ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE SERIES NO. 1

ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

General Principles and Work Plan

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى خَاتَمِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful
Praise to Allah, Lord of the Universe.
May Peace and Prayers Be upon His
Final Prophet and Messenger.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ۝ خَلَقَ الْإِنسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۝ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ۝ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۝ عَلَّمَ الْإِنسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ۝

(العلق: ١ ـ ٥)

Read in the name of your Sustainer, Who has Created man out of a germ cell. Read — for your Sustainer is the Most bountiful One. Who has taught (man) the use of the pen. Taught Man what he did not know.
(Qur'an 96:1-5)

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُم مِّن بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ۝

(النحل: ٧٨)

And Allah has brought you forth from your mother's womb knowing nothing — but He has endowed you with hearing, and sight, and minds, so that you might have cause to be grateful.
(Qur'an 16:78)

ISLAMIZATION OF

KNOWLEDGE

General Principles and Work Plan

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CONTENTS

Introduction

From the dawn of Qur'anic revelation to Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) to the "Call to Islam" (da'wah) and the establishment of the Ummah as a universal entity in Madinah, the Islamic community has faced immense challenges and conspiracies, manifested by direct military aggression and unrelenting psychological and economic warfare, covertly and deviously waged. Earlier, diverse opponents—pagan and heretic, Persian and Roman, among others—sought to trample the Ummah or to check its advance. Thanks to Divine Providence, however, the Ummah always emerged from these trials physically and spiritually stronger and more viable. In fact, in response to these assaults, the Ummah managed to strike at the root of many strongholds of disbelief (kufr) and to carry the message of Islam to far-flung regions of the earth, until it became the leading "nation" and the most balanced Ummah on Earth—an Ummah of the "Middle Way": "You are the best Ummah evolved for Mankind" (Qur'an, 3:110).

Because of repeated attacks, the initial enthusiasm and sense of commitment began to wane in later years; and the onslaught of enemies began to cause disintegration and weakness in the structure of the Ummah. Still, these enemies were unable to achieve an overall victory—one that could completely sweep away the Ummah's faith (imān) and resolve.

After many attempts to achieve this desired objective foundered, these enemies set out to investigate and to search carefully for more devious methods. They concluded that the strength of the Ummah stemmed from its religion (dīn) and belief (áqīdah). Therefore, they launched an extensive campaign to weaken the Ummah's commitment and attachment to its dīn, Islam; to change its understanding and application of the Shari'ah; and to turn the great principles inherent in Islam from an active, motivating, and highly positive power into a rigid formalism that was incapable of inspiring or of directing the spirit and lives of Muslims.

This was the beginning of what may be designated as the intellectual incursion—a process that introduced (under the guise of logic, common sense, and pragmatism) certain philosophical and metaphysical concepts that led to much controversy and endless sophistry. The ensuing intellectual and religious consequences were disastrous for the Ummah. One result was the emergence of manifold esoteric (batinī) sects, which further weakened the

Ummah by impairing its unity and distracting its scholars from the original sources and unsullied fountainheads of Islam: the Qur'an, the Word of Allah (SWT), and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS).

Another direct consequence of this intellectual incursion was the Muslim defeat at the hands of the Christian crusaders and the Mongols. Although the Ottomans temporarily saved the Ummah from its crisis, the effects of intellectual deviancy and the problems created by the partial application of the Shari'ah soon began to threaten the existence of the Ottoman State itself. During the age of the European Renaissance, the intellectual incursion began to assume new dimensions by becoming more systematic, all-embracing, and sophisticated.

Western imperialism, its religious functionaries, and orientalists' machinations together turned their campaign into a total and exhaustive onslaught. This campaign sought to crush any resistance to, infiltrating and transforming the Islamic mind and ethos. Islam, itself, had become the prime target to be penetrated. By isolating Islam from everyday life and twisting it into a dogmatic labyrinth,the cultural distortion and intellectual collapse of the Ummah was achieved.

At the beginning of the eleventh century A.H. / seventeenth century A.C., orientalists, colonialists, and missionaries laid the groundwork for this new intellectual offensive against Islam and the Ummah. They were aided and abetted, materially and morally, by numerous organizations and supporters, and succeeded eventually in ensnaring the hearts and minds of many Muslims, reshaping its thinking and clouding their Islamic vision. When European industrialism and material progress reached their peak, Europe achieved prominence and power. At this same time, the Ummah was vastly depleted by lassitude, and its enemies decided to launch an all-out assault to deal the Ummah the final blow.

