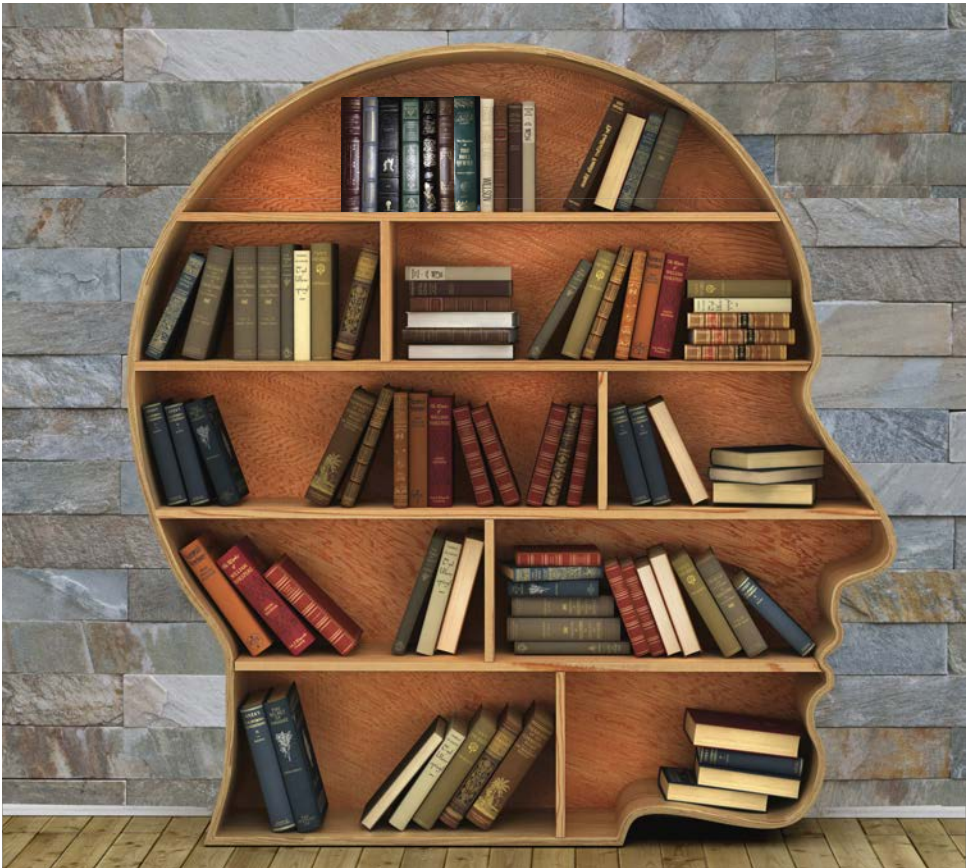




MAPPING INTELLECTUAL BUILDING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THOUGHT AND REASON



FATHI HASAN MALKAWI



MAPPING INTELLECTUAL BUILDING
and the Construction of Thought and Reason

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Content

FOREWORD	vii
INTRODUCTION	ix
<i>Chapter 1: Thought in Islamic Sources</i>	1
Introduction	1
1. Thought in the Qur'an and the Sunnah	2
2. Thought in Islamic Heritage	5
3. Thought as <i>Tawhīd</i> , <i>Tazkiyah</i> , and <i>Umrān</i>	15
4. Thought as Faith, Knowledge, and Action	19
5. The Term Islamic Thought	29
6. Thought and Emotion	33
Conclusion	38
<i>Chapter 2: Intellectual Building and Its Levels</i>	40
Introduction	40
1. Intellectual Building: A Building in Thought	41
2. Stages and Levels of Intellectual Building	45
3. Dialogue of Knowledge and Thought	52
4. Movement of Thought and Thought of the Movement	59
5. Schools of Thought	68
Conclusion	75
<i>Chapter 3: Intellectual Building of Society and the Ummah</i>	77
Introduction	77
1. Intellectual Identity	78
2. Intellectual Building between Stagnation and Renewal	81
3. Marketing Ideas	86
4. The Ummah's Need for Intellectual and Scholarly Leadership	89
5. Institutions and Intellectual Leadership	91
6. The Intellectual Elites: The Foundation of Europe's Renaissance	92
7. Individual Ingenuity is the Foundation of Intellectual Leadership	92
8. The University as Intellectual Leadership of Society	93
9. Intellectual Capital	96
Conclusion	98

