observe nations or individuals as they are or throughout history and arrive at a rational conclusion that the ideology results in progress for a nation. Another crucial difference between the scientific and rational method is in the type of facts or conclusions reached by the two types of thinking. The scientific method leads to establishing relative and not absolute facts because it is based on relative measurements.

For example, the conclusion that mercury is very dense is not an absolute fact but a relative fact because the density is relative to the density of water. No fact or conclusion can be considered scientific unless it is based on such relative measures. In contrast, the rational method arrives at absolute facts because it entails studying the reality as it is and not comparing the reality to something else. Thus, the conclusion that the earth has gravity is an absolute truth that can be reached at by observing things falling towards the earth's center. However, scientific research is required to measure gravity and quantify it.

The scientific method was embraced and promoted by the West after witnessing its impact on scientific and technological advancement. However, the West extended the application of this method to areas where it cannot be used. As a result, many non-scientific areas of knowledge were given the term "scientific," such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, politics, and education, despite the fact that human beings, human behavior, economy, society, and politics, are intellectual fields that lay beyond the ability of science to address.

Although these areas of knowledge require research, observation, and analysis, the type of research and analysis is not scientific.

Many Muslims were confused by these areas of knowledge and began studying such "soft sciences" as global disciplines that are not influenced by the point of view of life. In reality, such areas of

knowledge were specific to the Western point of view and culture. Those who laid them down, such as Freud, Adam Smith, and Machiavelli, were not scientists but Western thinkers who studied human beings, human behavior, societies, and their relationships, based on Western culture. And the conclusions that they reached were also based on Western culture.

This mix between what should and should not be discussed scientifically was carried to Muslims, who began discussing intellectual issues from a scientific approach. For example, Muslims began discussing the "Scientific Miracles of the Qur'an," not realizing that the Qur'an is not a book of physics or chemistry but rather, as Allah (swt) described it, "Hudan lil-Muttaqin," which discusses truth vs. falsehood, halal and haram, and the previous prophets and nations in order to take lessons from them. All that is mentioned about some natural phenomena, such as rain, the shape of the earth, and the development of the fetus, was mentioned as a proof of Allah's existence and signs of His Might and Wisdom. Thus, the Sahabah understood the Qur'an much more than the Muslims today, even though Muslims in today's age witnessed, and in some instances pioneered, great advancements in science and technology. The Sahabah studied the Qur'an and the Sunnah and implemented them as orders and systems that governed the society, whereas Muslims today began discussing the Qur'an and Sunnah using the scientific approach and started holding conferences and publishing books to this end, which distracted Muslims from their objective of establishing the Islamic system and carrying Islam to the world.

Islam clearly demarcated the lab and the physical universe, and not the Qur'an and the Sunnah, as the scope of applied and experimental science. It was reported in a hadith that a group of people came to the Prophet (saaw) asking him about the pollination of dates. He instructed them not to pollinate the date palms themselves since the wind may carry the seeds. That year there was no harvest; they informed him of this, and he told them, "You know best regarding your worldly affairs," referring to the scientific research. Also, Imam Muslim reported that the Prophet (saaw) said:

"I am a human being like you, but I receive the revelation. If I instructed you on something related to the Deen, then take it, but if I instructed you on something related to your worldly affairs, then you know best."

Therefore, Islam clearly distinguished between the scope of science and technology, which is the lab and the physical universe, and the scope of the Deen, which is the life affairs and the systems governing the relationships and issues the human being faces. In spite of this distinction, there are so many shaykhs issuing fatwas on scientific issues based on their understanding of some ayahs and hadiths, such as the rotation and shape of the earth, the atom, the fetus and its development, and many other scientific issues. In addition, many Muslims are busy digging into the Qur'an and the Sunnah for a cure for cancer or diabetes rather than conducting the necessary research in the lab. The problem with such an approach is that those scientific fatwas may become part of the Deen itself, the way it happened with the Church during the European Middle Ages. Such a trend could lead either to not accepting any scientific theory or conclusion unless a fatwa exists supporting it, or a potential conflict between the Deen and science if the scientific research proves the error in any fatwa.

When Europe experienced their Dark Ages, the Muslims had the privilege of not experiencing it because they possessed the clear distinction between the scope of scientific thinking and the scope of the Deen. In addition, the Muslims understood the purpose of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which

was to govern the lives of the people and not to serve as the subject of laboratory research. However, it seems that the West is pushing the Muslims to undergo the same Dark Ages by blurring the distinction between the scientific and the rational thinking.

## Emotional Thinking

This type of thinking can manifest in two aspects:

**1. Wishful Thinking:** When a person possesses an emotional inclination to reach a specific conclusion, he wishes the events to lead to this result. As a result, he would start interpreting everything based upon this wish. The intellect's role in this type of thinking is to justify the wished for result and attempt to prove its case. For example, some people have a certain loyalty to a regime, and based upon this emotional attachment, they would wish that this regime is a just system. Based upon this wish, they would conclude that a certain regime is just, and they would justify the actions of this regime in order to fit this conclusion, even if this justification amounted to denying clear facts altogether.

The wishful thinking also manifests in the wish of many Muslims for a certain state to be an Islamic State. Living under the Islamic System is the wish of every Muslim, but for some, this wish may incline them to label any regime as Islamic based upon the presence of certain symbols of Islam. Such people would then use the existence of these symbols to claim that a particular state is Islamic. And if the state in question is in reality a Kufir state, such individuals would try to justify this in order to support their wished-for conclusion that the state is Islamic.

This type of thinking leaves the emotions a free reign to determine and decide. In most instances, the emotion conceals or overshadows the intellect, and as a result, the person will not perceive the reality as is. Instead, the person will see the reality as he likes it to be. It was reported that the Prophet (saaw) said, "The Qadi must not judge while in a state of anger." Similarly, a judge cannot preside over a court session while in a state that may cloud his judgment, such as hunger, anxiety, or extreme happiness. Thus, Islam makes it clear that a person cannot make a sound judgment or issue decisions if his emotions control him.

**2. Addressing the People in an Emotional Way:** Usually, one can address the people directly by presenting the facts the way they are without paying too much attention to the eloquence of the presentation because the primary concern is the soundness and correctness of what is being presented. However, there could be speeches that are addressing the emotions instead of the intellect. Once a person is exposed to this type of speech, his senses to the reality will be weakened because his emotions are controlling him. As a result, the eloquence of the speech will be controlling him.

For example, consider the following two texts taken from different sources, which both address the issue of defining the society and defining the basis of human relationships:

"While the human being is in need of quiet moments, of time to reflect alone, or privacy and solitude, he is by nature a social being. To live in society and interact with others is a natural or inborn characteristic of human beings. The human being was not forced into being social nor did he simply learn by experience that he cannot live in total isolation and solitude. Neither did he just use

his reason to decide that it was better if he cooperated and shared with others. One of the reasons for saying that social life is natural is suggested in the noble verse of the Qur'an:

*"It is We who portion out among them their livelihood in the life of this world, and We raise some of them above others (from the standpoints of possibilities and capacities) in degrees, so that some might obtain labor of others." [TMQ 43:32]*

This suggests that people are not created alike in their possibilities and capabilities. If people were all alike, there would be no need to obtain any service or help from others. God has created people with different physical, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional capacities. He has made some superior in some ways and others superior in other ways. He has thus made all need each other and naturally inclined to interact with one another. This is thus the basis of the social or interconnected life of human beings."

"A society is composed of human beings, thoughts, sentiments, and the system. This is a general definition arrived at by studying any society and placing into consideration the targeted society we seek to change. To illustrate this further, the sum total of individuals would form a group. If permanent relationships exist between them, they would be a society regardless of their number. The existence of this relationship is achieved through the common interest between them, whether they are beneficial or not. The internal momentum within the person to acquire benefit is classified as vital energy. Every human being has energy that requires satisfaction. Consequently, from this internal momentum, feelings naturally emanate. In the case of animals, the satisfaction will be directed by biological needs and trial and error. In the case of human beings, the satisfaction of the needs will be achieved through a given set of concepts that are adopted. These concepts would identify for the person the kinds of emotions that pushes him to satisfy his needs and how to satisfy them. According to these concepts, Man will organize his interests. Based on this, relationships between human beings will arise. This results in the development of relationships based on certain ideas, emotions, and systems being implemented. Thus, the element which renders people as a society is the relationships. Therefore, entering the society is nothing more than addressing the existing relationships amongst the people in the society."

The first piece of text addresses primarily the emotions and the imaginations, much like any work of art or literature. Its concern is to attract the audience or the reader by its glamour. An Arabic proverb mentions: "The most beautiful poetry is the one that is most full of lies." The proverb is alluding to the many features of Arabic eloquence, such as hyperbole, simile, and metaphor, which may lead the poet to say something that has little or relation to the reality. Allah (swt) also says in the Qur'an:

*"As for the poets, the deviants follow them. Don't you see that they speak about every subject in their poetry, and that they say what they do not do? Except those who believe and perform righteous deeds, and remember Allah often, and reply back (in poetry) to the unjust poetry. And those who do wrong will come to know by what overturning they will be overturned." [TMQ 26:224-227]*

However, reading the second text illustrates that its contents focus on the facts without using any tools to try and sway the reader. It does not pay any attention to the eloquence, and as a result, the reader will focus only on the ideas that are presented.

The Ummah will appreciate this emotional style in addressing the people if it is declined in its intellect because this style does not require any effort to comprehend. Those people who are searching solely for something that provides them with a positive feeling would easily gravitate towards this manner of presenting ideas. In Arabic Literature, the most beautiful poems are those said by poets before Islam. When the poet accepts Islam, his poetry will not stimulate the emotions as passionately because the poet would have more concern towards lying and the restrictions of the Halal and Haram. Comparing the poems of one poet, such as Hassan bin Thabit, before and after he became Muslim, illustrates the difference. Before Islam, his poetry was full of eloquence but lacked any substance; after becoming Muslim, his poetry was full of substance but had less emotional flair.

Any Ummah that seeks revival would restrict such a style to literature and would not use it in intellectual issues, legal discussions, or political analysis. Also, such an Ummah would no room for emotional or wishful thinking. A survey of the writings of Muslim scholars demonstrates this. Scrutinizing the books of Fiqh, Tafseer, Usul, and history from the 4<sup>th</sup> century and earlier shows that these works were written using a very high intellectual. After this era, when the signs of decline began to emerge, the style became influenced by the emotions and paying too much attention to the eloquence of the speech at the expense of conveying the ideas in a clear and concise manner. Even some intellectual issues such as Fiqh and Usul were written in a poetic format, which not only defeated the purpose of poetry but caused the level of thinking among the people to decline.

Recently, this approach spread all over the Muslim world, to the extent that Jumma' Khutbas, speeches, writings, and lectures, became emotional and very rich in eloquence but devoid of any substance or clear thoughts. By the time Muslims became accustomed to this style of presentation, they turned away from any attempt to address them intellectually and to push them to think. Some even went as far as claiming that the Deen cannot be taken intellectually but through faith, or saying that there can be no intellectual research in issues regarding the Deen, or claiming that the thinking of Muslims cannot be based on the Deen. Such claims amount to no less than separating the Deen from the life, and such an approach will cause the Deen to lose its impact.

Addressing this problem necessitates reviving of the Islamic thinking based on the Islamic Aqeedah and to initiate the thinking process until it becomes a norm while trying to avoid addressing the people emotionally. Poetic style and emotional language have no space in areas that require serious discussion which utilize high intellectual standards.

### Narrow Thinking

Narrowness in thinking refers to the inability in conducting comprehensive research in different issues. It could either result from the strong attachment to the status quo or from limiting the discussion to the status quo, or the lack of information or sources of knowledge to the individual. Such constraints eventually shift the individual into an isolated person who restricts the scope of his thinking to the status quo. In fact, this type of thinking is similar to the superficial thinking, and it could be one of the reasons behind the superficial thinking. This type of thinking is distinct from being specialized in one area because specialization means to focus in one aspect in order to develop creativity in a specific field. Such a person is not narrow in the scope of his thinking but is focused in one aspect. However, the narrow thinker cannot think in any issue, general or specific, and the scope of his thinking is limited and usually does not extend beyond thinking in his livelihood and related matters. For example, a merchant may know all of his customers and their

needs, as well as the details of his merchandise. However, the same person, if narrow in his thinking, would avoid any intellectual discussion. If he participates in any such type of discussion, his participation will be superficial and for the sole purpose of showing that he has something to say.

The Imperialists during the Colonial Era encouraged this approach among Muslims, and the rulers who presided over the people on behalf of the Colonialists enforced strict laws that prevented people from discussing certain issues seriously, such as politics, economics, and the legal system. Even the intelligentsia, or the educated class, were banned from any intellectual or profound discussion, unless their discussion would reach a pre-set set by the regime. For this reason, one witnesses the conferences in the Muslim World devoid of any thinking in such issues. Any discussion in any Arab parliament or economic seminar will result in nothing but superficial discussion because those who are organizing these functions know that they have no power and are tools used by the ruler to enhance his image. Such a restrictive policy by the regimes has resulted in narrowness among the educated people.

When it comes to the common people, their situation is even worse. The regimes caused them to stay away from anything related to the public affairs while keeping them occupied with their livelihood. Combined with the oppression and the influence of the media, this condition results in a state of fear among the people that prevents them from thinking and results in viewing the world from a very narrow angle, which itself is based on a pre-set point of view. Institutions such as the media and schools provide the people with data on a selective basis, magnifying some issues while trivializing others. All of this has produced closed minds which analyze everything according to the "Conspiracy Theory." Such a theory prevents the people from understanding the real causes of their problems, and it refers all the problems facing the people to an imaginary enemy manufactured either by the regime to preoccupy the people or manufactured by the people themselves due to the fear they live in.

Regarding the shaykhs and the Ulema, the narrow thinking prevents them from discussing many issues, either out of ignorance or out of fear from the authorities. Most of them lack the correct understanding of the issue at hand, and most of their speeches or fatwas are emotional, irrelevant, fail to address the situation, lack comprehensive understanding, and at best address a very narrow aspect of the situation. Furthermore, the people's ignorance and their blind attachment to these scholars caused many of them to become arrogant.

They would tell the people not to discuss any issue with them and would even instruct the people to follow them blindly.

Addressing this problem can occur by increasing the sources of information to the people and condition the people to listen to more than one opinion on a single issue, and then to encourage the people to select an opinion based on their research. This process would not occur unless the Muslims broaden their horizons. The Muslim must not have blindness and rigidity but must open his mind and heart to the people and adhere to the truth, even if it comes from a person that he dislikes. Allah (swt) says:

*"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah and be just witnesses, and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just; that is nearer to piety. And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is well aquatinted with what you do." [TMQ 5:8]*

## Logical Thinking

Logic is an old Greek discipline set by the classical Greek philosophers. They applied it to any aspect, whether they relate to things within or beyond the senses. They employed it in discussing God, His Attributes, and His Essence, in addition to other issues such as nature and justice. This way of thinking is built upon a specific philosophical order that leads a person to reach specific results. The specific format which characterizes logic consists of two premises: The major premise, which states a general rule or natural phenomenon, and the minor premise, which could be a specific idea or issue that the person must think about. Based on the relationship between the two premises, the logician reaches a conclusion.

Logicians do not emphasize the soundness or correctness of any of these premises or logical analysis. Rather, the emphasis is on the formality. In Ibn Taymiyya *Against the Greek Logicians*, by Hallaq, he states: "The inherent nature in Syllogism renders it hardly superior to analogy, because however valid the syllogism may be, it cannot, by virtue of form alone, lead to a certain conclusion. It is the subject matter of the argument, not its form, that determines the truth of the conclusion...A syllogistic mode of reasoning will not result in a certain conclusion by virtue of form alone."

# The Misapplication of Logic

This syllogism seems outwardly to be a very appealing mental exercise, which may tempt many people to use it. Although it could be applied in math, the logical approach cannot function in jurisprudence, Aqeedah, and politics. A few examples will illustrate misleading nature of logic if misapplied.

**Logic in Jurisprudence** One of the greatest disasters to befall the world of Fiqh was the introduction of logic in understanding the legal text. A simple example will demonstrate the inability of reaching the correct conclusion using the logical approach. In life, people borrow money for many things. Also, the Hajj is an important thing that Muslims must perform. The logical conclusion is that Muslims must borrow money for Hajj. This conclusion is false because Hajj is obligatory only on those who are capable. The one who does not have money does not need to borrow. The fallacy of this conclusion came from the fallacy of the second argument, although it seems correct. The correct argument is that Hajj is an important act that Muslims must do if they are capable.

**Logic in Aqeedah** Although it may seem otherwise, the use of logic in Aqeedah may lead to erroneous conclusions. For example, one can establish as his major premise that every creation is not eternal and will end and as his minor premise that Jannah and the Hell-Fire are created, leading to the logical conclusion that Jannah and Hell-Fire will end. This conclusion is wrong because the major premise is wrong. The first argument applies only to this life, but it cannot be generalized to include the Hereafter. The Hereafter is a different situation which is beyond the human sensation and comprehension. Therefore, the rules of this life cannot be applied to it.

**Logic in Political Thinking** One of the most dangerous pitfalls in the political thinking of the Muslims nowadays results from the use of logic to arrive at political conclusions. If, for instance, in formulating a political opinion about the policies of Britain and the US towards the European Union, one were to establish as his major premise that America would try to prevent the unity of Europe and as his minor premise that British policy is connected to the US policy, the logical conclusion would be that Britain tries to prevent the unity of Europe.

The conclusion is not correct because Britain would be very enthusiastic in achieving the European unity as long as it is within its interests. If the British policy seems to oppose the unity, this opposition is an attempt to steer the unity more towards its interests or to attempt to influence the US policy in Europe and not borne out of any lack of desire to achieve the European unity. The fallacy of the conclusion in this analogy is due to the fallacy of the second premise. Britain, as a sovereign nation and a former superpower, would not accept to have its policy linked to the policy of any other nation, even America. Although both of them belong to the same Western Camp, a conflict of interest may emerge at times.