Following their victories in World War I, European armies occupied vast areas of the Muslim world. After this military occupation, they first implemented their well-researched policies for a complete intellectual take-over to ensure total estrangement of the Ummah from Islam. This estrangement would be passed on to all subsequent generations of Muslims.

Then, to create a wide gap between the Ummah and the main sources of the Shari'ah (the Qur'an and the Sunnah), the enemies introduced changes in all systems of education and only allowed the minimum amount of "Islamic" educational curricula. Moreover, their agents dominated and exploited the mass media, using intellectual and pedagogic pretexts to further facilitate the coveted transformation.

However, the struggle against colonialism and foreign indoctrination was never stamped out. The Ummah's spirit of struggle and resistance was sustained by the Qur'an, which was both a companion and a guide. The Qur'an provided

daily reminders to Muslims of their place in history, their duty, and their predestined role of responsible world leadership: "Thus have we made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations" (Qur'an, 2: 143) The Muslim spirit for struggle (jihad) and the underlying virtues of self-trust, self-esteem, and goodness were rekindled. This, in turn, led to the emergence of reformist and liberation movements in the Muslim world. Unfortunately, however, the approach and mentality of such movements betrayed a Western outlook and an alien methodology and frame of reference that doomed them to failure. Indeed, it is axiomatic that what is intellectually or ideologically good for Europe and the West, in general, is not necessarily good or suitable for the Ummah, whose existence and destiny are rooted in and dependent upon the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Still, some movements tried to apply or advocate partial reform, wrongly assuming that they could succeed where others had failed in helping the Ummah regain its strength and greatness. The failure of these efforts and the resulting humiliation motivated other Muslim thinkers to devise other solutions. The Ummah had been entrusted with a mission, and the spiritual sustenance of its successive generations had always been found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Therefore, it was clear that any reform movement had to implement plans to help the Ummah derive its remedy from these sources, thereby regaining its identity and reestablishing a true Islamic life. It soon became apparent that the challenge that Muslim thinkers had to address was to offer a practical framework for understanding the Qur'an and the Sunnah. They needed to transfer the sources of knowledge from the realm of values, directives, and ideals into the realm of reality and practical application.

The crisis of the Ummah reached a peak when the West created an alien entity inside Muslim lands to act as a convenient springboard for its plans and ambitions. The creation of this entity through colonization by settlement, represents the most cruel and inhumane act of imperialism in the world. This was a further setback for the Ummah. Conscious of their identity, Muslims witnessed with chagrin the colonialists occupying their land, usurping their property and resources, degrading their character, defiling their sanctuaries, and ridiculing their religion. And, when the colonialists encountered feeble resistance, the sense of alarm in the hearts of Muslims reached unbearable limits. Shaken by such calamitous events, the Muslim mind was unable to distinguish between right and wrong or good and evil. Consequently, the Ummah was divided into more than fifty nation-states. This division occurred in such a way as to guarantee continuous friction among them. Many of these nation-states continue to fight each other rather than their enemies. This fighting encourages chaos and starvation to rampage over vast areas of the Muslim world.

Despite all this, and through the blessings of Allah (SWT), several groups

within the Ummah have remained faithful to the truth and have adhered to their belief. Unwavering in their faith and regardless of prevailing suppression, corruption, and pessimism, they have tried to provide a map of the way to deliverance and salvation. One of these groups was made up of youth who had attained a clear understanding of the nature of the problem and its cure while still studying at various Western universities. Ironically, the frequently acrimonious reports they read about the malaise of the Ummah while they were in the West strengthened their resolve and determination to raise such questions as: Who are we? What do we want? and What should we do?

With the limited resources available to students, they began (with the enthusiasm of youth and the knowledge they had acquired) to convene small meetings to air their concern and to discuss views on the major problems facing the Ummah and the reasons behind its decline and disintegration. Their Ummah, they believed, had been endowed by Allah (SWT) with all the human, "ideological", and material resources that should guarantee power and dignity among the nations—yet, the malaise prevailed. After prolonged deliberations, they reached a conclusion, based upon both theorization and first-hand experience, that the basic cause of the malaise of the Ummah lay in its current thought processes which suffered from intellectual rigidity and stagnation. These young men believed that the minor crises the Ummah suffered were, in fact, mere products of the prevailing malaise and that intellectual deviation and stagnation had impaired the Ummah's thoughts, leading to loss of vision, confusion, disintegration, and weakness. Furthermore, they believed that previous sincere and genuine attempts at reform had failed because Muslim reformers had been unable to realize the role that deviation, distortion, and stagnation of thought and methodology had been playing in creating such aimlessness and impotence.