<i>Chapter 4: Mapping Islamic Intellectual Building</i>	99
Introduction	99
1. Map of the Sources of Intellectual Building	101
2. Map of the Topics of Intellectual Building	103
3. Map of the Tools and Means of Intellectual Building	110
4. Map of Measuring Intellectual Building	113
5. Maps of the History of Ideas	119
6. Maps of Geographical Thought, and the Geography of Thought	121
7. Rules of Accepting Ideas	129
Conclusion	133
 <i>Chapter 5: Thought and Language</i>	136
Introduction	136
1. The Relationship between Thought and Language: The Historical Dimension	137
2. <i>Bayān</i> between Thought and Language	143
3. Theories on the Relationship between Thought and Language	149
4. Thought and Enhancing Language Skills	158
5. Intellectual and Linguistic Abuse	161
6. Inner Speech as <i>Kalām Nafsī</i>	163
7. Bilingualism, Diglossia, and Their Effect in Thought, Culture, and Identity	166
Conclusion	170
 <i>Chapter 6: Think Tanks and Intellectual Building Labs</i>	172
Introduction	172
1. Development of Ideas: Between Individual Creativity and Institutional Work	173
2. The Importance of Specialization, Focused Dedication, and Teamwork	175
3. The Evolution of Think Tanks and Their Trends	181
4. Research in the Topic of Think Tanks	186
5. Think Tanks and the Media	193
6. Think Tanks in the Arab World	197
7. Muslim Issues in Western Think Tanks	202
8. Prominent Think Tanks Around the World	206
Conclusion	212
 Concluding Remarks	214
 <i>Notes</i>	216
<i>Bibliography</i>	237

FOREWORD

Fathi Malkawi attempts in this work to draw our attention to the vital yet elusive subject of thought and to map as comprehensively as feasible the thinking processes involved in our mental construction of the world. Man's intellect is awoken by his surroundings, by his need to make sense of reality, his own existence, and a desire to know. How he articulates this reality to himself, interprets, and organises information as it presents itself to his conscience, makes decisions, takes action, and draws conclusions based on whatever framework he gives value to, whether spiritual or other, is the subject of this book. On a macro, international scale, these same elements apply to governmental workings, and can make or break society, in terms of policies adopted and organization/management strategies employed.

Malkawi reflects on many interesting aspects of human inner communication, including the workings of logic, and in today's information age, the control and manipulation of information by others for personal gain. Abuse of knowledge for power, whether for propaganda or marketing purposes, has reached great heights, appealing not so much to the rational part of the mind, but the emotional center and the unconscious. Beyond training oneself to read and think critically, there is need for a strong moral code of ethics, that only religion enshrines in comprehensive form, as a defence against the dangers of unfettered, vulnerable imagination falling victim to its own desires.

The work is written organically. So, the author analyses definitions, historical development, the mechanisms that allow the generation, processing, and retaining of thought including linguistics to widen our understanding of this vast subject and the relationship between thought, language, and speech. The role of faith, that is the frame of reference employed throughout, is the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAAS).*

So, why study thought? The hallmark of the human being is his intellect, his ability to think, which distinguishes him from other creatures, and thus

* *Ṣallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. May the peace and blessings of God be upon him. Said whenever the name of Prophet Muhammad is mentioned.

FOREWORD

it behoves the human being to give utmost respect to this gift, to understand what it signifies and how to elevate it. For those spiritually aware thought should ideally be a function of that faith, yet the Muslims today demonstrate poor organizational skills in relation to information processing, and stagnate in intellectual decline. The author attempts to chart a way out. For instance the need for specialized government institutions, with proper platforms for gathering data, and organised interpretation of that information for effective strategies to benefit the whole of society.

Where dates are cited according to the Islamic calendar (hijrah) they are labelled AH. Otherwise they follow the Gregorian calendar and are labelled CE where necessary. Arabic words are italicized except for those which have entered common usage. Diacritical marks have been added only to those Arabic names not considered contemporary. English translations taken from Arabic references are those of the author.

Since its establishment in 1981, the IIIT has served as a major center to facilitate serious scholarly efforts. Towards this end it has, over the decades, conducted numerous programs of research, seminars and conferences, as well as publishing scholarly works specialising in the social sciences and areas of theology, which to date number more than seven hundred titles in English and Arabic, many of which have been translated into other major languages.

We are grateful to the translator, as well as all those directly or indirectly involved in the completion of this book.