These three examples demonstrate that logic does not always lead people to the correct conclusion. It is worthwhile to mention the example of Ibn Taymiyyah to illustrate the misleading nature of using logic out of its context. Ibn Taymiyyah viewed logic as "the flesh of a slaughtered camel found on the summit of a mountain; the flesh is not good enough to warrant climbing the mountain, nor is the road leading to it easy to follow (Hallaq, Ibn Taymiyya Against the Greek Logicians).

The reason why logic does not lead to correct conclusions is because it does not regard reality nor does it attempt to analyze it. Rather, it builds a conclusion based on the relationship between two premises. The correct way of thinking necessitates understanding the reality and then attempting to find the rule that could be applied to the reality. Simply establishing certain premises and focusing on the relationship between the premises and the form of the argument will not result in any conclusion about the reality. The first example discusses an Shariah matter, and the correct conclusion regarding issues related to the Shariah is established by the evidence from the legal text. The second argument fails to acknowledge from the very beginning that the entire discussion is beyond the intellect. And the third example does not build its case based upon an understanding of the world order and the position of both the leading nations and the competing nations, which must be understood before attempting to comprehend the British policy in Europe.

In addition, the logical way of thinking is wrong because of its use of generalization. And because the essence of logic is based on a sequence of premises and pays attention only to the form, it has the potential to push a person away from the reality. A sound Faqih does not generalize based on apparent similarity. Rather, he exerts his effort in understanding each issue or situation independently and thoroughly, and then he searches for the evidence from the legislative sources and applies the daleel to a specific issue. It is not enough for him to refer to general ideas such as interest or the objective of Shariah and then conclude a result based on this.

And example of the erroneous conclusion that may result from logical-based generalization is apparent in the following argument. One can state, according to logic, that Islam does not overburden the human being, which in itself is a generalization, and as a second premise, that renting houses is burdensome. Because having shelter is a basic need for the human being, then the logical conclusion is that, by necessity, Islam allows buying houses by taking loans from the bank which involve riba to avoid the burden of renting. What this argument fails to address is that necessity (Darurah) is not a general rule that applies to all situations but only to specific situations mentioned in the Islamic text. Also, the concept of Islam not overburdening the human being simply states a fact: Whatever Allah (swt) did reveal as halal and haram lay within the capability of the human being to apply without excessive burden. However, the notion of burden nowadays is used through logic to justify making halal what Islam made haram.

Such a logical thinking process is very common among Muslims, particularly in jurisprudence. As a result, many people cite "Logical justifications for Shariah rules" such as claiming that siyam (fasting) purifies the brain from its metabolic wastes, or that sujood helps discharge the electric charge from the head. Many others would make such claims that Islam made the testimony of the woman less than that of the man in certain issues because of her lack of understanding and conclude that such a rule is no longer valid on the premise that women today are educated. And yet others would link the fasting to the sighting of the moon on the premise that Muslims were illiterate, concluding as a result that the use of calculations are allowed in determining the beginning and end of Ramadan on the premise that Muslims are no longer illiterate. Furthermore, many jurists generalize the concept of necessity (Darurah) and apply it to all situations, whereas Islam applied Darurah only in specific situations. All of these erroneous arguments result from the use of logical thinking taken out of context.

In order to address this way of thinking, Muslims must be trained to understand the situation as it is rather than through this Sophistic approach. The Muslims must realize that the processes involved

in establishing the Aqeedah, understanding the legal text, and formulating political opinions are unique. And they must restrict the application of logic to such areas as mathematics.

### Justification Based Thinking

The correct way of thinking requires from any person to start searching any issue by studying the situation correctly and then linking it with previous information in order to reach a conclusion. For Sharii issues, the research must be constructed upon valid Sharii evidences. For all other issues, the appropriate evidence is required to substantiate the research. In either case, the starting point of any research is to study the situation, with the conclusion as the final destination.

However, due to the superficial thinking, the situation is reversed among Muslims. They begin with a pre-set conclusion, and the entire research is tailored to justify the conclusion that was already decided upon. This type of thinking is a twisted approach which defeats the entire purpose of thinking and cancels the mission of the thinker.

Both the superficial thinking as well as the imitation naturally result in this method of thinking because the one who utilizes it usually adopts the result or conclusion either based on, wishful thinking, or the need to blend with the crowd. One of the manifestations of this thinking is justifying the actions and decisions of the rulers, officials, shaykhs, scholars, and prominent thinkers. The entire research begins with the pre-determined conclusion that any decision or act made by such individuals is correct by default. Afterwards, the thinking is restricted to finding reasons and explanations to justify these decisions or actions.

Another manifestation of this thinking is justifying the human error. Many people will make a mistake and then realize it. But instead of admitting their mistake, they continue to justify it either out of stubbornness, fear of losing credibility in the eyes of the people, or out of personal interest.

This type of thinking is very common among Muslims nowadays. Most of their thinking, whether in politics, jurisprudence, Aqeedah, or science, amounts to nothing more than justifying pre-set results made by the shaykhs, political leaders, and intellectuals. The masses cling onto these individuals and try to imitate them blindly. As a result, the thinkers and intellectuals in the Ummah are very little in number.

The correct research requires setting aside any pre-set results or conclusions. However, it does not require abandoning previous information or the point of view of life because these components are essential to the thinking process. The previous information must be taken if it is correct because the thinking process cannot materialize without it. And the point of view cannot be put aside because it shapes the thinking of the person. And in the case of Muslims, Islam came to shape their thinking.

The thinking of the Ummah must rid itself of this obstacle to the correct thinking. Blind, imitation, superficial thinking are shackles that need to be disposed of. Also, we need to restore the trust of the individuals in themselves and in their capabilities to do their own independent research. Each individual must realize that he is accountable only for his decisions, and it is not correct to choose these shaykhs, leaders, and thinkers as "gods" by following them blindly and justifying their opinions and decisions. Allah (swt) mentions in the Qur'an that some of the sinners will try to claim that their mistakes were the result of the mistakes of their leaders, but this will not be accepted from them:

*"And they will say: 'Our Lord! Verily, we obeyed our chiefs and our great ones, and they misled us from the (Right) Way.'" [TMQ 33:67]*

This ayah condemns the concept of justifying the mistakes of others. Regarding justifying personal mistakes, Islam considers this justification as a crime that can be much more than the original mistake. Therefore, it is mandatory upon Muslims to admit their mistakes without justifying them. The Prophet (saaw) said, "Every son of Adam makes mistakes, and the best wrongdoers are the ones who repent." We must realize that it is mandatory to see things as they are and not as we like them to be.

# The Impact of Neglecting the Islamic Method of Thinking

The different approaches and methods mentioned all characterize the thinking of Muslims today. While they may not exist in each and every Muslim, all of these characteristics exist in the Ummah at different levels. These incorrect approaches could be one of many reasons that led to the intellectual decline in addition to being a product of the intellectual decline. Thus, it is not surprising to see the state of the Ummah today and its intellectual apathy. The Ummah has devolved to such a level that the total amount of literature published in Israel exceeds the amount that is published in all the Arab countries combined. And the quality of most of what is published in the Arab world amounts to no more than copying the Western culture in arts, literature, politics, economy, and other disciplines. The same applies to the amount of reading. The percentage of those who read in the Muslim countries is very little compared to other nations. And those who do read restrict their reading to the curriculum or popular newspapers and magazines, or to books that present issues in an emotional way.

This state of affairs has culminated in the absence of Islamic thinking in the Ummah. While some individuals may possess correct Islamic thinking, the Ummah as an entity lacks this method of thinking, the absence of which has resulted in two outcomes:

## Absence of the Public Awareness

Any progressing nation which adopts its ideology in an intellectual way will form a public awareness, which means that the public's outlook towards the major issues and problems will be unified. This unified public awareness materializes when the point of view towards man, life, and the universe, is consistent and is built upon a fundamental conviction that is arrived at intellectually. Without such public awareness or a unified outlook toward life, the Ummah will lose its intellectual unity, and, as a result, will come under the influence of many conflicting thoughts and emotions. Even when presented with one case or issue, its perception will vary, and the efforts to deal with this case will be scattered. Thus, what any group may build or achieve may be destroyed by the function of another group. At the end, animosity will spread, which will dissolve any attempt to establish a unified entity. Allah (swt) warned the Muslims about such a dispute when He said:

*"And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute (with one another) lest you lose courage and your strength departs, and be patient. Surely, Allah is with those who are patient." [TMQ 8:46]*

Furthermore, Allah (swt) states that the unity of the Fikr that unifies the hearts is one of the greatest favors that Allah gave to the Muslims:

*"And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah (the Qur'an) and be not divided among yourselves. And remember Allah's Favor on you, for you were enemies to one another, but He joined your hearts together so that, by His Grace, you became brethren (in Islam), and you were on the brink of a pit of fire, and He saved you from it." [TMQ 3:103]*

However, Muslims lost their public awareness and lost their unified outlook and became controlled by different outlooks. This is because of the lack of the Islamic way of thinking and because of the

failure to adopt Islam in its correct way, as well as because of the efforts of the Colonialists and their tools in propagating the Western culture. Nowadays, there are Capitalist Muslims who call, intentionally or unintentionally, for the separation of Deen from the public life. Similarly, there exist Communist Muslims, Nationalist Muslims, Socialist Muslims, Muslims who are concerned solely about their interests, Pragmatic Muslims, Muslims who justify the acts of the rulers, and careless Muslims, each one having a distinct point of view. If they meet to discuss any issue, they will immediately differ with each other, and the discussion will either escalate to a level where each side will hurl insults at one another or label each other with derogatory names and depart with animosity towards each other. As a result, societies in the Muslim world live in different camps, each one of them having their own distinct outlook or point of view. And each camp isolates itself from the others, meeting only to acquire a specific interest or as a formality or to clash with one another.

The intellectual division is the worst disaster that struck the Ummah. Muslims today approach any issue, even critical or clear-cut issues that leave no room for divergent understandings, from a distinct angle according to each individual's unique point of view.

For example, the issue of unity, and the specific steps towards this objective, are clear-cut and well defined. Yet the multitude of scattered opinions and divergent understandings regarding this issue reflects the fractured public opinion of the Ummah. Some would approach this issue carelessly or, out of lack of concern or apathy, would not even consider it an issue. Others would approach the issue with great enthusiasm, but carefully scrutinizing their enthusiasm will reveal that it is based purely on slogans without any intellectual basis. One will find the Social Nationalists calling for unity based on Socialism, and the Secular Nationalists calling for unity based on the separation of the Deen from the public life. Also, one will see the Islamist Nationalist calling for each country to be united based on Islam but separated from the other countries, claiming that each country has its own unique circumstances. And the Ultra-nationalist would reject the unity outright because he views it as a threat to the sovereignty of his own homeland. And there are people who call for unity for each region, such as North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Subcontinent, and the Turkish Regions. Thus, the Muslims cannot even agree as to the scope of unity, let alone what steps to take towards achieving it.

Even regarding the nature of unity itself, there are differences. Some define unity as cooperation between the different governments on some issues, such as canceling the visas or lifting customs dues. Some would call to establish a league among the people while maintaining the political entities as they are. Others would call for a confederation or a federation, and still others would call for a total unity. Some would call for some sort of economic integration centered around establishing common markets, while others would call for unity only in the foreign policy through political organizations such as the Arab League. Ironically each camp would speak about unity, but with each other, they will immediately disperse and achieve nothing.

All of these differences exist regarding the objective of unity alone. Regarding the methodology, the differences are much worse. The Pragmatists will leave the method to the situation to determine. The Gradualists would call for the states to agree on the minimum level of unity as a first step while working for the next stage. One will see the officials who want the rulers to decide upon the methodology as well as revolutionaries who want to reach the unity based on mass revolution. And some will call for annexation, even if done by force. These

differences exist in each camp that call for the unity. In the Nationalist camp alone, there exist revolutionaries, gradualists, pragmatists, and others.

All of these differences exist regarding the concept of unity in the general sense. Examining the details will reveal even further differences. What exasperates the problem are the existence of some who are not serious in their discussion and discuss simply to discharge their emotions. And in addition to such individuals, there exist others who are connected to the Imperialists, either directly by coordinating with them or indirectly by acting in a manner that serves their agenda.<sup>6</sup> The former would deliberately collaborate with the Imperialists in working against any notion of correct unity, while the latter would unknowingly draw the Ummah into repeated conflicts and events that would serve the agenda of others at the expense of the Ummah's resources.

Such a situation reflects the hadith in which the Prophet (saaw) described the situation of the Muslims nowadays: "At that day, you will be great in number, but you will be like the foam." In spite of their tremendous number and resources, the Muslim Ummah has no value without any unified public awareness or unified outlook towards life. Some would claim that the differences that exist is a natural and healthy phenomenon. They will go further by claiming that the West is progressing despite the differences that exist in their pluralistic societies. This argument fails to distinguish between differences in the way of thinking, which will lead to dismantling the public awareness and spell disaster for any nation including the West, and the differences resulting from understanding certain issues while maintaining the unity of the public awareness, which is natural.

The West already solved the problem of building a specific frame of thinking after decades of struggle in Europe. The separation of State and Church, and the subsequent adoption of Capitalism, caused the West to unify the public awareness along a common outlook towards life. By doing so, a distinct way of thinking emerged among the people, and the entire society was reorganized based upon this focal point. Even the feelings and attitudes of the people existed within this frame. Political parties, different associations such as think tanks and labor unions, various individuals such as academics, journalists, intellectuals, jurists, and even some clergy, all became just different outlets of expressing this common unified outlook. The nature of life under Capitalism facilitated the creation of these differences of opinion within a common ideological framework.

Some would think that the existing currents in the West conflict with one another and even with this common framework. However, the Socialist or Nationalist movements that call for integration of their people into the European Union, religious movements who espouse "Christian values," and extreme leftist and rightists, do not conflict with this Capitalist framework because all of these movements and currents work within the existing framework. For example, the Communist parties in many European nations call for change through public votes and not through the class struggle as laid down by the Communist ideology. Furthermore, such parties establish coalitions and fronts with other movements any other pragmatic movement would. The same applies to all other movements and parties in the West. Therefore, the West is not progressing because of the differences but rather because of the unity in their way of thinking which refers to a specific point of view.

Contrary to the West, the Muslims did not yet settle any critical intellectual issue, and they have not yet conclude the intellectual struggle. To this day, Muslims as an Ummah have yet to take a stand towards issues such as: The revival and how to achieve it; technological advancement and how to approach it, and whether it occurs through transferring technology or through other means; the unity

and how to build it; and the priorities of the Ummah and where to start. All of these issues remain unsettled and dangling before the Muslims waiting for someone to address them. Although some movements may have resolved such issues, the Ummah as an entity has not. It must be noted that having different groups that reach distinct conclusions in these issues while keeping their findings and research to themselves and banning the members of the group from communicating with other groups for fear of losing their members, is not enough. In fact, this phenomenon will not succeed in unifying the public awareness and actually exasperates the already-existing division.

As a result of this intellectual division in the very point of view of life, the platform exists for any issue, even small issues, to result in multitudes of opinions and approaches if discussed among Muslims. For example, even the issue of removing a small munkar such as a bar will result in a vast array of diverging opinions that sometimes will conflict one another. The regimes take advantage of this situation and even work to maintain it by emphasizing this type of difference and market it as a sign of openness and progress. They would present case after case to the Ummah, one after another, to create more confusion and intensify the differences. To facilitate this process, the media keeps presenting issues to the public either without solutions or, at best, with conflicting solutions. And when the people are on the verge of settling one issue by arriving at a specific understanding towards it, the regimes present a new issue to keep the masses busy and, as a result, prevent the Ummah from ever settling any issue intellectually. At the end, the masses will keep thinking that they are in need of this ruler to help them and to maintain the integrity of the country, regardless of his record of atrocities and crimes against the people.

Therefore, the Muslims must work to build the public awareness based on Islam by adopting Islam in the correct manner as a distinct way of thinking and establishing the Islamic Aqeedah as the intellectual reference point. This is the most important challenge facing Muslims nowadays because unifying the public awareness will maintain the existence of the correct way of thinking. Once the intellectual unity is achieved, the thoughts, the agenda, and the reference point for the Ummah will unite, and the general frame within which the Muslims can discuss issues with focus and clarity will materialize.

Within this frame, having different opinions in detailed issues is a healthy phenomenon that will contribute to the intellectual growth and dynamism of the Ummah. As a result, the path for the revival will be clear, and the Ummah will proceed towards it utilizing its resources in an effective and coordinated manner. Simply calling the people to "Get united," or to "Coordinate your efforts," or to "Help each other in whatever you agree upon," will not suffice. Such a unity can never materialize unless the thinking of the Ummah is united.

The Western Colonial powers and their tools realize the danger of those who are working to establish the public awareness of the Ummah, and they consider them more of a danger than anything else. For this reason, many attempts are made to prevent the establishment of a unified public awareness based on Islam. These efforts include: Harassing those who work for such an intellectual unity by intimidation, torture, and deprivation of basic rights; isolating such individuals from the Ummah by barring them from using any means of mass communication such as television; trying to divert them; and using some tools to attack them and to distort their image. On the other hand, any call that magnifies the division and erects barriers between the Ummah and a unified public awareness will be encouraged. As a result, any individual that calls for remaining general and avoiding specific or deep discussion regarding the issues, not looking at things comprehensively, or not discussing any issues at all, nor avoiding any opinion different than what

the individual carries, are given the spotlight to present their ideas. Such individuals are not only committing a crime against the Ummah but against themselves as well.