Cognizant of these facts, these young men established the Association of Muslim Social Scientists in 1382 A.H./1972 A.C. The Association addressed itself to the intellectual problems facing Islamic thought. They exchanged and disseminated information on all matters relating to Islamic thought, particularly among Muslim intellectuals. Though many of these young people were intellectually capable, they, nevertheless, refused to diagnose the malaise and its causes alone. They wanted to be absolutely sure that the diagnosis was correct and, therefore, contacted a number of Muslim activists (duāt) as well as contemporary Muslim scholars and reformers. The Association wanted to share with the others the ideas, concepts, and conclusions they had reached and to receive the benefit of the knowledge and experience of others. To this end, a decision was made to hold several meetings and seminars in order to exchange viewpoints.

In 1377 A.H. / 1977 A.C., the Association sponsored a two-week international conference that was held in Europe for some of the most

distinguished leaders of the Islamic movement. In addition to the Association which was, at the time, leading the students' Islamic movement in Europe and North America, thirty active leaders of Islamic movements and Muslim scholars in various fields of specialization from all over the Muslim world attended this meeting. The participants unanimously agreed that the contemporary crisis of the Ummah was intellectual – a crisis of thought – and that the remedy was to be sought within that framework. The seminar participants also concluded that the Muslim thought process and methodology needed to be given priority in the effort to achieve reform and that a specialized body needed to be established to conduct research into these areas. They emphasized that Muslim scholars needed to be involved. Those who attended were all capable and willing to address themselves to this issue and to help formulate a sound intellectual basis for the necessary purposeful, sincere, and methodical work.

The concerned young men lost no time as they began to gather resources for an independent scientific and intellectual organization to serve this purpose. Their efforts culminated in the establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). The Institute was officially incorporated in the United States of America at the beginning of the fourteenth *Hijri* century, and it immediately addressed itself to the issue of Islamic thought. Its first international conference was held in Islamabad, Pakistan (1402 A.H./1982 A.C.), in cooperation with the International Islamic University located there. The conference was attended by numerous Muslim scholars who presented various important papers and studies on the issue of Islamic thought and knowledge. They urged the participants to conduct research, to contribute to all scientific fields and social activities, to initiate educational and intellectual reform, to present alternative scientific concepts and solutions to problems, and to recast knowledge in the light of Islamic values, taking into account the realities of the contemporary world. The objectives of the conferences were to probe the causes of various aspects of the crisis of the Ummah and to determine priorities in the quest for a resurgence in working toward establishing the true mission of Islam. The papers, deliberations, and resolutions of the conference all confirmed the earlier convictions of those who had called for it. Practically all participants urged Muslim scholars to assume their responsibilities and to make all possible efforts to confront the intellectual aspects of the problem, which had previously never received the attention or the priority required to stem the tide of cultural chaos and disintegration.

The plan formulated by the Institute to tackle the crisis of thought in the Muslim world has been based upon the conviction that the crisis involves two dimensions: the intellectual thought processes and the estrangement between the Ummah and its legacy, i.e. its alienation from its culture and civilization.

First, the intellectual incursion, change, and disruption that was introduced, especially in the social sciences and the humanities, was of such enormous proportions as to make the Muslims either overlook Islamic thought and legacy or, at best, to simply study it and treat it as an ancient phenomenon neither needed by nor relevant to contemporary life. Consequently, Muslim scholars and intellectuals sought to fulfill their needs in the Western social sciences, not realizing that the West had established these sciences in accordance with its own circumstances and goals and rooted in its ideological world vision. As a result, these sciences now tend to reflect the West's values, concepts, and beliefs, upon which all Western aspects of behavior, activity, and social institutions are established. While these disciplines are acceptable and compatible with Western objectives, they tend to clash with Islamic values and guidelines. Much confusion has ensued, and the basis of the present conflict, contradiction, and loss of identity and direction can be traced back to contradiction and weakness in Islamic thoughts and aims. All this mandates as cornerstones in the attempt to cure the malaise and in the proposed change in the current systems of education in the Muslim world and the Islamization of the social sciences, as well as in regaining our intellectual identity.