IIIT
May 2020

INTRODUCTION

The issue of “thought” is complex, and its form and construction the subject of compelling modern discourse. Who is leading it and why? What is meant by the concept of ‘thought’? What place does it hold, and in what relation does it stand to the concepts of knowledge, culture, philosophy, literature, and *fiqh* (deep understanding, jurisprudence)? Where do we find the study of the notion of “thought” in school and university education? How is its evolution in the Islamic heritage understood? What programs of study or tools can be presented to those who wish to advance their intellect to become thinkers? How can we develop a test to measure the level of intellectual construction and building in individuals, groups, or societies? What is the relationship between thought and language? And what is meant by ‘schools of thought’?

These and similar questions are the result of observation. In the past few decades we have seen a significant increase in the number of Muslim youth searching for Islamic writings of an intellectual nature. This is partly due to their having grown tired of the predominantly scholarly-jurisprudential and/or cultural-activist orientations characteristic of large segments of the ‘Islamic Awakening’ (*al-Şaḥwah al-Islāmiyyah*) era youth movements of the last quarter of the twentieth century. It is an era that has also witnessed the emergence of a number of intellectual projects in the Islamic milieu, whose pioneers are unknown both in the traditional Islamic science institutions and traditional circles of Islamic movements and organizations.

Has this pursuit of Islamic intellectual writing been concurrent with a noticeably increasing interest in ‘human development’ projects? And, is it then that the need emerged to include the subject of ‘intellectual building’ within these programs?

Have observers of the intellectual affairs of the Arab world not noticed that a significant proportion of youth in this region have grown weary of the status quo in their countries? This status quo is the prevailing reality characterized by the political, religious, and media elites’ monopoly of influence around public intellectual knowledge that has served to create the crisis of the Ummah. The mixing between the binary oppositions of heritage

and modernity, independence and dependency, backwardness and progress, identity and globalization, the religious and civil, among other binaries has further intensified the sense of despair and frustration.

It is not easy to provide specific answers for the many questions that come to mind on the issue of thought; however, it may be said that the Muslim youth are fed up with the disorientation that has been afflicting the Ummah since the nineteenth century. They are now dejected citizens due to the intellectual elites who continue to reproduce the idea of 'renaissance', without offering any practical steps to create it.

At the same time, during the last quarter of the twentieth century institutions and centers sought to provide different types of psychological mobilization in the form of training programs, similar to what is presented in the West, known as 'human development' programs. Some of these institutions have chosen themes, such as, renaissance, civilizational building, intellectual education, or methods of thought, etc., to focus their work around raising awareness of the need for human and civilizational building. As such, they have sought to develop a sense of hope in the possibility of achieving such building. Further, youth have demanded 'intellectual building' in their aspiration to change the current reality. Hence, training institutes and centers have spread remarkably fast across the Arab World and are attempting to provide academic programs and training courses in the field of intellectual building.

There are, however, sincere efforts within this movement, by individuals who advocate a revival of Muslim societies in line with Islamic principles as part of their mission. They strive to design and use training programs to achieve this goal. Nonetheless, it seems that many other institutes that are strongly commercial in their objectives and practice almost completely dominate learning and thus impede the efforts of those institutes and the programs.

This book attempts to provide an in-depth conceptualization of intellectual building, and offers an introduction to the subject and a map of its main elements. The reader will find that some of the concepts and ideas provided in this book have been discussed in many other writings from a variety of viewpoints and examples. This book touches further concepts and ideas as they are seen as important, especially as the reader may find it difficult to obtain additional resources to further understand these concepts and ideas. In this case, we use this opportunity to determine the topics that need further thinking, research, and study, and offer various practical examples to exercise the desired capacities for intellectual building.

Mapping Intellectual Building

My approach in this book is to not focus on precise and comprehensive definitions of the concepts discussed but instead address the meanings of the concepts in the context of the semantic field to which they belong. This is to ensure that the reader might not concern him or herself with the memorizing of a specific text to comprehend the meaning, but rather have the opportunity to understand the concept as applied in different instances and, as such, gain an ability to express this understanding and comprehension through language that is embracing of the diversity of linguistic formulation and perspectives, and perhaps even the diversity of emotional expression.

It is also my deliberate approach not to use numerous examples of names of individuals, authors, institutions, or groups, even when the situation might necessitate such examples. I believe this task belongs to the reader to exercise a degree of intellectual expansion. The use of too many examples encroaches upon the readers' intellectual foundation to fill in the blanks of this foundation; the readers themselves ought to practice this creative intellectual process by linking to relevant examples from what they already know, then comparing and balancing between them until the example becomes clearer. Readers may not find the suitable example readily present in their minds, or the example may not be an element of their current intellectual building practice, and hence this becomes an invitation to think, and an opportunity to employ the appropriate means to complete the desired intellectual building capacity.¹

The book, nonetheless, references various authors and sources, either to document the source of an idea, where it is necessary to reference the place and page numbers of this idea, or for the purpose of seeking further knowledge on the subject, whereby the source is referenced in its entirety. In either case, readers are encouraged to critically read and scrutinize these references for problematic aspects. References included may at times lack precision and specification in the use of terms, or inaccuracies in absorbing the material within the epistemological domain to which they belong. This occurs especially when the author is, for example, not a specialist in psychology or philosophy, but quotes from books of psychology or philosophy ideas that are not without inherent contradictions within themselves, contradiction with the overall idea, or with the worldview from which the author attempts to intellectualize.