### Absence of the Intellectual Sensation

The Nahda is the intellectual progress because the thought is what defines the point of view toward life, and this basis will serve as the foundation for man's behavior in this life. In the absence of this fundamental thought, the Ummah will decline. Thus, the revival does not refer to the material objects or the circumstances but refers to the human being, his behavior, and his nature. Once this intellectual revival occurs, it will result in material progress in areas such as industry, science, and technology. The mere existence of such material progress is not necessarily an indication of the intellectual progress.

The feeling associated with the revival is not a physical or material feeling like the pain that a person feels when afflicted with a physical injury, but an intellectual feeling akin to the pain which a Muslim feels when he sees a person committing a haram. The human being manifests three type of sensation or feeling: the physical or material sensation caused by external factors such as fire; the instinctive sensation that results from one of the instincts or organic needs such as the sensation of hunger or sexual desire; and the intellectual sensation such as feeling of the grave consequences of Kufr. While the first two types are common to some degree between the human being and the animal, the third type exists only in the human being and, more importantly, is a manifestation of the intellectual revival.

The human being is not born with this intellectual sensation but acquires it through adopting specific thoughts towards man, life, and the universe, based on total intellectual conviction. The more this conviction is instilled in the individual, the more the individual will build corollary thoughts toward life which will gradually establish themselves more firmly until they become concepts for that individual. Such an individual will see the reality of these concepts as well as their connection with the fundamental thoughts, and the intellectual sensation results from such a process.

However, if the fundamental thought is adopted emotionally or through superficial information, then it will fail to produce this consistent intellectual sensation. The sensation of such an individual could be physical, instinctive, or an inconsistent intellectual sensation that mirrors the inconsistency of his thoughts because of the influence of other thoughts hidden beneath the layer of superficial Islamic thought he carries. For example, if the person believes in Maslahah, his feeling will be based on it. If he believes in Capitalism, his feeling will reflect the Capitalist thought he carries. And if he carries no thought at all, he will manifest a haphazard pattern of feeling. Should such individuals mix Islam with all of these external thoughts, then the sensation or feeling will sometimes reflect Islam and at other times reflect something else.

Islam places a special emphasis in establishing this intellectual sensation among Muslims.

The Qur'an orders Muslims to take their Aqeedah in an intellectual manner through extensive research in order for the Iman to produce its results, among them the intellectual sensation and the Islamic way of thinking. Allah (swt) says:

*"Beautified for men is the love of things they covet: women, children, much of gold and silver (wealth), branded beautiful horses, cattle and well-tilled land. This is the pleasure of the present world's life; but Allah has the excellent return with Him." [TMQ 3:14]*

In this ayah, Allah (swt) states that the intellectual sensation takes precedence above the material sensation regarding the beauty. The ayah mentions that the beauty of the Iman, which can be felt only by the Muslim, is much higher than the material beauty which can be felt by all people.

In another ayah, Allah (swt) illustrates the distinction between the intellectual sensation and the other types of sensation when He mentions regarding the act of shirk:

*"The shirk is a great oppression." [TMQ 31:13]*

The physical or instinctive feeling may cause the person to sense the physical oppression which deprives their basic rights or abuses them. However, Allah (swt) in this ayah is directing the Muslims to look to things from the Islamic perspective, which would lead to the realization that associating anything with Allah (swt) in any aspect of Tawheed, whether in the creation, in obedience, or in submission, is far greater than any other type of physical or instinctive oppression. Only Muslims who believe in Islam can feel the seriousness of this type of oppression.

The Prophet (saaw) built this type of intellectual sensation based on the Iman among the Sahabah. It was reported in a hadith that the Prophet (saaw) one day asked his Sahabah, "Do you know who is bankrupt?" They answered, "The bankrupt from among us is the one who does not have money or belongings." In response, the Prophet (saaw) replied, "The bankrupt from my Ummah is the one who comes on the Day of Judgment with Salat, Zakat, and fasting, yet he is coming while he used to abuse this person or beat that person or take the money of the others. These people will start taking from his hasanat (good deeds). And if his hasanat are extinguished before he can fulfill his dues towards them (those he abused), then some of their sayyi'at (bad deeds) would be taken from them and given to him. Then he will be thrown into the Hell-Fire." While the people in general may view bankruptcy in the material sense and feel it as such, the Muslim, after reading this hadith, will look to bankruptcy from a different perspective and will sense its severity.

An extensive survey of the situation of the Ummah shows that the Muslims either lost this intellectual sensation or possess it in a very distorted context. As a result, Muslims cannot feel the severity or magnitude of any critical issue. Any feeling that exists towards such issues will primarily consist of instinctive or material feelings as a result of sensing some tangible or material effect of such an issue. For example, Muslims would feel the issue of occupation of any Muslim land only if the occupation resulted in oppression of Muslims, influx of refugees, killing and raping of Muslims, or other material effects. However, if the occupiers respected the "individual rights" of Muslims, and Muslims prospered under their occupation, then the masses would be heedless towards the gravity of the occupation.

How the Muslims feel the decline also illustrates the lack of intellectual sensation in the Ummah. Material parameters such as poverty, illiteracy, the spread of disease, the prevalence of technological backwardness, and the oppression of the ruler and his regime, govern the feeling of the Muslims towards the decline. Thus, when Muslims debate the issue of revival, the debate would focus on the end result of the decline. As a result, Muslims present their solutions towards the decline from a material perspective which deals only with these outward symptoms of the decline,

such as removing the ruler without changing the system, opening schools, increasing the standard of living, or preaching morals. Such an approach is superficial because a person does not need a high level of sensation to feel the material manifestations of the decline, nor does he require an intellectual capacity to realize the existence of such symptoms in the Ummah. If Muslims concentrate their efforts in dealing with these symptoms by suggesting solutions thinking that they are the problems, they will soon realize that all of their efforts dedicated to this end are in vain. However, if a person sensed the decline in the correct way based on the decline of the thinking level, the absence of the Islamic way of thinking, the lack of the common awareness, and the absence of any common idea that can bind Muslims, this individual will realize that the problem is much deeper than the poverty, the illiteracy, or even the occupation.

Whatever remains of the intellectual sensation became distorted due to the existence of conflicting ideas among the Muslims. For example, some may think that a problem exists in the "occupation" of Iran to some Arab-dominated lands, or a similar problem exists in the "occupation" of Turkey to some Arab-dominated territories in the country's southern regions. In addition, some may sense the Pakistani existence in Bangladesh as a problem. The sensation that exists among such individuals is heavily influenced by Nationalism. On the other hand, those who look to the people as Muslims would not concern themselves with what regime controls which territory inhabited by Muslims because none of these regimes rule by Islam. Thus, a Muslim would not waste his or her time lobbying for any of these regimes but would work to address the setup of the society, including the regimes themselves.

In conclusion, the real crisis facing the Muslim Ummah is an intellectual crisis. No one will feel the magnitude of such a crisis except those who possess this Islamic intellectual sensation. Those who possess this type of sensation will see and feel things that the rest of the masses fail to notice. The Prophet (saaw) described the situation of such individuals who hold onto Islam in all aspects, intellectually as well as emotionally, by saying: "Islam started as strange, and it will return as a stranger."

These two outcomes the lack of the public awareness in the Ummah, and the absence of the intellectual sensation are the two most dangerous consequences of neglecting the Islamic way of thinking because they are spearheading the decline of the Ummah.

InshaAllah, the next article will explore the historical factors which resulted in the absence of the Islamic thinking, as well as address the characteristics of the correct Islamic method of thinking.

## **Factors Resulting in the Divergence from the Islamic Way of Thinking**

Both decline and revival are products of the intellectual momentum which people initiate. The revival is expected to occur if such an effort or momentum is built upon a comprehensive thought and the people proceeded accordingly. On the contrary, the decline is expected to prevail if this comprehensive thought is absent and the people fail to consider any such thought as their frame of reference.

Therefore, any discussion or research related to the factors resulting in the current decline the Ummah is facing must address this issue. By surveying the intellectual history of the Muslim Ummah, one discovers that Muslims during the first three generations maintained Islam as the sole frame of reference. They adopted Islam the way the Prophet (saaw) instructed them to - by scrutinizing the reality through a deep and comprehensive thinking process. The Islamic Aqeedah, built through this intellectual process, became a reference for the thinking of Muslims. This Aqeedah would serve as the foundation upon which the Sahabah would build their understanding of the Islamic rules and systems to govern their lives with.

Muslims were particularly concerned about this process, and the Prophet (saaw) kept a vigilant eye in correcting any diversion in this approach. He would immediately correct the Sahabah and censor any misunderstanding that arose, regardless of its magnitude. For example, when the Prophet (saaw) told the Sahabah that the people of Jannah were created for the Jannah, and the people of Jahannam were created for Jahannam, the Sahabah asked him, "Then why would we work?" He (saaw) told them, "You should work, and each one will proceed towards what he was created for." In this incident, the Prophet (saaw) detected a problem in their thinking when the Sahabah sought to connect their actions in a negative fashion with the Ghaib, in this case what they perceived as the being the Knowledge of Allah (swt). The Prophet (saaw) immediately corrected this misunderstanding by explaining to them that the Muslim should connect his actions with what he can comprehend and perceive, which is the Hukm Sharii, rather than with what he cannot fathom or comprehend, which is the Ghaib.

In another incident, an eclipse occurred after the death of Ibrahim, the son of the Prophet (saaw). Some people began to mistakenly connect the occurrence of the eclipse to this incident. The Prophet (saaw) immediately corrected their understanding by explaining to the people that they should not connect any natural phenomenon with the process of life and because there is no relationship between the two. He told the Sahabah, "Both the sun and the moon are signs of Allah, and they do not have their eclipse due to the birth or death of any individual."

This correction process did not just happen during the time of the Prophet (saaw) but also continued during the Era of the Sahabah. It was reported that Abu Bakr corrected the people when they incorrectly understood the following ayah:

*"O You who believe. Guard your own selves. If you follow guidance, no harm can come to you from those who go astray. The return of all of you is to Allah." [TMQ 5:105]*

Some people misunderstood this ayah to claim that a Muslim should care only for himself and not have any concern for others. Abu Bakr explained to them that the ayah is not an indication to stop enjoining the good and forbidding the evil (Amr bil-Ma'ruf wa nahy anil-Munkar). Instead, the ayah is ordering the Muslims not to follow such persons who commit mistakes. The ayah further mentions that the mistakes committed by such individuals will not harm the Muslims unless they follow them and commit the same mistakes. Abu Bakr, after explaining the ayah's correct meaning, also quoted a hadith in which the Prophet (saaw) said:

"You will continue performing Amr bil- Ma'ruf wa nahy anil-Munkar, and you will continue to hold the oppressor accountable and force him to cease his oppression. Otherwise, Allah will send a punishment, and you will make Du'a to Allah but your Du'a will not be answered."

In another incident, Umar ibn al Khattab was reciting the ayah:

*"and fruits and abba." [TMQ 80:31]*

A sahabi asked him, "What is this 'abba'?" Umar noticed that he was asking about something related to the Ghaib and instructed him not to do so and to be content with the ayah's general meaning of describing the bounties of the Jannah. Also, Umar realized that the general meaning of the text is clear and can be understood without understanding the meaning of the word "abba."

Another example which illustrates this corrective process occurred when the Muslims faced the Romans in the Battle of Yarmuk. A Muslim who was overwhelmed by the numbers of the Roman Army stated, "Arabs are too little and Romans are too many. How great the Romans are and how little the Arabs are." Khalid ibn al-Walid replied, "You should say, 'How great Muslims are and how little the Romans are,' since the soldiers will be great by the victory and will be little by the defeat." In this incident, Khalid corrected the entire criteria of the balance of power between armies, and explained to that individual that the measure of an army's greatness should be based on its victories and not on its size.

These examples illustrate that the Prophet (saaw) as well as the Sahabah after him were very concerned about the thinking process. They would correct the misunderstanding of a certain concept in addition to addressing the way of thinking of anyone whom they needed correction. Therefore, Muslims always strove to eliminate any alien idea from Islam in order to preserve the correct understanding of Islam and eliminate the possibility of any divergence emerging. Muslims paid careful attention towards maintaining their point of view towards the life in addition to preserving their understanding of the Aqeedah, the Islamic thoughts and rules, and the mechanism through which they understood Islam.

However, by the third generation, patterns of divergence began to appear in the thinking of some Muslims when they incorporated some alien ideas into their thinking. Consequently, the understanding of Islam among Muslims gradually deteriorated. Even though Muslims are expected to maintain a high level of understanding, they failed to do so as a result of an accumulation of several factors. The three most significant factors which contributed to the decline of the thinking among Muslims were: Greek Philosophy, the Oriental or Eastern Philosophies, and the recent Western intellectual invasion.

## Greek Philosophy

Greek philosophy can be considered a specific outlook toward life since it has an Aqeedah as well as certain key fundamental thoughts, all of which produce a unique way of thinking based upon logic.

This philosophy was exposed to Muslims through two channels: The Christians living under the Islamic State, and the Translation movement. The Christians who were ruled by Muslims were already equipped with the Greek philosophy because Christianity became devoid of any rational thoughts and concepts and, therefore, could not be considered as an basis for building any substantial thoughts upon. Due to this deficiency, the Christians began to look towards Greek philosophy and logic in order to their system of thoughts. Unfortunately, some Muslims were influenced by the Greek thoughts as well, and they began studying Greek philosophy, thinking that doing so would enable them to intellectually face the Christians with the same tools.

They failed to realize that delving into Greek philosophy would lead them to be influenced by it. The Muslims did not understand that any way of thinking is defined by a unique Aqeedah, which will result in the person adopting any way of thinking to ultimately be influence by the Aqeedah which shaped such a way of thinking.

An example illustrating how the Muslims relied upon Greek philosophy to substantiate their arguments was when the Christians claimed that Christ in the Word of Allah that was given to Mariam. According to their argument, since the word is one of Allah's Attributes, it is eternal because any descriptive adjective is connected to the object it is describing. And because the object in this instance is Allah, Who is eternal, then any attribute related to Allah is also eternal. The conclusion that the Christians derived as a result of this logic is that Christ is eternal and not created. To support their claim, they quoted the following from the Bible: "In the beginning, there was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Some Muslims, such as the Mu'tazilah, thought that the best method to counter the Christian argument was to claim that the Qur'an was created. According to them, saying that the Qur'an, which is Allah's Word, is created would lead to the conclusion that Christ is also created on the basis that Christ is also Allah's Word. As a result, the entire concept of discussing the Attributes of Allah influenced by this approach. The Mu'tazilah claimed that no difference exists between Allah's Attributes and His Essence, and that both are one and the same. They propagated the notion that the descriptions of Allah's Essence are not separated from His Essence. According to them, if the Attributes of Allah, which are eternal, are separated from His Essence, this would result in the existence of several eternal things, which would justify the existence of the Trinity.

To counter this claim, others such as Ahlul-Sunnah viewed such a stance as denial of Allah's Attributes. Ahlul-Sunnah claimed that while Allah has eternal attributes, they are neither a part of Allah nor separated from His Essence. According to them, Allah's Attributes are not a part of Him because the descriptions are never an integral part of the object being described. And they are eternal because no description which carries a limited meaning can be attributed to Allah's Essence. Based on this logic, Ahlul-Sunnah concluded that the Attributes of Allah are eternal and are manifested by Allah's Essence, but they are neither Him nor something other than Him because the descriptions are not the essence which is described. Furthermore, the Attributes are not something other than Allah because they are attributed to Allah. Muslims were eventually caught in this

endless spiral of sophistic argument which eventually led to conclusions that had no realistic or rational basis. The issue could have been settled from the beginning if the Muslims realized that the issue of Allah's Attributes is part of the Ghaib and is beyond the scope of rational discussion. Furthermore, the Muslims should have acknowledged that the laws which apply to the human being cannot apply to Allah. Eventually, such an intellectual squabble led to an entire Fitnah when the State attempted to impose the opinion of the Mu'tazilah upon the Muslims by force.

What caused the Muslims to entangle themselves in these sophistic discussions was adopting the logical method of thinking in the Aqeedah. The Muslims should have built the Aqeedah through the rational thinking in order to reach the conclusion that Allah exists and that the Qur'an is from Allah, and this basis would lead the Muslims to believe conclusively that whatever Allah revealed to Muhammad (saaw) is wahi. Once this Aqeedah is established, then the wahi itself, and not the rational thinking, would serve to establish the existence of the angels, the Attributes of Allah, and other aspects of the Ghaib. Thus, the Muslims should have adopted their opinions regarding issues of the Ghaib only through the textual, and not the rational, evidence. Muslims could have avoided this pitfall by adopting the stance that the statement "Christ is the Word of Allah" does not mean that Christ is one of Allah's Attributes.<sup>1</sup>

Muslims also adopted the Greek philosophy through the translation movement, which began during the Umayyads but became more systematic and institutionalized during the Abbasid Era. Al-Ma'mun, who was influenced by the Mu'tazilah, encouraged the translation of Greek literature, and Greek philosophy was one significant source of material that the Muslims translated. As a result, many Muslims began studying this philosophy, and they were influenced by it to varying degrees. Some of them only adopted the Greek Philosophy as a method of thinking without adopting its Aqeedah, such as the Mu'tazilah and the Mutakallimeen. Others adopted the Greek thought basis itself, which included concepts such as God's incarnation, Immanetism, and Pantheism, and were the so-called "Muslim Philosophers" such as Ibn Sina, Farabi, and others.

Although the Mutakallimeen maintained their belief in Islam, for them the Islamic doctrine ceased to function as a rational doctrine which instructed the human being to first think using the rational method and then to use the revelation as a basis for establishing the existence of realities beyond the human mind or senses. Rather, Islam was reduced to an abstract philosophy addressing issues that were beyond the human .