Second, the plan draws attention to the current estrangement between the Ummah and its legacy—a rift that has turned Islam's great achievements into merely historical ones—mere fossils of a bygone age, recalled, if at all, to muster nostalgic feelings or an ineffectual sense of pride. The legacy of Islam, to many, no longer presents the basis for dynamic creativity.

The Institute, therefore, believes that the Ummah must be united under the aegis of its legacy, that the legacy should be viewed as a viable and dynamic force. The Institute believes that many aspects of this legacy can be used to the Ummah's advantage through methodical and effective planning geared to making the presentation and understanding of the educational and intellectual heritage of Islam easy and accessible. It realizes that this can be accomplished by systematically arranging and classifying the legacy and by establishing the specific relevance of Islam to the modern disciplines and social sciences. Indeed, this legacy, as it stands today, is often obscure and yields its treasures only to a few capable and patient scholars. As a result, the Institute, *in shā'a Allah*, intends to prepare and publish its Agenda for classifying the Islamic Legacy. In addition to this, there will be model-studies that are intended to provide the modern Muslim disciplinarians with ready access to the Legacy in their areas of specialization.

Following the Conference in Islamabad on the Islamization of knowledge (1402 A.H./1982 A.C.), the Institute decided to publish a detailed plan to serve as a guide to Muslim intellectuals and students in the field of Islamization of knowledge. The result was the publication of *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Workplan*, based upon papers and speeches delivered

at various conferences by Dr. Ismā'īl Rājī al Fārūqī and Dr. 'AbdulḤamīd AbūSulaymān. The late Dr. al Fārūqī took the initiative in editing the first edition, while Dr. AbūSulaymān re-edited, updated and introduced the plan in a subsequent Arabic edition.

In this second English edition, edited by Dr. AbūSulaymān, the first four parts of the original English edition remain basically unchanged, however some important modifications and additional concepts and ideas have been presented. The new edition offers greater understanding of the intellectual issues facing the Ummah and the Muslim scholars—not in the field of education but foremost in thought and methodology.

These concepts will also put forth a new frame of reference and approach to life for the Ummah and the Muslim mind. This will, *in shā'a Allah*, lessen or eliminate the prevailing apathy (*tawākul*) and revive the Muslim attitude of seriousness and efficiency, action and perfection toward life (*itqān*). It is this attitude which constitutes an integral part of the Muslim concepts of *Khilāfah* (vicegerency), *Iṣlāḥ* (reform), and *I'mār* (civilization) in this world.

This edition also offers a more dynamic and precise work plan for Islamization of Knowledge by IIIT. It reflects the interaction between increased knowledge and the increased involvement of the scholars in the process of thinking and writing in the field—the process of "learning through doing". It emphasizes the Islamic vision and an original approach of methodology of knowledge, incorporating the three Islamic sources of knowledge: revelation (*waḥy*), reason (*'aql*), and the universe (*al kawn*). This edition affirms that Islamization of knowledge is a continuing process and that its major goals are achieved through the accumulation and development of ideas in the various fields of knowledge.

Moreover, the new edition seeks to further clarify (see part 7) the concept of Islamization of knowledge, its relevance and relationship to "westernization," "modernization," and the dynamics of actual life and events. These clarifications and emphasis are worth the notice of the readers, especially in acquiring a firm grasp of the idea, mission and priorities involved in the concept and task of Islamization.

The International Institute of Islamic Thought

Rabī' al Ākhir 1409 AH
November 1988 AC

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

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A. The Malaise of the Ummah

The Ummah of Islam stands at present at the lowest rung of the ladder of nations. In this century, no other nation has been subjected to comparable defeats or humiliation. Muslims were defeated, massacred, double-crossed, colonized, and exploited, proselytized, forced or bribed into conversion to other faiths. They were secularized, Westernized, and de-Islamized by internal and external agents of their enemies. This occurred in practically every country and corner of the vast Muslim world. Even though they were victims of injustice and aggression on every count, Muslims were vilified and denigrated in representations of them in all nations. They enjoy the worst possible 'image' in the contemporary world. In today's global mass media, the 'Muslim' is stereotyped as aggressive, destructive, lawless, terroristic, uncivilized, fanatic, 'fundamentalist,' backward and anachronistic. Muslims are the objects of hatred and contempt on the part of non-Muslims, whether developed or underdeveloped, capitalist or Marxist, Eastern or Western, civilized or otherwise. The Muslim world itself is known only for its inner strife and division, its turbulence and self-contradictions, its wars and threats to world peace, its excessive wealth and excessive poverty, its famines and epidemics. In the minds of people everywhere, the Muslim world is the "sick man" of the world; and the whole world is led to think that, at the root of all these evils, stands the religion of Islam.