This book began as a set of ideas that I was asked to present impromptu to students of an intellectual training center. These ideas seem to have been of particular interest to other groups that work on programs of human development and youth empowerment. Therefore, this material was

presented several times, and with each time the ideas would crystallize and grow. There was, as a result, a need to document this process until the point of publication, which I hope will be of some value. Nonetheless, the author – and perhaps every author – is overcome by the feeling described by ‘Abd al-Rahīm al-Baysānī al-‘Asqalānī (d. 596 AH), a master rhetorician known as *al-Qādi al-Fadhil* (the Venerable Judge) who was one of the advisers of Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-Ayūbī, and who wrote to his friend al-‘Imād al-Isfahānī apologizing for the need to correct some words of his, stating: “Something occurred to me, I do not [know] if it occurred to you or not? I will tell you, I can see that no one writes a book on a particular day without saying the day after: “if this or that is changed it would be better, and if more was added it would be advisable, and if this was put forward it would be best, or if this was taken out it would be more beautiful. This is one of the greatest lessons, and an indication that deficiency overwhelms most human beings.”²

The translation of this book into English comes in response to numerous requests to make it available to English-speaking readers. My daughter, Banan F. Malkawi, has done meticulous work to render the book into English. Her work was not just translation, rather she reviewed the ideas, the original sources, and made numerous corrections. I am really grateful to her.

Finally, Dr. Anas Al-Shaikh Ali and Shiraz Khan at the IIIT London Office, as usual, have made great efforts in producing the book, I am very thankful to both of them, and to Dr. Wanda Krause for her editorial work.

I ask Allah (SWT) to benefit me with what I have presented, and forgive me for what I have lacked in, and may Allah help readers to recognize the value and importance of this book, and seek to develop its ideas.

All praise is due to Allah Almighty, Lord of the Worlds.

FATHI H. MALKAWI

Mapping Intellectual Building

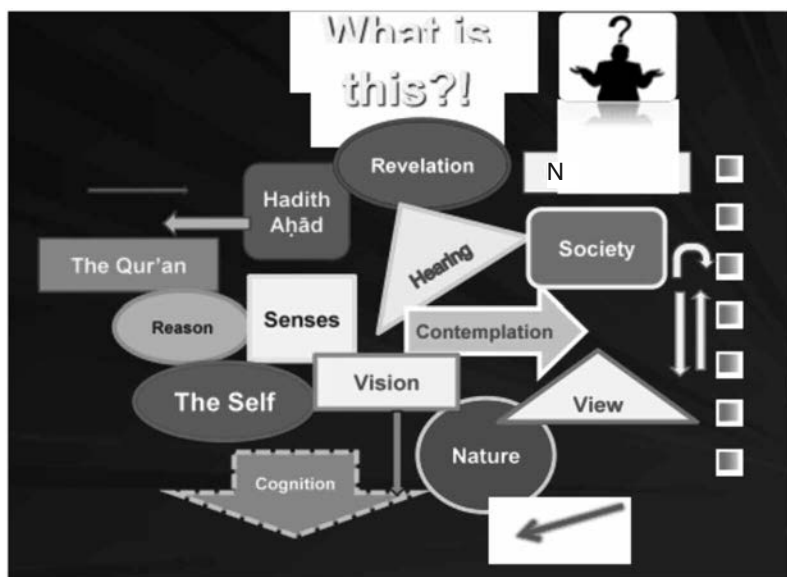
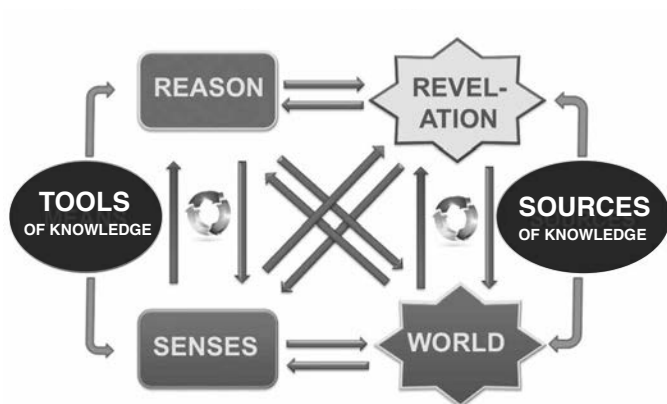