Thus, Isa was born in this miraculous way; in addition, the ayah indicates that he was created by Allah. We cannot draw an analogy between the Speech of Allah (whether it was sent to Muhammad through the Qur'an or addressed to Musa directly) and Isa, who was created after Allah ordered him to be created. The Speech of Allah and the nature of Isa are two different issues. Furthermore, when the Qur'an describes Isa as the Word of Allah, the meaning of the text is that Isa is just the result of the Word of Allah, which was given to Mariam. And the world of Allah is "Be" mentioned in the ayah, which resulted in the creation of Isa.

Perception in a logical and abstract manner. As a result, they introduced some philosophical issues to the Muslims such as whether or not the Qur'an is created, who created man's actions, and whether Allah's Attributes are separated from His Essence. As for the Muslim Philosophers, they did not

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<sup>1</sup> Allah (swt) says:

"Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to that thing, 'Be,' and it is." [TMQ 36:82]

leave a substantial impact upon the mainstream, but some Sufi movements remain influenced by their thoughts even until today.

The Greek Philosophy was a setback for Muslims which greatly impacted their understanding of Islam. What added complexity to the problem was when some Khulafah adopted the opinions of the Mu'tazilah and attempted to impose it by force. All of this led to the emergence of many groups, such as Al-Mu'tazilah, Juhamiyah, Hashawiya, and others, in addition to many philosophical movements such as Ikhwan us-Safah, which eventually produced sects such as the Druze. The emergence of such philosophical sects damaged the intellectual cohesiveness and unity of the Muslims and greatly affected their Islamic way of thinking. Muslims would begin to employ the logical method of thinking in areas beyond its scope, such as in the realm of Aqeedah or political thinking. In addition, the influence of such movements introduced to the Muslims the notions of metaphorical and even twisted means of thinking.

### Eastern Philosophies

Two of the most significant Eastern philosophies that influenced Muslims were the Indian and the Persian philosophies. Many Persians and Hindus became Muslims, but they attempted to reconcile between their old thoughts and the new Islamic thoughts they adopted. Eventually, many of their philosophies and literature was translated into Arabic, and as a result, many of their concepts, such as Brahmanism, Dualism, and the ideas of Mazdak, spread among Muslims. Heretics (Zanadiqah) emerged for the first time in Muslim history, some propagating the Communistic teachings of Mazduk,<sup>2</sup> while others promoting Brahmanism,<sup>3</sup> which is rooted in the notion of torturing the body in order to elevate the spiritual aspect. In addition to individuals, entire sects whose foundation and structure exceeded the boundaries of Islam emerged, among them the Karamitah and Hashashin (Assassins).

The rapid spread of Sufism among Muslims was one of the most evident products of the Eastern philosophies. Sufism began as a call for Muslims to detach themselves from the worldly issues, such as financial and political affairs and material enjoyments, and to focus solely on the Hereafter. However, Sufism later incorporated many alien ideas such as Brahmanism, Incarnation, and Dualism. Since then, Sufism evolved from a call to detach the people from the life affairs into a comprehensive philosophy with its own ideas, symbols, way of thinking, order, literature, and poetry. The Sufi thought became distinguished in its usage of distinct symbols and styles of communication that no one except the Sufis themselves could comprehend. For example, the Sufis claimed that each ayah or hadith has two meanings: One that is understood by common people (the apparent meaning), and the Batini (hidden) meaning, which only they can understand. They justified this stance on the basis that everything became unveiled to them as a result of certain practices and acts of devotion which they conducted. Below are some examples of some ayahs along with the Batini meanings which the Sufis attributed to them:

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<sup>2</sup> Mazduk was a Zoroastrian high priest in 5th century Persia who was also well-known as a Zoroastrian philosopher.

<sup>3</sup> Brahmanism claims that man is composed of two antagonistic elements: The material and spiritual components. Because they are antagonistic, one would have to deprive himself materially in order to elevate himself spiritually, until reaching a state of spiritual perfection which its adherents termed the state of "Nirvana."

Allah (saws) says,

*"He has let loose the two seas which meet together; between them is a barrier which none of them can transgress." [TMQ 55:19-20]*

Ibn Arabi, a prominent Sufi, stated regarding this ayah: "The two seas (the saltwater and freshwater seas) refer respectively to the physical body and the spirit, and they meet in the human existence. The barrier alludes to the animalistic aspect of the human soul which prevents either of the two components (the physical body and the spirit) from overcoming the other."

Allah (saws) says,

*"The first house erected for the people is that one in Mecca." [TMQ 3:96]*

According to Sufi understanding, the apparent meaning of the house is the Ka'abah, whereas the hidden meaning is the Prophet (saaw).

Allah (saws) says,

*"Worship Allah and join none with Him and do good to parents, kinfolk, orphans, the poor, the relative neighbor and the neighbor, the companion by your side and the wayfarer." [TMQ 4:36]*

Al-Tusturi says that the known meaning is the apparent meaning, however the hidden meaning is different. The "relative neighbor" is the heart, the "neighbor" refers to nature, and the "wayfarer" refers to the bodily organs that obey Allah.

Allah (saws) says,

*" Oh people! Fear your Lord, the One Who created you from one single soul." [TMQ 4:1]*

Ibn Arabi says to make whatever appears from you a protection for your Lord and make your Lord, which is your inside part, a protection for you.

The individuals who deduced the tafseers for the ayahs did not follow any defined rule or methodology and depended solely upon whim and illusion. The Theory of Incarnation is apparent in Ibn Arabi's statements when he considered that Allah is the hidden component of the human being.

Furthermore, the Sufis became attached to their shaykhs and imams, each following behaving according to a specific order, such as the Naqshabandi Order. Also worthwhile mentioning is that most of the Sufis were originally of Non-Arab descent, particularly from the Persian and Turkic regions. This turnout was a natural result of the close proximity of these regions to the centers of Persian and Indian philosophy. This geographical proximity eventually contributed to the emergence of the Bouwaihi and Safawi states in Persia and its surroundings, which helped isolate the Muslims in India and Asia from the Muslims in Iraq, Bilad æ-Sham, Egypt, and other territories west of Persia. These two states served as a strong intellectual barrier which separated the two halves of the Islamic world from each other.

Sufism also exerted a tremendous control on Muslim thought in India and Central Asia. Sahrouirdi and Ghazali aided in spreading these ideas due to their frequent travels to areas in the Muslims world. However, in the center of the Muslim world, which consisted of Bilad as-Sham, Iraq, Egypt, and Arabia, Sufis was resisted heavily by Muslims. Some scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya and Ibnul-Qayyem greatly assisted the opposition towards Sufism. And some extreme Sufis such as Ibnul-Arabi and Al-Hallaj were executed because of propagating their belief in the Incarnation. Furthermore, the Arabic language aided in obstructing the spread of Sufism in these territories. The situation remained relatively unchanged until some people such as the Moguls and Suljuk Turks emigrated from Central Asia to these regions. These people carried Sufi ideas to the Arabs, and by the 11th Century A.H., most of the Muslim World succumbed to the influence of Sufi thought.

Sufism stifled the thinking process in the Muslim Ummah by spreading passiveness, carelessness, ignorance, and superficial thinking among the Muslims. The Sufi philosophy changed the thinking of Muslims to one based on Fatalism which essentially ignores the cause-effect relationship that Allah (swt) established in the universe. Concepts such as depending upon others, laziness in thinking, and sanctification of certain personalities, in addition to the emergence of personal cults, are only a few of the negative impacts of Sufism, all of which ultimately resulted in the stagnation of Muslim thought. With the doors of ijthihad already closed, the presence of destructive alien thoughts spreading passiveness among Muslims, the educational centers and institutions restricted to memorizing old Fiqh books, and the rapid spread of bida' practices such as visiting the graves of the imams in a ritualistic manner, the Muslims were an easy target for the third and final factor which led to their intellectual decline: The Western invasion.

### The Western Intellectual Invasion

While Muslims were experiencing a state of intellectual decline, Europe began to emerge as a new intellectual power in the world. During this time, Europe experienced the Renaissance, which resulted in the emergence of Capitalism as a new ideology. The Capitalist ideology had as its foundation the Secular creed which defined the relationship between Church and State. Thinkers such as Hobbs and Rosseau began propagating the newly-emerging concepts of Democracy, Freedom, Individualism, and Liberty. Parallel to the intellectual development was the emergence of the scientific way of thinking, which Europe embraced. All of these intellectual developments ushered Europe into the Industrial Revolution. With the emergence of the Capitalist ideology and the Industrial Revolution, the West emerged as a new intellectual and material force in the world.

Muslims, content with their military superiority, were either unaware or heedless of the sweeping changes which were occurring throughout most of Europe. This contentment was further strengthened by their belief that Islam could not be conquered, the long history the Islamic State enjoyed as the First State in the world for a millennium, and their ability to defeat both the Crusaders and the Moguls. Further adding to this feeling of contentment was the fact that the Muslims were able to sweep across Europe, ultimately reaching Central France and Vienna.

Although the Ottoman State was a military giant, its political and intellectual influence was miniscule. Politically and intellectually, the Muslims were declining due to the accumulation of several internal factors, and this deterioration became more widespread and obvious during the days of the Ottoman State. The Muslims in this state of decline were ill-prepared in dealing with the sudden changes that swept through Europe, and consequently the progress that Europe experienced was a shock to the Muslims that took them by surprise. While the Muslims before continuously

expanded their frontiers to new lands, the Muslims during the days of the Ottoman State witnessed the European Nations, particularly Spain, Portugal, Holland, Britain, and France, colonizing Muslim lands in different regions. In the past, the Europeans were forced to cross the Muslim world in order to trade with other nations and territories in remote areas such as China. However, with the discovery of new trade routes by Vasco De Gama, Magellen, Columbus, and others, Europe no longer depended solely upon the Muslims in this regard.

In light of such events, the Muslims began to realize their weakness and decline, but this realization was not initiated by any intellectual awareness of the situation. Instead, the Muslims reacted based on physical criteria to the material advancements in Europe and the conquering of Muslim lands. As a result, the Muslims were overwhelmed by the material advancement of Europe. Although the Muslims attempted to initiate a revival, the concept of revival in their minds was no longer an intellectual revival but was restricted to keeping pace with the progress occurring in the West. As a result of this reactionary stance towards the revival, Muslims became enchanted with the West for the first time in their history.

In their attempts to define and create the revival, the Muslims became divided into three major currents. The first current, the so-called "Traditionalists" or "Conservatives," consisted of the common masses, the traditional shaykhs and scholars, and the Sufis. They took the stance of passiveness and carelessness and paid little or no attention to the events happening in Europe. Furthermore, they were unable to recognize the distinction between the material and the cultural aspects of a civilization. As a result, they viewed the Western civilization as Kufr in all aspects, which caused them to reject any product of the West as something from Shaytan, whether the product was intellectual, cultural, scientific or technological.

The second current which attempted to revive the Muslims was the Secular current which consisted of those who were fascinated and mesmerized by the European culture and civilization. The seeds of this current were planted with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt. Some individuals started visiting Europe in order to study, and these individuals eventually began calling the Muslims to adopt the European culture and civilization in their totality. They called for such Western ideas as the detachment of the Deen from the state, the separation of Islam from life, and other Western-borne concepts such as Equality, Individualism, and Freedom. The Secular current would eventually give rise to the Turkish secular nationalists such as the Young Turks and the Union and Progress Party, as well as some westernized arabs who would form the seeds of arab-nationalist movements.

The last current were represented by the "Modernists" who propagated the idea that the Western culture has both positive and negative qualities and that Muslims should adopt from Europe anything that does not conflict with their Deen. This current started calling Muslims to bridge the gap between Islam and the Western culture by reinterpreting Islam to adapt to the modern life defined by the West.

To the misfortune of the Muslims, all of these currents were wrong in their approach. The Traditionalist current chose the path of stagnation and was not prepared to think in any aspect. And the Secular and Modernist trends considered the West as the reference point, either consciously or subconsciously. They incorrectly defined the revival as being based on the relationship between the Muslims and the West, differing only in the extent to which Muslims should emulate the West. Furthermore, by considering the West as the frame of reference which defined their course of action, these currents, particularly the Secular and Modernist currents, made themselves easy targets

for the European nations to use them as tools in their cultural and intellectual campaign against the Muslims. Both Britain and France started openly assisting the Seculars from among the Turks and Arabs. Egypt, which was occupied by Britain, became a safe haven for Seculars who were forced to leave the Ottoman-controlled territories. In addition, some Lebanese Christians emigrated to Egypt and established newspapers and journals advocating the Secular point of view. Britain and France assisted these individuals in spreading their publications to different regions of the Ottoman State. Lord Cromer, who resided in Egypt at the time as the British Viceroy, played a critical role in this process.

The Modernist current was also supported by Britain, but the support was done covertly and with the intention of establishing its roots firmly among the masses. This Modernist stream included members such as Refaah Tahtawi, Kahyrid-Deen Al-Tunusi, Jamaal ud-Deen Al-Afghani, Abdul-Rahman Al-Kawakiby, and Muhammad Abdu. A prominent aspect of this covert support was Lord Cromer's efforts in helping Muhammad Abdu reach the position of Shaykh al-Azhar, although he was not well appreciated by the scholars there.<sup>4</sup> The works of Muhammad Abdu and Lord Cromer eventually resulted in the establishment of a new educational and judicial system in Egypt. Muhammad Abdu used the stagnation which gripped the Islamic world to justify his stance of modernizing Islam to mold into the Western-dominated status quo.

In addition to the Secular and Modernist currents, Britain and France also lent support to the Conservative or Traditionalist current by advocating the Sufi trend and promoting the various Sufi orders. This support was clearly visible when the Sufis in Algeria fought alongside the French government against the Muslims. In addition, the new publishing houses established in Egypt began publishing many works of Sufi literature, such as the books of Ibnul-Arabi and Al-Ghazali.

A critical analysis of these currents will reveal that all of them were incorrect for two principle reasons:

1. These movements incorrectly defined the concept of revival and its approach. The Traditionalist movement defined the concept of revival based on stagnation and passiveness. And the Secular and Modernist currents defined the concept of revival from a purely materialistic vantage point. This outlook led them to restrict the concept of revival to dealing with the West and keeping pace with its progress, rather than dealing with themselves and identifying the factors which would create progress for the Muslims. What the Muslims should have done was to initiate a discussion about their situation, proceed to identify factors and causes that led to their decline, and then define the approach they should follow to revive themselves intellectually with the objective of restoring their creativity, productivity, and above all, the correct Islamic thinking. Unfortunately, no attempts of this nature happened.
2. Both the Traditionalist and Modernist currents failed to identify the difference between Hadaara (the cultural aspects of a civilization) and Madaneyyah (the material aspects of a civilization). For this reason, Muslims were unable to identify what they can adopt and what they should reject from other civilizations. Because the Hadaara consists of a set of concepts

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<sup>4</sup> The British were keen in recruiting scholars in order to carry out their plans for the Muslim world. An example of Britain's close ties with such scholars is when the Khalifah requested Muhammad Abdu's presence in Istanbul. Muhammad Abdu, fearful for his security, traveled to Istanbul and resided as a guest of the British Consulate, which exerted considerable pressure upon the Khalifah to secure Abdu's safety.

about life derived from a fundamental thought or creed, then the Muslims cannot adopt anything from the other civilizations related to the Hadaara. Aspects related to a civilization or society's Hadaara include its systems, the economic and political orders, the outlook towards man and society, and the prevailing arts and philosophies.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the Madaneyyah consists of the material aspects of a civilization which is not influenced by a unique point of view, philosophy or creed, such as industry, mathematics, physics, engineering, and medicine. All of these material aspects are permissible because the Sharii Qa'ida states: "The original rule for objects is permissibility, unless it is proven otherwise."<sup>6</sup>

In addition, Muslims failed to differentiate between the different types of knowledge and, as a result, could not identify what areas of knowledge they could adopt from the West and what areas of knowledge they could not. Because the scientific knowledge is acquired through the scientific methodology, which is universal and cannot be influenced by any doctrine or specific point of view, the Muslims are allowed to acquire scientific knowledge from any source. However, the Thaqafah, or the knowledge that is influenced by a specific point of view towards life is particular to any culture and is acquired by narration and deduction. Such areas of knowledge include language, history, jurisprudence, and philosophy. Muslims must exercise care in studying any cultural knowledge such as sociology, psychology, and economics because they are influenced by the point of view of others.

Based on this distinction between the universal and the particular, the Muslims were supposed to adopt the science and technology from the West and develop it further while rejecting the Western culture and point of view. However, instead of adopting this strategy, the Muslims ironically attempted to transfer the thoughts and concepts unique to the Western culture while rejecting many technological and scientific advancements which the West achieved.

These attempts to revive the Muslims failed to address the true nature of revival. Instead, they compounded the problem of the Muslims by mixing the Islamic thought with the Western thought. Such a mixture led to more backwardness in science and technology. Further exasperating the decline was the intellectual invasion of the West, which systematically targeted specific issues in the Islamic way of thinking. Following are examples of specific issues in Islam which the West addressed and their impact upon Muslims:

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<sup>5</sup> The debate in this aspect has no relation to whether the item to be adopted (or rejected) complies with, or is similar to, Islam. Muslims are ordered to adopt, comply, and adhere only to the Sharii rules derived from a valid Islamic text. If a rule is not derived from a text, even though it may seem similar to Islam, it cannot be taken. The Muslims are prohibited from adopting any Kufr legislation, even if such a legislation does not conflict with Islam at some point.

<sup>6</sup> If the material aspect is influenced by the Hadaara, then it cannot be taken. For example, a stone is part of the Madaneyyah, whereas a stone carved into a statue of a person would reflect the Hadaara of Western culture, which allows the production of replicas of people in the arts. Furthermore, architecture is part of the Madaneyyah, but Islam prohibits the use of architecture to design a house which openly displays its interior to the outside world.