The inexorable facts that the Ummah numbers over a billion people; that its territories are among the most vast and the richest; and that its potential in human, material, and geopolitical resources are the greatest, make the defeat, the humiliation, and the misrepresentation of Muslims intolerable. What aggravates this even further is the knowledge that the Ummah's faith — Islam — is, in fact, an integral, beneficial, world-affirming, and realistic religion in which practical solutions for contemporary problems of humanity can be sought and found.

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B. Major Effects of the Malaise

1. Political Character

The Ummah is divided against itself. The colonial powers have successfully fragmented the Ummah into some fifty or more nation-states and set them one against another. The boundaries of the Muslim states have been so defined as to create perpetual friction for every state with its neighbors. Political machination by the enemy continually exploits those areas of friction and creates feelings of alienation and hostility.

Internally, every Muslim nation-state is, in turn, divided against itself because its population is heterogeneous and one group is assigned hegemony over the other groups by the colonial masters. No nation-state was given the time, peace, or resources necessary to integrate its own citizenry into a single entity; and no two states were allowed to unite so as to constitute a greater whole. Indeed, the few attempts in that direction were doomed to failure. To make things worse, the enemy either has imported aliens into the Muslim world in order to guarantee perpetual strife and to initiate reasons for interference in the internal affairs of these states, or has converted groups of natives of those states to a Western Christianity that necessarily implies their estrangement from their Muslim compatriots, or has infused into non-Muslim natives a notion of their ethnic identity that sets them in conflict with the Muslims. Finally, the enemy has created hostile "foreign" states within the body of the Ummah to divert Muslim energy away from reconstruction, to drain its resources in futile wars, or to serve as bases for colonialism and foreign political interests. Every Muslim government spends the greater part of its resources and energy on securing its own power within and its sovereignty without—and yet without avail.

Throughout the Muslim world, except in a few regions where the enemy has found rulers ready to cooperate, colonial administration has destroyed all political institutions in the land. When the time came for colonial administrations to withdraw, they entrusted power to the native elites who had already been systematically Westernized. Then, in most former Muslim colonies, power went to the military who were destined to grab it at the first opportunity. In the majority of cases today, Muslim countries are ruled by the military because they are devoid of political institutions that are capable of operating the government, of mobilizing the masses for resistance, of leading them into constructive political action, or, simply, of acting in harmony with one another.

2. Economic Character

The Ummah is nondeveloped and backward. The overwhelming majority

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of its members are illiterate. Their production of goods and services is far below their needs, which are then satisfied by importing finished goods from colonial and postcolonial powers. Even in the strategic necessities of life—the staple foods, clothing, energy, and hardware—no Muslim state is fully self-sufficient. Just about every Muslim state would be exposed to famine if the colonial powers wished for any reason to stop their unfair trade with them. Everywhere, colonial interest has been creating consumer markets and demands for colonialists' products, while the needs of Muslims for productive hardware goes unheeded. In their competition with local Muslim productivity, the colonialists seek (and often succeed) in forcing it out of the market. When the colonialists help to develop some industry, it turns out to be one that is dependent upon the colonialists' raw materials or finished components, which they alone supply, thus subjecting the industry to function at the colonialists' mercy, thereby subserving their goals. In most cases, the new Muslim industries are not designed to meet the basic needs but, rather, those tangential needs created by colonialist all-pervasive advertisement. Muslim agricultural self-sufficiency is their first enemy, since, at this stage and for a long time to come, that is the necessary prerequisite of Muslim resistance to any colonialist scheme. Muslim farmers are uprooted from their villages by false promises of better living in the cities, through the lure of temporary jobs in speculative building-construction and consumer-goods industries, and through exploitation by landlords and tax collectors. The farmers migrate to the cities to live in shanty towns, dependent upon imported staple foods, and become prey to any demagogue who capitalizes upon their adverse circumstances.