# The Islamic Political System

The manner in which the West addressed this issue perhaps inflicted the greatest damage upon the Muslim Ummah because it struck at the very mechanism which implements the Islamic system. During the Middle Ages, the Western nations suffered tremendously as a result of the theocratic systems imposed upon them. A severe backlash erupted as a result of the oppression that the West experienced, which caused some groups to deny religion altogether. In order to resolve this confrontation, the West formulated a compromise solution which separated the Deen from the life affairs, and this solution became the Secular basis of Western Capitalist societies. With the separation of Church and State and the subsequent adoption of Capitalism, Europe entered a phase of rapid progress. Thus, the notion that religion and politics cannot coexist and that mixing the two is synonymous with backwardness and decline became a cornerstone in Western political thought. The West exported this notion to the Muslims and brilliantly deceived the Muslims into thinking that the historical experiences which the West encountered was a universal one which applied to every religion or Deen, including Islam. As a result, the Muslims began to view Islamic politics in the same light as the West viewed politics mixed with the Deen as a lethal cocktail. And just as the West perceived their decline as the result of mixing religion with politics, the Muslims began to perceive their own decline as the direct result of implementing Islam in the life affairs.

Such a problem could have been easily alleviated if the Muslims realized that the experiences of the West were specific to the West and stemmed from certain factors, such as: The inability of the Christian doctrine to address the life affairs because of the original doctrine being mixed with man-made ideas and innovations; the fact that the whims and opinions of the clergy, and not even the Christian doctrine itself, was used as a basis for rule; and the incorrectness of the manner in which the Europeans attempted to resolve their intellectual dilemma, which produced an incorrect solution that inherently contradicted itself. None of these factors could be generalized to the Muslim World because the Islamic text is proven correct and was never polluted, which made Islam capable of addressing the life affairs at any time or place. And Islam, unlike the existing Christian doctrine in Europe at the time, is intellectually conclusive and directs the human being to build his Aqeedah based on the intellectual method. Furthermore, the Islamic Aqeedah is comprehensive in its nature, and from it emanates a comprehensive system of life. Therefore, there was never a conflict between the reality deduced from the intellect and the Islamic Aqeedah. And the Islamic System addresses all aspects of life, leaving no aspect of the life affairs unanswered. Because of these attributes that were unique to the Islamic Aqeedah, the Muslims never had a "Dark Ages" which the West experienced. The decline which the Muslims were undergoing was a result of misunderstanding Islam, which resulted from the accumulation of several factors, none of which had any relation to the factors contributing to the European Dark Ages. However, the West capitalized upon the decline of the Muslims and their intellectual confusion by misleading them to believe that the presence of Islam in the political arena was the central cause of their decline. As a result, the Muslims were diverted into perceiving their decline as well as the issue of revival using the West as a model, which caused them to call for the separation of Islam from the life affairs and abandoning the Islamic political system as necessary to revive the Muslims.

Today, the separation of Islam and politics has become deeply rooted among the Muslims in general and among Muslim politicians and intellectuals in particular. In addition, two recent factors compound the problem. First, the educational curricula laid down by the Western Colonialists

which the Muslims were exposed to depicted the Islamic history under the Khilafah as a ruthless and barbaric era in which the Muslim world was engulfed in conflicts, instability, and endless killings immediately following the Era of the Sahabah. The Khulafaa were presented for the most part as bloodthirsty dictators preoccupied with lavishness and women. Such images were so successfully implanted in the minds of the Muslims that they began to view their history with shame, thinking that the Khilafah was something that spoiled the image of Islam. Added to the history books are the existence of some regimes in the Muslim world which claim themselves as Islamic, as well as the behavior of Muslim political parties and individuals who play the same dirty politics characteristic of Western politics. Such regimes, although they are nothing more than Secular regimes which apply fragments of Islam, nevertheless present a very negative portrayal of Islam. Because of the inability of most Muslims to distinguish between what constitutes an Islamic state and the existing states which claim themselves as Islamic, and their inability to differentiate between politics practiced based on Islam and "Politics in the name of Islam," such regimes and individuals further shatter the confidence of Muslims in Islam's ability to address the life's affairs. As a result, many Muslims, out of despair and frustration, take the easy path and separate Islam from politics altogether.

## The Status of Women

The issue of woman in Islam was clear and never debated among Muslims. Allah (swt) created men and women and legislated general responsibilities for both, such as carrying the Daw'ah and holding the rulers accountable, in addition to designating specific responsibilities for each gender. Muslims acknowledged that sovereignty belongs to Allah, and the rules related to both men and women are Islamic rules deduced through ijtiḥad based upon the daleel. It was implicitly recognized among Muslims that the process of ijtiḥad and the concept of daleel are not sex-dependent, and thus, a "male" or "female" understanding of Islam never emerged. The only understanding that Islam produced for any concept or rule was the legal understanding based upon the daleel. As a result, all Muslims, whether man or woman, adhered to the Islamic rules in their entirety, and the Muslims with this understanding were saved from the "sex wars" that continue to plague the West until today.

It was this understanding that the Muslims lacked in dealing with the onslaught from the West regarding the status of women in Islam. The ideological invasion initiated by the West raised issues related to the Islamic Social System, such as why the man is allowed to marry four women and why the woman must cover her entire body except the face and hands. Even more damaging was the very concept of the status of women in Islam which the West constructed and propagated - a slave in a male-dominated society. The proper response to all of this would be to realize that the outlook of the West towards women stem from a specific viewpoint. The Muslims could have easily addressed this issue by presenting Islam with its intellectual basis, forcing the West to question whether the human being or Allah was fit to decide what status would be conferred to both men and women. However, the Muslims made a critical mistake by attempting to justify the status of women in Islam to accommodate the Western outlook. Some Muslims reacted to the accusations initiated by the West began by calling for Western ideas such as woman's liberation and equality between the sexes, thinking that doing so would stave off some of the attacks. As a reaction to this group, another section of Muslims went to the opposite extreme and claimed that the woman should not leave her home and are prohibited from trade, education, and politics. A third group emerged in an attempt to reconcile between the two camps, which was no more than an attempt to reconcile between Western thoughts and Islamic emotions.

The end result of these attempts to address this issue was a total disaster. As a direct outcome of these movements, the Muslim Ummah was faced with three options regarding the status of women: To adopt the Western model, which was based on a reaction to an incorrect viewpoint; or to adopt what was labeled as the "Islamic" model, which was a reaction to a reaction; or to adopt the model which attempted to mix Islam with the Western outlook, which was a compromise between two reactions. Further compounding the problem was the fact that the Muslims began to lose the distinction between Islam and various local cultures and traditions which did in fact discriminate heavily upon women. Many aspects of these traditions and cultures were deemed Islamic, particularly on the issue of women. This intermixing of Islam with local culture succeeded in magnifying the image among Muslims and non-Muslims that Islam is oppressive to women.

In addition to these issues, many others were addressed, such as Jihad, the status of non-Muslims in Islam, and the Islamic penal code. In order to ensure the success of this process, new universities and schools were erected throughout the Muslim world, and scholarships were granted to Muslim

students to study in the West. Furthermore, cultural and educational clubs were established, and even hospitals were utilized for the purpose of promoting Western ideas and culture among Muslims. All of these tools were used to spread Western ideas such as Nationalism, Secularism, and, above all, sanctification of the West in all of its aspects, from its history to noted Western personalities to its achievements in the arts and literature. These thoughts were initially accepted by some Christians in Lebanon and later spread among Muslims. When the West eventually colonized the region militarily, the Shariah was abandoned except in areas dealing with personal issues, and a new educational curriculum was imposed. The existence of this educational curriculum would guarantee that, after the military departure of the West from the Muslim lands, the future generations who would graduate from this curriculum would look up to the West as their ideal model in every facet of life.

Nowadays, the Western thought has become pervasive among Muslims. In fact, the Western culture became the dominant point of view among the intelligentsia and the educated class. Most of the publications, seminars, intellectual circles, and discussions, which exist in the Muslim World are influenced by this point of view. And the advent of new means of transmitting ideas such as telecommunications and internet further enhanced this influence.

The impact of the Western thought is the most dangerous factor which affected Muslims, far surpassing the impact of the Greek and Eastern philosophies. While these old philosophies may have diverted the thinking of the Muslims, the modern Western philosophy killed the Muslim thought altogether and worked to reshape the thinking of future generations of Muslims based on the Western culture. Today, the majority of Muslims have Islamic emotions, but are Westernized in their thoughts and ideas.

The Islamic way of thinking was not destroyed overnight but was slowly dismembered due to many factors which accumulated throughout history. Those factors started with the emergence of some intellectual factors after the Tabi'een. Recently, many attempts were initiated to restore the Islamic way of thinking by returning the Muslims back to the lifestyle of the first three generations. But even these attempts failed because those who pioneered such attempts confined their efforts to Taqleed in Fiqhi opinions produced by these early generations and continuous repetition of their opinions in issues related to the Aqeedah without any profound intellectual thinking. Furthermore, they did not differentiate between examining the first three generations, how they built and maintained their thinking, and how they faced the issues surrounding them as a role model to take lessons from, and actually copying the tools and technologies that existed at the time. As a result, the change that they called for was in fact a call for Muslims to return to the days of riding camels and not a call for the Muslims to emulate the early generations. Thus, even these movements were unable to solve the problem.

# Characteristics of the Islamic Way of Thinking

With the emergence of the many problems that resulted from the absence of the Islamic way of thinking, some members of the Muslim Ummah attempted to define the course of revival. Any attempt to revive the Muslim Ummah cannot succeed without reconstructing the Islamic way of thinking among the Muslims. Without a clear picture of what the Islamic way of thinking consists of, reviving the Muslims would be doomed to failure and would repeat the same mistakes of past attempts which failed. Thus, fully comprehending these unique characteristics is vital to the revival process in order to keep the revival detached from the emotions, reactions, and factors that precipitated the decline. After addressing the factors and causes that resulted in corrupting the Islamic way of thinking, it is necessary to mention some distinguishing characteristics of the Islamic way of thinking. These characteristics can be deduced by examining the wahi, which defines the source of the Islamic culture, and by studying how the Sahabah dealt with the issues that faced them. Following are some of these characteristics:

## 1) The Existence of Truth and Falsehood as Absolute and Not Relative

The objective of the Islamic way of thinking is to reach the truth, which necessitates believing in the existence of truth and falsehood and in the correct and incorrect as absolute, and not relative, facts. The most distinguishing feature of this life is that it consists of facts and not illusions. Any objective and serious study or thought must acknowledge the undeniable fact that absolute realities exist; otherwise, such a study would degenerate into fanciful storytelling and speculation that cannot construct any sustainable concepts. With this in mind, any research, study, or thinking cannot be devoid of purpose or for entertainment; any such study or research would be in vain and would bear no productive concepts aside from superficial thoughts and abstract philosophies. Reaching the truth must be the sole motive behind any study or research, and once the truth is reached and is proven conclusively, Muslims must abide by it and adopt it as part of their thinking. No attention should be given to the opinions and traditions of the masses, or to any cost or benefit that may be associated with adhering to the truth. The truth must be accepted only based on its merits. Anyone who realizes the truth and failed to abide by it has willingly labeled himself a hypocrite and has cheated and deceived himself, which suffices to classify such a person as ignorant.

The existence of absolute truth is easily recognizable upon examining the manner in which the human being develops his thinking capacity. The human being from early childhood begins to sense his surroundings, and the images of these realities will be firmly entrenched in his brain. The human being at an early age feels the existence of these realities although he is unable to explain or define them. Upon repetitive feeling and sensation, the existence of these realities becomes definite and conclusive, and the notion that such realities are merely illusions quickly dissipates. The moon or mountain which the human being senses remains the same moon or mountain every time he senses them. If these realities were merely illusions that emanated from his imagination, then the human being, who has full control over his imagination, can alter the shape and nature of such illusions as he pleases. However, these realities exist regardless of his or anyone else's imagination, which means that the existence of these realities does not depend upon the imagination and is not a relative issue like the subject of one's imagination.

Furthermore, as the human being develops in his childhood, he develops the ability to connect some of his instincts and needs to these objects. Initially, such a connection during the early stages is merely instinctive or emotional, but not intellectual, and such connections exist even among the animals. For example, the infant would connect between his mother's aroma, her voice and the breastmilk. These connections are not imaginary or illusory but are real outcomes of the interaction between his instincts and needs with the objects and realities surrounding him. Food and water always satisfy his need to eat and drink, and this satisfaction occurs in every human being and animal without exception.

With further maturation, the human child begins to comprehend these realities and initiates the process of classifying things by terms. Initially, this process occurs through imitation, starting with tangible things in his immediate vicinity such as his parents and bodily organs. He then begins the process of building relationships between these tangible realities, such as categorizing different realities on the basis of size or shape. In addition, the child starts to comprehend the attributes of certain actions, such as eating, walking, and sleeping. What must be noted is that the realities which the human being senses exist regardless of the terms he attributes to them. A mountain exists regardless of whether someone refers to it as a mountain or a small hill. Furthermore, the attributes that exist in objects are realities which the human being senses from his early childhood. Fire has the attribute of burning, and everyone observes this phenomenon without exception.

Alongside these processes, the child develops the ability to listen to the different sounds, which is the first linguistic skill that man develops and will later shape the development of his vocal system. All of these sounds and images will be stored as information, which will further reinforce the already conclusive existence of the realities that he has repeatedly observed throughout the years. The child starts communicating using very simple language usually composed of one or two phonetics. With time, his vocal system develops to the extent that he begins to utilize language and express his ideas in a spoken form, whereas before he would express himself primarily through emotions (laughing, crying, etc.) or bodily movements. Once the child acquires the ability to speak, he begins the process of questioning the realities surrounding him as well as their relationship to one another. This questioning proceeds naturally, and usually his parents assist him in answering these questions. The answers he receives will serve as information that will later serve as a basis for his thinking. In addition to questioning, the child also begins the process of issuing his own opinions and judgments. This thinking process will be crude and have numerous errors in its initial stages. By the time his reservoir of information increases and his senses become more refined, his thinking will become more sophisticated and accurate.

The human being, from the onset of his ability to rationalize and comprehend his surroundings, realizes that there is a stark difference between the existence of certain realities and their explanation. The existence of these realities is connected directly to the human being's senses and is, therefore, conclusive. Since the onset of the development of his ability to sense his surroundings, the human being has sensed the different realities, and what he senses is consistent time and again. However, the information which explains these realities may differ. Man begins to associate the information provided to him with the realities that he senses. If the information corresponds to the reality, then it will concentrate within him and naturally evolve into a concept, which he refers to as a reference for measuring other ideas and issues by. For example, the parent would tell their child that playing with electrical items is dangerous and could result in injury or death. They would also inform him that crying in a loud voice at night would attract ghosts which would kidnap him. Initially, the child would trust both statements because of the bond of trust and emotional link

between him and his parents. However, the human being by his nature is curious, and this curiosity entices him to explore. With time, he will realize accuracy of the first statement and the inherent fallacy of the second by comparing both statements to the reality which he senses and to the many incidents and experiences. He will realize the correctness of the first statement either by news of others who were injured or killed by electrocution, or by directly experiencing an electric shock. When he begins contemplating the second statement and compares it to the reality, he will realize its falsehood through the accounts of many children, including himself, who would cry at night without ever being kidnapped by ghosts. As a result, he would consider the first statement as a concept and conviction that cannot be changed without the need to search for any further evidence to support it. As for the second statement, he would abandon it after realizing its falsehood.

Therefore, the truth is what matches with the reality, and because the reality is the same for everyone, then this correspondence is absolute and not relative. For example, the issue of whether Allah exists is not relative because either Allah exists or He does not. No one can claim that Allah exists and does not exist at the same time on the basis that some people deny His existence and others acknowledge it. The existence of the reality is something that people sense and not something that people create in their minds or imaginations. Thus, the reality exists in this life because of the fact that the reality itself exists and not because man wanted it to exist or imagined it to exist. The human being arrives at this conclusion from the moment that he begins to sense these realities.

Claiming that the realities which people sense are merely illusions and not the reality is a false claim which has no basis. Those who claim such a hallucination contradict their assertion simply by their conduct in daily life. If a human being were to doubt that everything surrounding him is real - including the food he eats, the items that he uses to carry out specific actions, and the words that he speaks and hears from others - he would be unable to live. Thus, the ideas and thoughts which either affirm the existence of a specific reality or attribute some descriptions to it are correct if the reality proves their correctness and false if the reality proves their falsehood. Saying that there exists a force called gravity which pushes matter to the center of the earth is correct and absolute because the reality proved its existence millions of times, and everyone observes the same phenomenon continuously and without exception.

Thus, the existence of truth is a conclusive issue that every human being realizes, and this realization is firmly entrenched. Once a human being realizes the truth, then he must abide by it because thinking is the most noble characteristic the human being possesses. Through this ability to think, the human being comprehends his surroundings, builds concepts that shape his personality and outlook, and develops plans and objectives to guide him through life. The human being can avoid many dangers, whether physical or intellectual, and overcome many obstacles that impede his progress through this ability. Furthermore, thinking renders the person legally accountable and responsible for his actions and their consequences. Without this capacity, the person would be considered insane or mentally dysfunctional and cannot be held legally accountable for his actions. Thus, the natural course for any human being to pursue is to proceed in this life according to his convictions, which he arrives at through the thinking process. The most debased of people are those who identify the truth and then avert themselves from it and fail to abide by it. Anyone who chooses this course of action defeats the very purpose of the most honorable characteristic that Allah has granted him, and he begins training himself in the fields of lying and hypocrisy. Stubbornness and argument based on falsehood become distinguishing features of his character.

While thinking is the most venerable characteristic that a human being has, the process itself is time and energy-consuming. Thus, the human being should not engage in thinking for entertainment like the Greek philosophers would do, nor should it be done for show as some people try to do when they argue an issue that is clearly incorrect. The Prophet (saaw) said, "I guarantee a house in the Jannah to the one who abandons (the miraah) even if he is correct." The word "miraah" in the hadith refers to the sophistic or pointless argument, or any argument initiated out of stubbornness and not for the purpose of reaching the truth in order to abide by it. Thus, it is mandatory upon all Muslims to abide by the truth and make reaching the truth the objective of any discussion, while ridding themselves of any loyalty aside from loyalty to the truth. The truth should serve as the frame of reference to measure things with. Muslims should never refer to anything - whether an individual, emotion, benefit, or institution as a frame of reference for assessing the truth. Anyone who does so has betrayed himself and has sold his personality and independence for a very cheap price. It is expected for a Muslim to consistently refer to the truth, and he should not insist on the falsehood regardless of the reasons or justifications for doing so.

## 2) Recognizing the Daleel, its Types, and its Domain

Human being encounter many issues in their daily lives, ranging from political and economic to intellectual and cultural. In order to proceed through life with its myriad of issues, the human being must develop or adopt certain opinions and thoughts related to these issues, and this adoption will serve as the basis for pursuing a specific course of action in addressing or resolving these issues. The most accurate and correct opinion or thought will doubtless lead to the most effective course of action in resolving an issue. And the accuracy or correctness of any thought or opinion will depend solely upon the strength of evidence that supports the thought or opinion. Therefore, no idea, opinion, rule or thought should be taken without its daleel (evidence). The process of adopting opinions or thoughts should not be done out of convenience or fascination (either with the opinion itself or with the one who carries it). No one should adopt any thought or opinion on the basis of personal benefit, emotion, reaction, or imitation. Ultimately, the daleel is the sole criterion for determining which opinion is correct.

The reason for placing the evidence as the sole basis for adopting any thought, action, opinion, or rule, is that Muslims will be held accountable for their actions when they face Allah (swt). This accountability will proceed on an individualistic basis in which everyone will be asked about only his or her actions. Parents, siblings, family, friends, shaykhs, leaders, mas'ools, government, country, or personal benefits and desires, will not avail any individual on the Day of Judgment. Allah (swt) will ask each person about their obedience to the wahi He sent. Therefore, awareness of the sharii rules along with their evidences is critical for the Muslims.

Furthermore, the behavior of the human being is based on the concepts and convictions which he carries. A concept, which the human being is convinced of to the extent that he will refer to it as a basis for his personality and outlook, cannot emerge unless it is built upon convincing evidence. Without any evidence to substantiate it, a concept will be reduced to superficial information which cannot define a consistent behavior. One should not adopt or defend any opinion, thought, or rule, without being convinced of its evidence (with the notable exception of Taqleed, where the person is unable to evaluate the evidences or opinion). This is because the process of adoption renders whatever a person adopted an integral component of his mentality which will define his thinking. And anything that a person is not convinced with cannot define the thinking. Shallow thinking will be the inevitable outcome of adopting opinions without conviction.

One would say that a person who is part of a party or group is expected to adopt what the group adopts even if he is not convinced with the group's adoption. However, the evidence for adoption in this case is the same evidence which obligates the Muslim to establish and join a group, which is the ayah:

*"And let there arise from among you an ummah that calls for Khayr (Islam), commands Al-Ma'ruf (good, what Islam ordains) and forbids Al-Munkar (evil, what Islam prohibits), and those are the ones who will attain success." [TMQ 3:104]*

The group cannot exist as a distinct entity without adopting a set of thoughts. It cannot even interact with the people without adoption. In order to maintain a pure and strong entity, which would translate into effective communication with the people, the group is expected to adopt its thoughts based on study, thought and research. Furthermore, the group or party should present its adopted opinions with its evidence to its members and to the Ummah, and leave the doors open for any discussion in order for the adoption to produce its fruits. Thus, the adoption in the group in no way should be associated with blindly following opinions or taking opinions without an evidence.

# Types of Daleel

The daleel can be divided into two primary categories: The intellectual or rational daleel derived through the thinking process, and the textual daleel deduced from the wahi.

## A). The Intellectual Daleel

The intellectual daleel, which is derived through the aql, is the reality that corresponds to an issue and proves its correctness as a result. This type of daleel is further subdivided into two types:

### **I). Evidence for fundamental thoughts**

The fundamental thought, or Aqeedah, is the foundation which humanity refers to when measuring things. This thought serves as a frame of reference for the human being and defines his point of view and outlook towards life by resolving the essential questions that every human being must answer. The evidence for this type of thought is rational and must fully match with the reality. For example, believing in Allah (swt) as Unlimited and Eternal is a fundamental thought which is established by certain realities inherent in the universe, in life, and in the human being himself. The properties which all of these realities inherently possess would lead to the intellectual realization that they are created and not eternal. Similarly, believing in the Qur'an is derived through this process. As an Arabic text, the Qur'an must have a source. Examining the reality of the Qur'an and thinking about its possible sources would lead to the rational conclusion that the Qur'an must be the words of Allah (swt). And the prophethood of Muhammad (saaw) is realized through this conclusion.

The Qur'an addressed the sentiments of the human being while simultaneously directing the human being to think about the world surrounding him and to arrive at a conclusive belief. Through this intermixing of intellect and emotions, the Islamic Aqeedah addresses both aspects of the human being. Thus, the Islamic Aqeedah convinces the intellect of the human being and satisfies his nature. The core of the Aqeedah, which consists of believing in the Oneness of Allah, the Qur'an as the word of Allah, and in Muhammad as the final messenger, are established using this method.

Once the foundation of the Aqeedah<sup>7</sup> is built, it serves as a basis for peripheral issues related to the Aqeedah, such as the previous prophets and books, the Day of Resurrection, Jannah (Paradise) and Jahannam (Hell-Fire), and the Attributes of Allah.

These concepts can only be deduced after establishing the core of the Aqeedah because the evidence for such issues is the wahi itself, which cannot be realized without first establishing the existence of the wahi, the source of the wahi, and the human being's need for the wahi. Furthermore, these issues cannot be discussed rationally because they are beyond the senses of the human being, which is an essential component of the rational thinking process.

The intellectual process is also used to construct basic thoughts related to the various aspects of life, such as politics and economics, and these basic thoughts serve as a foundation for building an understanding of these various aspects of life. For example, building a political mentality requires

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<sup>7</sup> The foundation of the Aqeedah is defined as the Tauhid in the legislative aspect, which must rely on the wahi as its evidence, and the scientific fields, which utilize the scientific method of thinking.

establishing some basic notions about the influential nations in the world and their policies, interests, and relationship to other nations. These thoughts must be built by understanding the reality as it is and not through imagining the reality the way someone wants it to be. Thus, applying the intellectual process is required for all aspects of life except

## **II). Evidence for detailed or specific thoughts**

The frame of reference, which is defined by the fundamental thought or Aqeedah, serves as the lens through which the human being perceives all other issues. Moreover, this frame will shape the individual's mentality and thinking towards a specific direction. Consequently, each individual would look to issues and problems from a distinct angle. One cannot perceive detailed issues and thoughts in isolation because the detailed thoughts are built upon fundamental thoughts and do not exist in a vacuum. Given an issue such as inheritance, each individual will discuss this issue based upon his or her fundamental outlook upon life, which will result in various solutions to address the issue. Communists will not recognize inheritance because personal ownership does not exist according to their frame of reference. And even if the government allows some ownership, they would not permit the transfer of this ownership to future generations through inheritance. On the other hand, the Capitalists would recognize inheritance and give the owner full freedom to define his will and designate or deny his wealth to whomever he chooses without restriction. Thus, a person can apportion his inheritance to his wife and children, to some or none of his children, to his pets, or to an organization. While a Muslim would not use his own rational judgment to issue a decision because the problem of inheritance is a legal issue and not an intellectual one. Thus, the Muslim would refer to the Hukm Sharii which indicates, as a basic thought, that wealth belongs to Allah and that the individual's ownership is defined as Allah's permission given to such an individual to own a specific item and utilize it for his own benefit. Once the individual dies, this permission ceases to exist, and his wealth must be distributed in fixed percentages to specific categories of individuals defined by the Hukm Sharii. The owner of wealth cannot change this system of inheritance, nor can he distribute his inheritance during his lifetime.

The differences mentioned result from the distinct frames of reference which each human being refers an issue to, and each frame is defined by a unique fundamental thought. None of these individuals would discuss the issue of inheritance, or any other issue, in isolation and disconnected from his frame of reference. As a result, the differences that exist in the world today in terms of how humanity perceives its issues and problems stem from the differences that exist in the fundamental thought which human beings adopt.

The distinct views that may arise in the way human beings perceive their issues is evident in the way that each fundamental thought defines the society and consequently prescribes the formula for changing the society. The Communists would look to any change in the society as an inevitable outcome of evolution resulting from the inherent class struggle in the society. According to the Communist thought, the human being has no control over this process, and the extent of the individual's contribution is limited to accelerating this process by making the class conflicts more obvious in order to mobilize the lower classes to revolt against the elite class. The Capitalists would look to change in the society as the result of promoting new ideas through the media and educational system until the society would accommodate such ideas. At the same time, the system would leave the individual to decide where he stands regarding such ideas, as what occurred with the issue of homosexuality. In Islam, the process of change occurs first by examining the idea through study, research, and thought, in order to determine its merits. If the idea is incorrect, then it

would be abandoned. However, if the idea is proven correct, then the Islamic State and the different parties existing within the Ummah would work to build the thinking of the masses according to the new thought through education and interaction. This process would result in building the concepts that individuals carry in addition to changing the public norms, which would in turn strengthen the concepts that the individuals possess and influence their behavior.

## B). The Textual Daleel

The second major category of daleels is the textual daleel which is derived exclusively from the wahi. As with the intellectual evidence, the textual daleel is also subdivided into two types:

### **I). Daleels related to the Aqeedah**

The Aqeedah is defined as the fundamental thought which provides a comprehensive explanation of the universe, man, and life, in addition to defining what lay before and after these realities and establishing the relationship between all of these aspects. While the core of the Aqeedah (which addresses the existence of Allah, the Qur'an as Allah's Speech, and Muhammad as a prophet) is established through intellectual daleels, all other issues related to the Aqeedah are based solely upon the textual daleel that emanates from the wahi. Because the textual evidence (the Qur'an), as well as its source (Allah), are proven intellectually, then the Muslim must believe in whatever the text mentions. Rejecting the text amounts to accusing Allah (swt) of giving false information, which directly contradicts the intellectually conclusive basis for the Aqeedah.

The daleel used in the Aqeedah is called Burhaan and carries a distinct significance. Burhaan is defined as the conclusive evidence which proves the existence of something in a conclusive manner. In this regard, Allah (swt) says:

*"Say, 'Bring your Burhaan if you are telling the truth.'" [TMQ 27:64]*

Any daleel used to prove any issue related to the Aqeedah must be conclusive in both its authenticity as well as its meaning because the Aqeedah cannot be established upon doubt or speculation. Only the Qur'an and the Hadith Mutawaatir carry this quality. Although the Khabr Ahad can be categorized as sound, its authenticity and correctness does not reach the level to render it a sufficient source of daleels for issues related to the Aqeedah. The evidence that the Aqeedah must be conclusive relates to the nature of the Aqeedah itself. The Aqeedah necessitates conclusiveness because the fundamental thought, which defines the outlook towards life and serves as the basis upon which all other thoughts and concepts are built, must be established upon conclusive evidences. If the fundamental thought is subject to doubt and uncertainty, then the very life of the human being will be mired with doubt and uncertainty in every aspect. Furthermore, the Qur'an condemned the Kuffar for establishing their Aqaid based on speculation or doubt:

*"They follow nothing but conjectures, and they do nothing but lie." [TMQ 6:116]*

*"And they have no knowledge of it, they only speculate." [TMQ 45:24]*

*"They follow only a guess, and verily, guessing is no substitute for the truth." [TMQ 53:28]*

In these and other ayahs, Allah (swt) attacked the Kuffar for establishing their fundamental thoughts through doubt, imitation, and emotions. It cannot be argued that this condemnation is specific to the Kuffar because the ayahs did not attack the Kuffar per se but also attacked the very concept of building the Aqeedah upon doubt. Therefore, the daleel for the Aqeedah must be conclusive to the extent that no other understanding can be derived from the evidences used. Only through this process can the Muslims guarantee the purity of their Aqeedah and safeguard themselves from delving into absurd discussions based on speculation. The intellectual fragmentation that occurred among Muslims in some issues related to the Aqeedah was due to several reasons, one of which was accepting inconclusive evidence as a basis for building the Aqeedah.

## **II). The Daleel for the Hukm Sharii**

In Usul ul-Fiqh, the daleel used for a Hukm Sharii is called "Amaarah," which is defined as: An indication to show that a particular issue is most likely included in this item. The difference between the Burhaan and the Amarah is more clearly illustrated in the following example. When Allah (swt) says,

*"We sent to Madian their brother Shuaib," [TMQ 11:84]*

the ayah proves the fact that Shuaib was sent to his people. Furthermore, the ayah also proves that Shuaib was a prophet. The fact that Shuaib was a prophet is not "derived" from the ayah; rather, the ayah mentions this fact conclusively without any room for doubt or error.

However, when Allah (swt) says regarding the wudu,

*"And if you lamastum women," [TMQ 5:6]*

Imam Shafi used this ayah to show that touching a woman breaks the wudu. Shafi derived this hukm from the ayah based on his understanding and the extent of his knowledge. And according to Shafi, this understanding is correct with the possibility of being incorrect. Abu Hanifa uses the same ayah to indicate that lamastum refers to sexual intercourse. According to Abu Hanifa's understanding and the extent of his knowledge, the ayah indicates this hukm, and to Abu Hanifa, this understanding is correct with the possibility that it is wrong. The ayah did not establish the existence of something in a conclusive manner. Instead, each mujtahid would use the ayah to illustrate that the hukm which he understands related to the issue at hand is DERIVED from the ayah. As a result, each mujtahid considers his opinion as correct with the possibility of being wrong and considers the opinions of the other scholars related to the same issue as wrong with the possibility of being correct.

Because the Hukm Sharii differs from the Aqeedah, the Hukm Sharii does not necessarily require a conclusive evidence. The mujtahid searches for the daleel in order to understand what most likely seems correct regarding a particular issue. Therefore, the daleel can either be conclusive or non-conclusive. However, there are many rules which have a conclusive daleel, such as the number of prayers a day, the number of rakas in each prayer, the obligation of fasting during Ramadan, the permissibility of trading and prohibition of riba, theft and zina, the obligation of being ruled by Islam, and other issues. These issues lend no room for ijihad because their corresponding evidences are conclusive.

The Qur'an, Hadith Mutawaatir, and Hadith Ahad can all be used as a source of daleels for the Hukm Sharii. The evidence which allows Muslims to rely on non-conclusive daleels as a source of akham shariyah is the fact that the Qur'an itself addressed the Muslims with both ayahs having conclusive meanings as well as those with non-conclusive meanings. Allah (swt) would not mention akham shariyah in non-conclusive ayahs if they could not be used as a source of daleels for rulings. Furthermore, the Prophet (saaw) accepted the Muslims changing the direction of the Qibla from Al-Quds to Mecca on the account of one individual. While the details of this issue are mentioned in books of Usul ul-Fiqh and are beyond the scope of this paper, the general outlook towards the daleel is essential to building the Islamic way of thinking in the correct manner.

In summary, Muslims should not adopt any thought, opinion, or rule without an evidence. The default scenario is that every Muslim must be a mujtahid. But because such a level is beyond the capacity of many individuals to achieve, the taqleed is permissible in issues related to Ahkam Shariyah. However, the permissibility of taqleed should not serve as a passport for ignorance. Muslims must search and study in order to elevate their knowledge, even though they may not possess the ability to perform ijihad. While attaining the ability to perform ijihad may not be achievable to many individuals, having the ability to research the opinions of mujtahids, understanding how they arrived at their opinions, and comprehending the soundness of the daleels they used, are certainly within the reach of many Muslims.

### 3) Recognizing the Domain of the Wahi

Muslims must believe in the wahi that Allah (swt) sent to Muhammad (saaw). The immediate question that arises is: What is the wahi and what is its domain? The wahi is defined as the address of Allah (swt) to the people, which includes the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The Qur'an is wahi because it is the Speech of Allah in both its words and meaning, while the Sunnah is wahi because the Qur'an conclusively established that whatever Muhammad (saaw) delivered is wahi. Allah (swt) mentions this fact in several ayahs in the Qur'an, such as the following ayah:

*"He does not speak out of his whims, but rather it is wahi." [TMQ 53:4]*

The letter "maa" in the ayah means "whatsoever," which is a letter in Arabic used to denote generalization. Thus, the ayah indicates that everything that Muhammad (saaw) spoke related to the Deen is wahi. In addition, Allah (swt) says:

*"Say (Muhammad), 'I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your Ilah is One Ilah'" [TMQ 18:110]*

*"Say (Muhammad), 'I warn you only by the wahi'" [TMQ 21:45]*

*"And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatever he forbids you from, abstain (from it)." [TMQ 59:7]*

The wahi, which includes the Qur'an and Sunnah, can be divided into two main categories. The first type addresses the Aqeedah and provides information related to the Ghaib and about past or future events, such as the description of Paradise, information describing the angels and jinn, and information about some previous prophets. Muslims must believe in this information as conclusive. The other category of wahi contains orders for carrying out specific actions, which are further

subdivided into the five known categories of the Hukm Sharii. This type of wahi also includes rules related to objects because prohibiting specific objects implicitly means to prohibit actions connected to those objects. For example, the prohibition of wine includes prohibiting its consumption, production, and trade. The position of the Muslim regarding the rules is to comply with every rule in its full capacity.

Therefore, the wahi covers the Aqeedah and related issues such as information about past or future events, in addition to dealing with actions which govern the behavior and conduct of human beings. The wahi does not include all other aspects of the life affairs, such as thoughts related to geography, astronomy, physics, history, medicine, and chemistry. Similarly, the wahi does discuss thoughts which describe the physical or material parameters of a specific reality, aside from mentioning its relationship to the Creator. Such issues can be approached either intellectually or scientifically depending upon the nature of each issue.