The oil bonanza with which Allah (SWT) endowed some Muslim countries has not proven to be the blessing (ni'mah) it was supposed to be. Scanty population distribution, in addition to intellectual and cultural decline and political instability, contributed to this. In most instances, the new wealth produced cosmetic development and, therefore, failed to play its natural role in developing the agricultural and industrial potential of the Ummah. Rather, it is still being channeled for "easy and secure" investment in the financial markets of the non-Muslim world, thus helping to develop foreign economics.

3. Cultural Character

The centuries of decline have caused illiteracy, ignorance, and superstition to spread among Muslims. These evils have caused the average Muslim to withdraw into the bliss of blind faith, to lean toward literalism and dogmatism, or to surrender himself to superstitions and to various charlatans. All these aberrations have bred in the Muslim no small measure of vulnerability. When the modern world imposed itself upon the average Muslim, his military,

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political, and economic weakness caused him to panic. He sought half-measures of reform that, he thought, would speedily recapture for him his lost ground. Unwittingly, he took to Westernization, lured by the successful example of the West and prompted by his Eastern or Westernized advisers. In areas under colonial administration, Westernization was ordered and promoted by every possible means at the rulers' disposal.

Well-meaning or otherwise, Westernized Muslim leaders did not grasp the fact that their programs would sooner or later undermine the very foundations of the faith and culture of their subjects. The connection between the manifestations of Western productivity and power and the Western views on God and man; on life, nature, the world; and on time and history was too subtle for Muslim leaders to grasp or, in their hurry, to consider. A secular system of education was built that taught Western values and methods. Soon, graduates who were ignorant of the Islamic legacy began to pour into society. The new graduates became suspicious of the majority of the guardians of the legacy, the ulama', who were dogmatists, legalists, and literalists, who failed to distinguish between those juristic verdicts (ahkām) of the Qur'an and the Sunnah that could not be discarded or dismissed, and those matters that are open to creative exercise of judgment (ijtihād). The graduates' suspicion of the guardians of the legacy increased and a gap began to develop within the ranks of the Ummah, dividing it into Westernizing secularizers and opponents of secularization. The colonialist powers saw to it that the former became the decision makers in society.

The colonialists attacked everything Islamic either directly or by their native puppets. The perfection of the Qur'anic text, the Message of the Prophet (ṢAAS), the veracity of the Sunnah, the comprehensiveness of the Shari‘ah, and the glories of Muslim achievements in culture and civilization were severely denigrated; none of them were spared. The purpose was to inject doubt into the Muslim's confidence in himself, in his Ummah, and in his faith and ancestors. The object was to undermine his Islamic consciousness and to subvert his Islamic personality. Because he lacked the spiritual stamina necessary for resistance, he was susceptible to corruption. The colonialists and their stooges filled the Muslim's daily life with media products that promoted Western culture. Newspapers, books, and magazines; radio and television; cinema and theater; records and tapes; and street posters and neon signs bombarded him daily with such effects. Muslim governments took pride in the new boulevards they opened in their capitals, which were dotted with Western-style high-rise office or apartment buildings; but they were not shamed by the squalor and degradation of the rest of their towns and villages. Westernized elites frequented public halls to watch a movie or to listen to an opera, a concert, or a drama; and their sons and daughters read about them in books in public or missionary schools and colleges, without realizing

their incongruity with everything else they thought or did. Those who completed their self-Westernization stood out more oddly against their Muslim environment and background. The integrity of Islamic culture and the unity of the Islamic style of life were shattered in their own persons, in their thought and actions, in their homes and families. Western social institutions and customs were introduced into their lives in excess and with impertinence. Instead of raising themselves from their debasement to the heights of virtue and societal efficacy envisaged for them by Islam, Muslim men and women began to hanker after the manifestations of Western decadence: gradual nudity and immorality of dress and make-up (*tabarruj*), economic independence aimed at individualistic license, egotistic pursuit of pleasure, and avoidance of duties imposed by family relationships.

In the cities, Islamic architecture died and Islamic town planning became nonexistent. The overgrown urban centers repeated every mistake and shortcoming of the European city that underwent the industrial revolution two centuries ago, as if utterly incapable of learning from the experience of others. Muslim homes, furniture, art, and decoration became a hodgepodge of all styles, betraying confused notions of Muslim identity.

Despite all claims that he has Westernized himself, the Muslim has, in fact, barbarized himself. His life has become a conglomeration of styles, discontinuous with his selfhood. He has made of himself something neither Islamic nor Western—a cultural freak of modern times.

C. The Core of the Crisis: The Malaise of Thought and Methodology

There can be no doubt that the intellectual and methodological decline of the Ummah is the core of its malaise. The educational system is the breeding ground of the disease. Schools and colleges generate and perpetuate that self-estrangement from Islam, from its legacy, and from its style. The educational system is the laboratory where Muslim youth are kneaded and cut, where their consciousness is molded into a caricature of the West. Here, the Muslim's link with his past is severed; his natural curiosity to learn the legacy of his fathers is stymied. Here, his willingness to touch base with his heritage and to spring toward creative representation of Islam is blunted with the doubts and the deviation the educational system has injected into every recess of his consciousness.

1. The Present State of Education in the Muslim World

Despite the tremendous expansion that has taken place in education so

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far, the state of Muslim education is at its worst. As far as Islamization is concerned, never before have both the traditional and the secularist schools, colleges, and universities been more daring in advocating their un-Islamic themes and never before have they had the captive ear of the overwhelming majority of Muslim youth as they do today. Since its inception under colonialist administrations, the secularist educational system has assumed tremendous proportions, elbowing out the Islamic system from the field. Islamic education, for the most part, remains a private affair that has limited access to public funds. Where public funds are made available, demands of secularization are imposed in the name of modernism and progress. This usually consists of bifurcating the curriculum into contrasting — nay, opposing — components, one Islamic and one "modern". What took place in some well-known Islamic universities is a classic example.

The colonialists devised a well-thought out and well-planned strategy. The Islamic component of the curriculum in certain universities remains unchanged, partly because of conservatism and vested interests and partly because it is in the secularist plan to keep it out of touch with reality and modernity. In this way, their graduates will present no competition to those of the secular institutions.

National independence gave the secularist educational system its greatest boost by adopting it as its own, pouring public funds into it, and secularizing it even further in the name of racist nationalism and regional "patriotism". The forces of Westernization and secularization, and resultant de-Islamization of teachers and students, continue to gather momentum in colleges and universities; and nothing has been done to arrest that degeneration. In fact, the situation is worse than it was under colonialism. Under colonialism, a spirit of resistance, of searching for liberation and an Islamic solution animated nearly everyone. Today, students are cynical, lethargic, and mistrust all leaders. This is largely due to repeated false promises and disappointments and to the sad example of a morally bankrupt leadership. No Muslim government, university administration, or private organization is doing anything about the sinking morale of college youth or about their continuing de-Islamization through "education". The colossal building programs in the affluent Muslim countries and the consequent growth of student bodies, faculty members, and expansion of facilities all serve the secularist cause. Hardly any of the funds are devoted to "modernizing" in a genuine sense, i.e., to improving the quality of education and the Islamic orientation of students and faculty. Everywhere, the race is on at maddening speed toward completing the Western educational model.

2. Lack of Clear Vision

Despite all claims to the contrary, the net result achieved is not a Western

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model, but rather a caricature of it. Like the Islamic model, the Western educational model depends ultimately upon a specific vision, though different from that of Islam, and is animated by a will to realize that vision. Buildings and offices, libraries and laboratories, and classrooms and auditoriums teeming with students and faculty are all material paraphernalia of little worth without the requisite vision. It is the nature of such vision that it cannot be copied; only its incidentals can. That is why in nearly two centuries of Westernized, secularized education, the Muslims have produced neither a school, college, university, nor a generation of scholars that matches the West in creativity or excellence. The insoluble problem of low standards in the Muslim World institutions is a necessary consequence of this lack of vision. There is no genuine search for knowledge without spirit, and the Western spirit is precisely what cannot and should not be copied. It is generated by its own vision of life and reality, in short, by its faith.

Education in the Muslim world lacks this vision. Its leadership does not have the vision of the Western man by necessity; and it does not have the vision of Islam by its own choice, i.e., by deliberate ignorance, laziness, and lack of concern. Educational leadership in the Muslim world has existed without culture and without cause. Nationalism has inspired the Western universities in the last 200 years because Romanticism has replaced the defunct God of Christianity with "*la nation*" as the genuine "ultimate reality". For the Muslim, no reality is ultimate but Allah (SWT). Therefore, ultimate loyalty to the nation-state, is both impossible and blasphemous to him. Whatever type of link a Muslim has with his legacy and past, it is not possible for him to be a "nationalist" in the same sense as the European who has substituted his Christianity with his 'nationalism'.