Allah (swt) directed the Muslims to the fact that such issues lay within the scope of the intellect but not within the domain of the wahi. This fact is explicated in several ayahs:

*"They ask you (Muhammad) about the new moons. Say, 'They are signs to mark fixed periods of time for mankind and for pilgrimage.'" [TMQ 2:189]*

*"Say, 'Behold all that is in the heavens and the earth,' but neither Ayat (proof, evidence, lessons, etc.) nor warners benefit those who refuse to believe." [TMQ 10:101]*

*"And We have appointed the night and the day as two signs (of Ours). Then, We have extinguished the sign of the night while We have made the sign of day bright, that you may seek bounty from your Lord, and that you may know the number of years and the reckoning." [TMQ 17:12]*

*"Say, 'Travel in the land and see how (Allah) originated creation'" [TMQ 29:20]*

*"Allah. It is He Who has subjected to you the sea, so that ships may sail through it by His Command, and that you may seek of His Bounty, and that you may be thankful; and (He) has subjected to you all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth." [TMQ 45:12-13]*

*"He it is Who has made the earth subservient to you, so walk in the path thereof and eat of His Provision" [TMQ 67:15]*

These and other ayahs illustrate that Allah (swt) created everything in the universe and in the earth for the disposal of the human being, and Allah (swt) assigned the human being the duty of researching, exploring, and utilizing these objects for his benefit. Although the Qur'an did mention some natural phenomena, such as the rain, the movement of celestial bodies, and the developmental stages of the fetus, these phenomena were mentioned to illustrate the signs of Allah as an indication to His Greatness. The Qur'an specifically discussed specific phenomena for the human being to appreciate Allah's Might and to provoke the human being to think about his surroundings and conclude that Allah (swt) exists. Furthermore, these phenomena were mentioned to prompt the human being to realize that the entire system of life must be set by the same Creator who set all the other systems in place. The Qur'an was not meant to be a book of physics or chemistry, or an encyclopedia of human anatomy. The scope of such fields of knowledge is science, and Islam gave

the human mind the authority to search and discover whatever Allah (swt) Created in the universe for the disposal of the human being. The Qur'an is a book of guidance, as Allah (swt) says:

*"This is the Book (Qur'an), in which there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqun."* [TMQ 2:2]

As a book of guidance, the Qur'an mentions regulations and rules to organize the human life as well as mentioning the consequences of abiding by these laws from the perspective of reward and punishment. Attempting to refer to the Qur'an as a scientific or technological manual defeats its purpose and diverts the attention of the people from the real scope of the Qur'an. What exists nowadays are Muslims who would refer to the Qur'an in order to prove a scientific theory or study while simultaneously referring to their own interests rather than the Qur'an as a reference for conducting their life affairs. If Allah (swt) revealed the Qur'an to be a book of science and technology, then the Sahabah should be the most scientifically and technologically advanced people ever to inhabit the earth. After all, the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet (saaw) while the Sahabah were living with him, and they adopted the tafseer directly from the Prophet (saaw). Their level of understanding in Islam surpassed all other generations of Muslims, to the extent that their ijma' in a Sharii issue is considered a source of legislation agreed upon by all the scholars. However, it is clearly evident to all human beings that the generation of the Sahabah were far less advanced in their technological and scientific knowledge than the generations living today. Furthermore, it was not reported or documented that the Sahabah ever conducted scientific research based on the Qur'an because they realized that the scope of the wahi did not include science and technology.

As previously mentioned, the wahi covers the Aqeedah and the intellectual aspect of the human being while simultaneously addressing the actions that man carries. Furthermore, the Qur'an addressed the rules governing the actions in a unique manner to ensure that these rules would always remain applicable despite changes in science and technology. The Qur'an did not address the actions from the perspective of being actions done by specific individuals at a specific time and place. Rather, the Qur'an addressed a particular action from the perspective of whether or not the action itself is allowed. Islam prohibits theft, whether the theft occurred in the 6th century or in the 21st century. Similarly, Islam permits trade, whether this trade occurs in the past, present, or future. The Ahkam Shariyah encompassed all of man's actions. No action exists without a corresponding Hukm Sharii, and to this extent Allah (swt) says:

*"And We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur'an) as an exposition of everything."* [TMQ 16:89]

*"This day, I have perfected your Deen for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your Deen."* [TMQ 5:3]

However, Islam did not burden the human being, which is why the sphere of permissible things is the largest. For example, the Sharii rule states that objects are permissible unless a specific text exists to prove otherwise. Thus, everything is allowed, and its utilization is permissible, with the exception of a few items such as Khamr and the flesh of the deceased animal. Furthermore, this concept permits the utilization of all types of minerals, plants, and animals, unless a text exists prohibiting the consumption of a specific item. Even in the case of prohibiting the consumption of a specific animal, the wahi permits the utilization of the same animals for other purposes, such as

training a dog to guard property or to hunt. Also included in this sphere are the natural actions of the human being, such as looking, seeing, smelling, and walking. Islam permitted all such actions unless it is connected to something haram, such as walking to a bar or looking at the aura of a man or woman.

In addition, Islam permitted Muslims to exploit anything in the universe for industry, medicine, agriculture, communication, and other aspects of civilization. It was reported in a hadith that some people came to the Prophet (saaw) about pollinating date trees. The Prophet (saaw) suggested to them that they should abandon the manual method since the wind may pollinate them. During the same season, the trees did not bear fruit. When the same people came to the Prophet (saaw) and explained this incident to him, he said, "You know better when it comes to your life affairs."

Therefore, all aspects of agriculture, industry, medicine, technology, communication, and mining, are within the sphere of the permissible and can be taken from any nation. When the Hukm Sharii addresses the actions, it does not address the physical means involved in performing the action because the means are objects which carry the original rule of permissibility. When Islam permitted traveling and made it a valid excuse to shorten the prayer, it did not restrict the travel to a specific mode. Therefore, the same rules apply to traveling by camel, plane, or automobile. The speed of the mode of transportation, and hence the length of time it takes for different modes to cover the required distance for shortening the prayers, is not an issue. When Islam ordered the Muslim Ummah to prepare, the issue is whether the Muslims have prepared themselves to the level where they can equal or surpass the other nations in might and power, regardless of whether this entails preparing camels and horses or building fighter planes and tanks. Islam does not place restrictions on the material means and tools connected to any action, which is why the Prophet (saaw) used a new weapon to fight one of the tribes. Furthermore, the Prophet (saaw) sent Sahabah to learn sword manufacturing in Yemen and incorporated a technique used by the Persians to defend Medina.

Due to the application of Islam, Muslims advanced at an extraordinarily rapid rate. The bedouins who used to fight using the sword and arrow, and who moved by camels and horses, are the same bedouins who faced the Roman navy thirteen years after the death of the Prophet (saaw). The newly emerging Muslim Ummah was able to defeat the Roman navy in the Battle of That-ul-Sawari during the days of 'Uthman, and the Mediterranean became under the control of the Muslims since then. Therefore, claiming that Islam is a backward deen which asks people to revert to the Middle Ages is an incorrect and absurd claim. The Islamic rules are not connected to the ways and means that human being employ in carrying out their actions but rather to the actions themselves. Humanity always develops in their ways and means, but the nature of the actions remain the same. Theft remains theft, regardless of the time or place it occurred. Zina refers to the action of having sexual relations outside of marriage, whether this illegal relationship occurred in a cave, in a city, or on the moon. Therefore, the system which addressed man's actions in the past is capable of addressing the same actions in the present and in the future. And the discovery of new ways and means has no bearing on the applicability of the system because ways, means, tools, and scientific advancement are not addressed by the system. Through this unique method of addressing the actions, Islam ensures that its rules and systems governing the actions of human beings remain applicable.

Once the scope of the wahi is realized and understood, Muslims can recognize the fine line that separates issues belonging to the wahi from issues that are reserved for the human mind. Muslims in

the past recognized this boundary and maintained it. Only when this fine distinction was blurred did Muslims begin to recede.

#### 4) Understanding the Human Mind and Its Limits

It was mentioned previously that thinking is a process of transmitting the comprehensible reality to the human brain through the senses and then explaining the reality using the previous information related to it. Developing a clearer understanding of the human mind and its inherent limitations requires a scrutiny of the various components which comprise the mind:

##### **I). The Reality**

The reality is defined as anything within the scope and capacity of the human senses to detect. Furthermore, the reality is the object which the human being thinks about before issuing a judgment or conclusion regarding it. The reality could be tangible, such as an atom, planet, or chemical, or it could be an idea or concept expressed not in terms of physical criteria but as words, formulas, and equations. As previously mentioned, the reality can be sensed by the human being either directly or indirectly. In either case, a reality must exist which the human being can think about, and this reality must be accessible to one or more of the senses. Anything beyond the scope of the senses cannot be the subject of the thinking process. Therefore, Muslims should not fruitlessly expend time and energy in any attempt to think about the Ghaib. Muslims believe in the Ghaib only through a conclusive evidence which proves its existence, but any attempt to venture beyond the daleel is futile since the subject matter of the daleel is a reality that lay beyond the senses. For example, Muslims believe in the angels without being able to comprehend their essence. But trying to decipher their essence would amount to nothing more than formulating delusions, assumptions, and speculation.

While the reality is essential to the thinking process, sensing the reality may not suffice to initiate the thinking process. A person must also be certain that he studied the reality extensively, which may require sensing the reality several times from different angles. For example, one may see a transparent fluid in a jar and conclude based on a fleeting glance that the fluid is water, but the fluid may be alcohol and only by smelling the odor would a person be able to issue an accurate judgment.

##### **II). The Senses**

The senses include the five known senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. The senses also include the feeling which stems from the organic needs and instinctive sensations, such as hunger and thirst, as well as the emotional sensations such as anxiety, compassion, and the sexual feelings. The level of sensation required in order to fully develop an accurate image of the reality depends upon the reality under scrutiny. Sometimes a single sensation may suffice to develop a complete image; a single exposure to fire is enough to conclude that fire burns. However, there are realities which require the input of several senses in order to fully grasp, such as deciphering a complex puzzle or comprehending the dynamics of a machine.

In addition, the sensation itself, however many senses are involved, is insufficient to serve as a basis for one's actions and agendas. Such an approach would amount to no more than a reactionary mode of action. For example, the sight of people being oppressed should not illicit one to respond based solely on his senses by donating food or money to the oppressed individuals. The individual must

scrutinize the other realities associated with the situation, which may entail the usage of many senses in addition to extending beyond the senses by thinking deeply about the situation before settling on a specific course of action.

### **III). The Human Brain**

The human brain is the place where the senses transmit information pertaining to the reality, where information related to the reality is stored, and where the linking of sensation to previous information takes place. In addition to these functions, the brain performs other functions, such as sending and receiving signals to and from the nervous system. Although the brain's function is to receive, process, and store the information, one cannot conclude that the brain is the "thinking organ" because thinking is a process which involves several organs besides the brain, particularly the sensory organs such as the eyes, ears, and mouth.

The brain receives signals and information, processes this information and then responds accordingly. However, the human being is confronted with many issues which require different types of responses. Since the brain relays signals to the other organs of the body, acting according to the brain alone would be merely instinctive and reactionary. In this regard, the brain of human beings and animals is the same. While this process should not serve as the basis for human behavior, there are instances when such a process is sufficient or even necessary, such as the "fight or flight" response that enables one to avoid an immediate or oncoming danger. But there are many instances and situations in which this process cannot suffice to produce the correct response. For example, if a Muslim man sees a woman exposing her beauty, the immediate signal from the brain would be an instinctive one inclining the man to approach her. However, if the man refers to his concepts, he would not approach her because the concepts he carries would lead him to conclude that such an action is Haram and would result in consequences in this life and in the Hereafter.

Therefore, the types of responses that the human being can illicit are of two types: The instinctive response, which is based solely upon the brain; and the intellectual response, which is based on the process of referring to certain concepts, with the brain being only part of this process. The intellectual response is further divided into two types - those that require an immediate response (what is sometimes known as "spontaneous thinking"), and those that require extensive research and study before issuing a response. Intellectual responses that require immediacy are needed for issues that cannot rely on an instinctive response alone but at the same time must be immediate. An example which demonstrates this type of response is when Ali (raa), while fighting the jihad, was about to kill a Kafir, and just as the Kafir spit on his face, Ali laid down his sword. Later, when the Kafir asked Ali why he did not strike, Ali responded, "Initially I was going to kill you for the sake of Allah, but after you spit at my face, I was going to kill you for personal reasons." However, there are issues which require a long process of thinking and research before issuing the appropriate response. Issues such as political analysis or discussing the revival of the Muslim Ummah require extensive research and thought that may necessitate extended periods of time before developing the appropriate response.

The process of referring to concepts before carrying out an action is essential, and every Muslim must develop this ability as being habitual. Furthermore, the Muslims must be aware of the different types of issues and the different responses that are required for each. To expect the Muslims in a specific locality who are being attacked by the Kuffar to engage in extensive thinking and research before deciding to defend themselves would constitute silliness. At the same time, resorting to

instinctive reactions in response to political issues and events that necessitate extensive thinking and research can produce devastating results, especially if such a trend become widespread among the Ummah.

#### **IV). The Previous Information**

All of the three previously mentioned elements can produce sensation but are not sufficient to initiate the thinking process. The previous information is essential for this process to materialize. Since the previous information is used to understand the reality, a person must be sure about the correctness and accuracy of the information he has. In addition, he must also acquire new knowledge in order to add to the previous information as well as to purify the existing information. This necessitates from the Muslim to always update himself by keeping with the events and continuously reading and searching for new knowledge. In fact, Muslims should be an encyclopedia a dynamic encyclopedia and not a static one that spits out information in a vacuum. In order to achieve this, the Muslim must begin with the basics of any discipline, upon which he can build other details and branches. This systematic method helps in organizing and processing the information in the mind. The reservoir of knowledge must be clear in his mind so that each discipline along with its branches can be categorized and connected to one another in the correct manner. Lumping information from various disciplines which have no relation to one another will result in a distorted outlook of the reality. For example, one must realize that history does not belong to the discipline of Fiqh while the Arabic language does. Also, one must realize that the biographical knowledge of reporters is part of Ilm ul Hadith but is not part of history. Acquiring information in this organized way will help Muslims absorb more information in an organized manner.

Once the four elements exist, the correct linkage between the information and the reality is needed. This linkage means to retrieve the relevant information that will help in understanding the reality. The more relevant information man acquires, the more correct and accurate his judgement will be. For example, if someone reads that the US president visits China, understanding the true nature of this visit requires having previous information about many aspects, such as the authority of the US president, the reality of the US government being a representative of the major corporations, US policy in the world in general and in China and SE Asia in particular, and the strategies to achieve this whether through containment or other strategies. In addition, developing an accurate assessment necessitates one to understand the time of the visit, the political situation at that moment, any official statements issued before, during, or after the visit, the reactions of some nations such as Russia and Europe, and the relationship of all of these events and facts with China, its history, and its policy. This comprehensive outlook will facilitate an accurate understanding of the nature of the visit. One should not think that this is impossible. All that is needed is following up on the events and analyzing the news.

In addition to political issues, this comprehensive and methodical approach is also needed to formulate an accurate opinion on issues of an intellectual or legal nature. For instance, to address the issue of whether the Shura in Islam is equivalent to Democracy in the West, one must understand the nature of both the Democratic system and the Islamic system, the ideological basis of each system, and the distinct organs and apparatus within each system. Addressing this issue also requires an understanding of the definition of Shura, when Shura is used, the distinction between Shura and Mashura, and the functions and setup of Majlis as-Shura as an institution of the Islamic system. The same also applies for legal issues, such as the issue of whether or not insurance is

haram. It is known that the mujtahid must exert his effort in understanding the reality and the text related to the reality in order to derive a rule. However, this process requires previous information about Usul ul-Fiqh, Arabic language, and the tafseer of the relevant ayahs and hadiths. Furthermore, he must have an understanding of the nature of the issue at hand. To be more able to practice ijihad, the mujtahid must also study the previous mujtahids and their opinions. The more the mujtahid reads and studies the opinions of others (what is called Comparative Fiqh), the more likely he will derive the correct answer.

These examples illustrate that no one should be content with his level of information. Once we understand the reality and scope of the human mind, we can avoid wasting time and energy discussing issues beyond its scope. And once we get involved in a study that is within the scope of the mind, then we would not settle for anything less than a comprehensive and enlightened study, even if this requires a continuous search for more information.

### Understanding Man's Nature and its Characteristics

Allah created the entire universe including the earth. Furthermore, Allah created Adam and sent him down to the earth to utilize its resources. In this regard, Allah says in the Qur'an:

*"He it is Who created for you all that is on earth." [TMQ 2:29]*

Allah (swt) equipped the human being and provided him with certain attributes enabling him to sustain himself in this universe. Allah (swt) says:

*"Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High, Who has created (everything) and then proportioned it." [TMQ 87:1-2]*

Therefore, the human nature consists of specific physical, mental, and emotional capabilities that enable him to sustain his livelihood in the universe which Allah (swt) created. One unique characteristic that is provided exclusively to the human being is a mind with the ability to think as previously mentioned. Allah (swt) directed the human being to think about the reality and about his nature, in addition to addressing the human being with Islam for the purpose of implementing Islam. Therefore, comprehending the nature of the human being is essential to directing our course towards obeying Allah and enabling us to control our whims and desires rather than being controlled by them.

Another characteristic that Allah created in the human being is a vital power that pushes the person to satisfy it. This vital energy consists of the instincts and organic needs. The satisfaction of the organic needs is critical for the individual's survival because the person will perish if these needs are not satisfied. In addition, the need to satisfy the organic needs originates internally and is independent of any external factor to stimulate this need. For example, the need to consume, which manifests itself through hunger and thirst, does not depend upon the presence of food for its arousal. Also, these organic needs cannot be satisfied at the expense of other organic needs. A person cannot satisfy his need to consume by excreting waste or sleeping or through any action except by consuming food.

In addition to the organic needs, Allah (swt) created specific instincts. Unlike the organic needs, the satisfaction of these instincts is not necessary for the individual's survival, although failure to satisfy

these instincts will lead to anxiety and uneasiness. While the satisfaction of these instincts is not vital to the survival of an individual, some of these instincts are necessary for the survival of humanity as a whole.

Without the instinct of procreation and its manifestations, humanity would cease to exist, whereas an individual who did not marry would not necessarily die as a result. Also, the incentive for these instincts stems from the external environment. The sight of the universe with all of its order and majesty would instigate the instinct of worship within an individual. And the sight of a woman would arouse within a man the instinct of procreation with all of its various manifestations.

Another unique distinction between the instincts and the organic needs is that each instinct manifests itself in various ways. The instinct of procreation manifests itself in certain tendencies such as fatherhood, motherhood, kindness to siblings, and sexual desire. The instinct of worship manifests itself in acts of devotion or sanctification of something thought to have more power. And the survival instinct manifests itself in fear, hope, the inclination to own things, the drive to dominate, and the hunger for knowledge.

Because each instinct has several manifestations, a human being can choose to satisfy them by satisfying others. The sexual inclinations can be partially alleviated by fasting, while the desire to dominate can be channeled towards working for the dominance of the ideology.

Like the attributes that Allah (swt) created in objects, the attributes that Allah (swt) created in the human being cannot be suspended or altered. Causing things to burn, an attribute of fire, or the attribute of cutting things that is associated with the knife, are permanent features of these objects that cannot be separated from the objects themselves. All of these attributes were created by Allah and are intrinsic and perpetual. Only in the case of miracles would the attributes temporarily cease to function. Similarly, the instincts and organic needs, along with their manifestations, are qualities that Allah created in the human being and cannot be removed from him. Allah (swt) says in this regard:

*"Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High, Who has created (everything) and then proportioned it." [TMQ 87: 1-2]*

Because these instincts and organic needs are attributes, they cannot be described as good or evil. One cannot say that the sexual desire, for example, is inherently evil, whereas the method of satisfying these instincts and needs can be deemed as either good or evil. The sexual inclination can be satisfied through marriage, which is good, or through zina, which is evil. The religious instinct can be satisfied by worshipping Allah exclusively, which is good, or through sanctifying the graves of saints, which is evil. And the survival instinct can be correctly satisfied by owning property in the correct way or by fearing Allah alone, or it can be incorrectly satisfied through theft or by fearing something other than Allah.

Islam organized the satisfaction of these instincts and needs without suppressing any of them. This satisfaction is organized in a very well-balanced way which sustains the life of the individual and maintains the society at a specific level. Allah (swt) will hold the human being accountable for the methods he chooses in satisfying these instincts and needs, and not in the satisfaction itself.

In addition to the instincts and organic needs, Allah (swt) created the freewill in the human being, which gives him the ability to choose his way of life and to select the method of satisfying these instincts and organic needs. In this regard, Allah (swt) says:

*"Have We not made for him a pair of eyes, and a tongue and pair of lips, and shown him the two ways (good and evil)?" [TMQ 90:8-10]*

*"And by the Nafs, and Him Who perfected him in proportion; then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him." [TMQ 91:7-8]*

Those who choose the correct method and abide by the commandments of Allah in satisfying their instincts and needs will be rewarded, and anyone who chooses the wrong method will be punished. This freewill does not encompass all of man's life but is limited to the choices he makes in carrying out his actions. In all other aspects, the human being is controlled by what Allah (swt) predetermined. For example, no one can decide or determine the time and place of his birth, his family, or his ethnicity. And no one can control either the actions which were imposed upon him or the consequences of certain actions done by him. Similarly, man lives in this universe and is subjected to the natural laws which Allah (swt) created, such as the law of gravity and the laws governing electricity. Allah (swt) would not hold the human being accountable for the actions that are beyond his control. In this regard, Allah (swt) says:

*"Allah does not burden a person beyond his scope." [TMQ 2:286]*

Furthermore, the Prophet (saaw) says, "Allah does not look to your shapes or your colors, but rather to your hearts and your deeds." The Muslim must be content with what Allah predetermined. A Muslim must believe that he would never miss anything that happened to him already, although he still must evaluate his actions to examine his shortcomings but not to trigger a cycle of self-blame. Every Muslim must believe that Allah tests the people by actions which may result in perceived positive or negative outcomes for the people while only Allah knows what is good and bad. Allah says:

*"and it may be that you dislike something which is good for you and that you like something which is bad for you. Allah knows, but you do not know." [TMQ 2:216]*

Regarding this issue, the Prophet (saaw) says, "Do not say, 'If I did this, then that would happen,' but say, 'Allah predetermined, and whatever is predetermined happened.'" Such an understanding will make the human being content with his situation, regardless of his circumstances. Furthermore, a person with this understanding will not despair over anything that happens to him beyond his control; at the same time, he would analyze what happened in order to contemplate his pitfalls without immersing himself in accusations. However, if not understood correctly, the human being would invite upon himself a vicious cycle of reproaching himself for decisions beyond his control, and he would divert his energy in trying to make choices in areas where the person's choice has no impact on the outcome. If a person's rizq at times seems insufficient to fulfill his expectations or needs, someone who is misled to believe that the rizq results from his efforts would mistakenly attribute the rizq he possesses to a failure or deficiency on his part. This distorted thinking would push the person towards making decisions on the false presumption that he can change his rizq, which may lead the individual to resort to haram or even outright criminal means. However, the person who acknowledges that Allah (swt) has predetermined his rizq will exert his effort to earn

the rizq without resorting to haram means because he realizes that he will receive whatever rizq Allah (swt) has fixed for him regardless of what avenue he chooses.

Furthermore, he will feel content at whatever consequences result from his efforts, even if they yield no results or even a negative outcome. Understanding man's reality enables us to proceed through life in the correct and balanced way. No one would be driven by his whims and desires, nor would he behave in a basal level characteristic of the animals. Possessing an accurate awareness of man's reality will provide the human being with the realization that everyone must choose and determine his or her behavior and that everyone can alter or modify his behavior as well. No human being is born inherently good or evil<sup>9</sup> because they have the choice to abide or not to abide. Thus, no specific behavioral mode is imposed upon the individual. The behavior of individuals can change by changing their concepts, and the behavior of societies can also change by introducing the correct concepts and by generating the correct public norms. In this context, understanding this reality illustrates that abiding by the rules of Allah is well within the capacity of every individual.

<sup>9</sup> The Christian doctrine propagated in Europe during the Middle Ages espoused the notion that the human being is born inherently evil, and this notion had its roots in the doctrine of "original sin." As a reaction to this outlook, the Capitalists took the other extreme and claimed that the human being is naturally good, and the evil that exists in human societies is a result of suppressing his natural state of freewill. Based upon this concept, the Capitalists called for societies to guarantee the "four freedoms" as a prerequisite for progress: Freedom of expression, freedom of belief, freedom of ownership, and personal freedom. According to the Capitalists, only when these freedoms are secured will the natural goodness of the human being be realized, and this view of man was the basis of the Human Rights espoused by the Capitalist ideology.

Some Muslims were influenced by this call due to the prevalence of the Western Culture and the misunderstanding of the Islamic culture, and they began to call for Human Rights. What they did not realize is that each of these four freedoms contradict Islam. For instance, there is no freedom of belief because the Muslim cannot revert from Islam. Furthermore, personal freedom has no place in Islam because the Muslim cannot commit zina. And freedom of expression and ownership contradict Islam because the Muslim cannot own through riba or express ideas such as Nationalism or Communism. Furthermore, the presence of these freedoms, while they are claimed by the Capitalists to result in goodness, actually create more evil than anyone could have expected.

In addition, some Muslims adopted the stance that human beings are born naturally good. However, the Islamic point of view states that human beings are born in a state of Fitra, and "Fitra" refers to the natural state of the human being, which consists of his instincts, organic needs, and emotional complex. This natural state has the potential to be directed in the correct way or in the wrong way, and the direction which the human being chooses is done by his mind. Thus, Fitra does not mean "good" as many Muslims may misunderstand. The Fitra refers to the natural potential that the human being has, and this potential can be directed towards good or evil.

Allah (swt) says:

*"Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you." [TMQ 2:185]*

*"Allah does not burden a person beyond his scope. He gets rewarded for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned." [TMQ 2:286]*

If the human being is unable to abide by the rules due to a specific reason such as disease or compulsion, then he would be addressed by a different set of rules. For example, fasting is obligatory, but someone who is sick is permitted not to fast. Also, correctly understanding man's nature within the context of Al Qada Wal-Qadr would keep Muslims away from the passive fatalistic thinking that submits to the status quo and succumbs to whims and desires. The Muslim would submit only to the actions that are beyond his control such as death. And even in death, the Muslim would not attribute the circumstances leading to the death to the Qada of Allah because sometimes a person's death would be the result of a crime that must be investigated. For example, when the tunnel collapsed and killed thousands of Muslims in one of the Hajj seasons, the Saudi Regime closed the issue by claiming that such an event was Qada just to keep themselves away from accountability. The Qada and Qadr must be adopted in a dynamic and active context, which causes the Muslims to realize that they can and must change their situation. The state of the Muslims is not something imposed upon them. Allah (swt) says:

*"Allah does not change the condition of any people unless they change what is within themselves."*  
**[TMQ 13:11]**

Such an understanding of man's reality liberates his mind from illusions and myths. It provides man with the opportunity to proceed in this life in a dynamic way while simultaneously possessing the full confidence in Allah.

The question arises: Is man's behavior linked to his genetics or to his biological composition? To answer this, we must realize that the human being proceeds in this life to satisfy his instincts and organic needs. The human being simultaneously possesses a mental capacity which distinguishes him from the animal. The animal would behave solely upon biological criteria without linking its behavior to any concepts for the simple reason that animals have no concepts and no ability to think and formulate concepts. While the instincts and needs require satisfaction, the method of satisfying these instincts and needs do not originate from them. No organic need or instinct mandates satisfaction in a specific way; they only mandate satisfaction. For example, the need to eat manifests itself in hunger, which pushes the human being to eat. There is no such thing as hunger which pushes a person to eat specific food items. Hunger per se does not impose upon the individual a specific choice to consume vegetables or animals slaughtered in a specific way or any type of animal. The concepts which a human being carries will determine for each individual what to eat. The same applies to thirst. No thirst necessitates drinking juice or wine. However, the concepts which man carries will push an individual to quench his thirst either by drinking wine, water or some other liquid.

Thus, no one can link the method which the human being chooses to satisfy his needs to any genetic or biological component, and the instincts function in the same manner. Instincts only push the human being to satisfy them, but they do not push towards satisfaction through a specific course. The concepts that the human being adopts will dictate which method he chooses to satisfy his instincts. For example, the need for ownership, which manifests from the survival instinct, creates a potential that require satisfaction, and this potential pushes the person to own or to invest. Owning through riba or trade is not instinctive. It is the concepts that determine whether to deal with riba or not. The same principle applies to theft. No one can claim that theft is part of his genetic code, the same way that no one can claim dealing with interest has a genetic component. Similarly, no one can claim that eating pork as opposed to vegetables has a genetic basis.

The sexual desire also necessitates satisfaction. However, the concepts that the human being carries, and not the instinct itself, will determine what specific method the human being adopts in satisfying this instinct. The sexual inclination could be satisfied through marrying a cousin or mother, or through marrying another person. However, specific concepts which Muslims carry, for example, state that marrying one's mother or sister is prohibited, while marrying certain categories of other women is allowed. No one can claim that marriage from cousins is determined by genetics. By the same token, no one can claim that zina is necessitated by genetics. The concepts that a person carries will either justify zina or keep him away from it.

All of these methods of satisfaction can be labeled as correct or incorrect depending upon the concepts that the human being carries. From the Islamic point of view, any method of satisfying any instinct or organic need is correct if the method is within the parameters of the Islamic framework and incorrect if it lay outside the Islamic framework. However, some people would try to satisfy their instincts and organic needs in a way that is not only incorrect but conflicts with the natural disposition in which Allah created these instincts and needs. For example, hunger can naturally be satisfied by food, and although the method can be correct or incorrect based on the concepts, the satisfaction is still achieved in a natural way. Eating pork cannot be labeled as satisfying the need to eat against man's nature although it must be labeled as incorrect. However, attempting to consume nails and glass cannot be considered a means of satisfying hunger that is harmonious with the natural disposition of the human being.

Similarly, Allah created the sexual desire to be satisfied in a specific way in order to achieve the specific objective of maintaining the continuity of humanity. Satisfying the sexual desire either through marriage or through zina is still in accordance to the human being's natural disposition, although zina is not correct. However, attempting to satisfy this desire from the same sex conflicts with the natural framework of this instinct. Therefore, satisfying these instincts and organic needs against the order that Allah defined cannot stem from any natural or intrinsic component of the human being. Resorting to methods such as homosexuality, which conflict with the inclination or the system, must stem purely from a concept. Homosexuality is a pure decision, like the decision to eat nails and glass. There is nothing in the design of the sexual instinct that would impel the human being to resort to such an action, just as nothing exists in the organic needs that would push a human to consume nails and glass. Thus, the role of genetics in determining the behavior of the human being must be understood clearly. While genetics may contribute to the manifestation of instincts and organic needs, they have no contribution to the methods which the human being chooses to satisfy these instincts and needs. The ways and methods that the human being utilizes are choices that every individual makes, and these choices depend upon the concepts that the individual carries.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Islam is not a collection of rules and a rigid set of "do's and don't's" to be imposed upon the people by force without any deep understanding. Islam is not theoretical information to be memorized or rehearsed as bedtime stories. Islam is not a spiritual system that shapes our relationships with metaphysics but has no voice in the life affairs. Islam is a comprehensive system built upon a rational doctrine that establishes a conclusive belief which agrees with the nature of the human being. Islam shapes the individual's belief, in addition to his behavior and thinking, in a dynamic way. While Muslims study Islam, they must study it in a very profound and creative way that will produce a dynamic force which will push them to think more and appreciate Allah's greatness, and ultimately encourage them to comply with the order that He fashioned.

Many attempts emerged to change the situation of Muslims in the last two centuries. Although these attempts left some impact in the thinking of Muslims, they failed to achieve a comprehensive revival. None of these attempts had an intellectual basis geared towards reviving the thinking of Muslims according to Islam. They were either emotional spouts that rallied the feelings of the Muslims temporarily before diffusing but failed to exert a profound intellectual impact, or they focused on the mere compliance to some Sharii rules, and even the way the rules were addressed was incorrect. A vivid example of such an attempt was in the issue of the woman's dress code. The woman's dress code is often addressed as the central problem of the Muslim Ummah, while it is only a symptom among many other symptoms. Furthermore, the woman's dress code is part of the social system of Islam, which is rooted in certain fundamental concepts that Islam addresses regarding the outlook towards man and woman in the society, the nature of man and woman, and the nature and purpose of their relationship to one another. However, oftentimes the issue of woman's dress is discussed in isolation of any profound concepts.

In the end, all of these attempts failed to address the thinking of Muslims, although thinking is one of the most distinguishing characteristics of man. Even the attempts to call Muslims back to the method of the Salaf did not fare any better than the other efforts. Such attempts failed to recognize the method of the Salaf Salih in thinking. This movement restricted itself to the fruits of that thinking method by imitating the Salaf, neglecting the fact that the Salaf themselves (may Allah be pleased with them) condemned imitation. As a result, these movements restricted themselves to issues that were discussed by the Salaf, without any relevance to the current life.

Even more disastrous in its outcome was the Modernist movement. From its very inception, the Modernist movement was incorrect because it was spawned as a reaction to the Traditionalist and Secular currents as an attempt to bridge the gap between them. The attempts of the Modernists were, in reality, no more than an attempt to reconcile between Islam and Western culture, although Allah (swt) clearly stated in several ayahs that there is no room for conciliation between Islam and any other ideology or culture. The mere objective of trying to reconcile Islam with the West was an implicit recognition of the Western Culture as the reference to which all other points of view, including Islam, would have to refer to.

As a result, the Modernist movement blurred the clear distinction between Islam and other ideologies, diluted the clear understanding of Islam, and strengthened the dominance of Western culture and thought among the Muslims. Today, this Modernist thought, and those groups and

individuals who represent such a thought pattern, are used by the West to contain the Muslims and to mold the thinking and behavior of Muslims along the lines of Western culture.

Those who seek the revival for Muslims must first revive the Islamic way of thinking and the method through which Islam must be studied in order to create the correct way of thinking among Muslims. By doing so, the various points of view and outlooks will become unified, and the public awareness will be built in the correct way. With the formation of a unified outlook and public awareness, the Muslim Ummah will have a clear reference and a framework to judge all other issues and ideas, which will cause the Ummah to naturally reject any idea or call presented to the Muslims that contradicts the Islamic point of view. This process necessitates a continuous process of providing the Ummah with the correct ideas in a relevant and dynamic way that addresses the reality and instigates the thinking process. The interaction must proceed in an open manner, and the ideas must be allowed to present themselves unrestricted. Any attempt to censor discussion or divert the attention of the Muslims from anything other than the objective of embracing the Islamic ideology and building the correct way of thinking must be viewed as an attack against the Muslims and an obstacle in the path of revival. Through this discussion of ideas, the incorrect ideas would gradually be filtered out, and the Ummah would concentrate upon the correct ideas, which would eventually give rise to an intellectual momentum carried by the masses. This intellectual momentum would then transform naturally into an idea implemented by the state with no gap between the state and the Ummah. Once the Muslims reach this stage, they will be in a position to carry Islam as a comprehensive ideology built upon a rational Aqeedah to the world.