Look at the highest model of the Muslim university teacher—the professor with a doctorate from a Western university, especially in the social sciences and humanities. He was trained in the West and graduated with a fair or less than fair average. In most cases, he was not Islamically motivated beforehand, i.e., he had not embarked upon his expedition to seek knowledge for the sake of Allah (SWT), but rather for a materialistic, egoistic, or at best, nationalistic goal. Therefore, he did not obtain all the knowledge available to him in the West, nor did he surpass his Western teachers at their own game; nor did he, like his ancestors (who learned and Islamized the sciences of ancient Greece, Persia, and India), digest what he learned or seek to rehabilitate it within the Islamic vision of knowledge and truth. Rather, he was satisfied to pass, to obtain the degree, to return home, and to achieve a position of affluence and eminence. The books he read as a student constitute the ultimate reaches of his knowledge; for now, he has neither time, energy, nor motivation to push beyond the frontiers of his basic training. His living and working conditions add to his distraction from such a distant ideal. Naturally,

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his students must emerge even less motivated and less competent. For them, the Western ideal has receded even further. Gradually, the standards sink; and Western education in the Muslim world becomes a caricature of its Western prototype.

The subjects and methodologies presently taught in the Muslim world are copies of the Western ones but are devoid of the vision that animated them in the West. Devoid of that vision, they have become instruments of mediocrity. Unconsciously, these dispirited materials and methodologies continue to exert a sinister de-Islamizing influence upon students by posing as alternatives to the Islamic disciplines as well as agents of "progress" and "modernization". They make the graduate of the Muslim university a typical "freshman"—thinking that he knows a great deal but knowing very little indeed.

The very possibility of excellence in the Western disciplines is, thus, removed from the Muslim student. For that possibility requires that the student perceive the totality of knowledge in his chosen field as well as become motivated by a driving idea to appropriate and to transcend this totality. The former depends upon the latter, since, in order to acquire knowledge of the totality, one must be driven by a consuming idea that only commitment to a cause generates. Without a cause, the Muslim is not driven to master the totality of knowledge in the discipline; and, without that mastery, no transcendence of the discipline's state-of-the-art is possible. For the Muslim, the only cause that can really be a cause is Islam. Lacking it, the Muslim teachers who studied in the West never reached the totality of knowledge. As teachers in universities, they could never impart this requisite of excellence to their students. Content to copy and to translate the less-than-totality of knowledge that they had acquired, they and their students are, at best, doomed to a mediocre performance.

That teachers in Muslim universities do not possess the vision of Islam and, therefore, are not driven by its cause is certainly the greatest calamity of Muslim education. Throughout the Muslim world, students enter the university equipped, as far as the Islamic vision is concerned, with the little knowledge of Islam they acquired at home or in elementary or secondary school. Obviously, this constitutes no "vision" and no "cause". Ideologically, therefore, the freshman student enters as a blank sheet. He may come with sentiments but surely not with ideas. These sentiments, if any, are shipwrecked when confronted with the "ideas", "facts", and the objective judgments of "science" presented to him in the disciplines. Obviously, he has no defenses nor vision with which to counter this ideational level. If he does not graduate a confirmed atheist, secularist, or communist, his view of Islam has receded to a realm of personal, subjective, and sentimental attachment to family and people. He does not envision Islam as vibrant, replete with the best and most relevant ideas concerning any problem. On the ideational level, the student

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in a Muslim university confronts alien ideologies presented to him in textbook or classroom with as miserable a defense as a soldier who, armed only with lance and sword, confronts an enemy armed with tank and machine gun. Nowhere in the Muslim world is the Islamic vision taught to all students as the Western tradition is taught to high school students in the West, i.e., with consistency, universality, utmost seriousness and commitment on the part of all. In no Muslim university is such a vision part of the "basic" or "core" studies program that is compulsory to all students.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book represents the perspective of a number of concerned and dedicated Muslim scholars. It is a "vision" which embodies the basic principles of Islamic methodology, coupled with an action plan to realize the reconstruction of Muslim thought and the Islamization of the humanities and the social sciences.

The International Institute of Islamic Thought presents this book to the Muslim ummah as an action plan. It is meant as a guide to be adopted thereby to foster the awareness of ummah of its worth and potential, of the real causes of its civilizational crisis and of the ways and means to overcome the malaise.