Diagram of the Equation of Epistemological Integration



1

Thought in Islamic Sources

Introduction

In this book, *Mapping Intellectual Building*, I would like to begin by emphasizing that we are concerned with Islamic thought, in particular. Therefore, our frame of reference in this context is the Islamic frame of reference through its foundational sources, primarily the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, followed by the understanding of the various scholars of Islam illustrated across the ages of these foundational sources, which forms part of the Islamic heritage or tradition. We defer discussion of any other understanding to later chapters. In terms of Islamic heritage, this book attempts to reflect on the diversity of perspectives that emerged throughout Islamic history on the topic of thought. Hence, in order not to confine the signification of thought (*fikr*) to certain ways in which it was understood in the Islamic tradition this discussion considers a variety of perspectives within the texts. The objective is, thus, to emphasize that those texts were composed in a Muslim society where the realities of *tawhīd*, the purification of the soul (*tazkiyah*), and *'umrān* were symbiotically complementary and integrated, and where each one of those domains had its specialists and proponents. The specific ways in which *fikr* might be confined is through preoccupation of the heart with monotheistic worship of God (*tawhīd*) and asceticism in worldly matters to the exclusion of developing and building the earth (*'umrān*) in accordance with God's Law and achieving security and justice.

This chapter also addresses the term 'Islamic thought' as a relatively modern term, whereas in previous times, the terms *'ilm* (knowledge/science) and *fiqh* (deep understanding/jurisprudence) were used instead, even though the terms *fikr* and *tafakkur* (contemplation) were prevalent in all the branches of religious knowledge. It concludes with an overview of thought and emotion, emphasizing that ideas are not devoid of emotions. Indeed, human thought is human consciousness of the self and its surroundings, and

human emotions are a fundamental element of the self. Our emotions play a significant role in making decisions or performing deeds.

We do not delve into lexicographical resources to explain the meaning of terms that we deal with in this chapter. This is because it is our view that the language of the Qur'an is inherently sufficient to indicate what this language signifies. Actually, and in many instances, we need dictionaries to understand human language to an extent greater than our need for them to understand the language of the Qur'an, as the Qur'an itself emphasizes repeatedly in *Surah al-Qamar*: "And We have indeed made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?" (54:17, 22, 32, 40).

In this chapter, we confine discussion to the concept of thought, and associated concepts. Hopefully, this would be a suitable prelude to discussing intellectual building in the following chapters.

1. Thought in the Qur'an and the Sunnah

Fikr, or thought, is an expression of an action performed by an individual, and it is the name of the fruit of action. On the one hand it is the action of reason, practice of insight and observation (*i'māl al-naẓar*), or the process of contemplation (*tafakkur*). On the other hand, it is the noun that is used to refer to the outcome and fruit of this action. The origin of *fikr* is the radical verb '*fakkara*', meaning to effect thinking and action of the mind; that is, to exercise mental activity, and hence the individual is a thinker, and the object is the element being thought about. To think about a matter is to contemplate it. God says: "For he thought [*fakkara*] and he [deliberated]" (74:18).

The plural of *fikr* is *afkār* (thoughts or ideas), and thinking is the process of mental activity relying on what is known in order to reach what is unknown. The concept of *fikr* occurs in the Qur'an in eighteen places, in five forms, all of which are in verb forms, as follows:

- *Fakkara*, one time: (74:18)
- *Yatafakkarū*, two times: (7:184), (30:8).
- *Tatafakkarū*, one time: (34:46).
- *Yatafakkarūn*, eleven times: (3:191), (7:176), (10:24), (13:3), (16:11, 44, 69), (30:21), (39:42), (45:13), (59:21).
- *Tatafakkarūn*, three times: (2:219, 266), (6:50).

Mapping Intellectual Building

Tafakkur does not merely mean the passing of an idea in the mind in an ordinary way, but rather denotes awareness, pursuit, and following-through. Ibn ‘Ashur says in his *Tafsīr*: “*Tafakkur* is to ponder and undertake the idea, which is the application of thought and the repeated reflection on what the indicators signify insofar as facts.”³

It suffices in this context to refer to the Qur’anic verse: “...Thus Allah makes clear to you His Signs: in order that you may consider- [give thought], (their bearings) on this life and the Hereafter” (2:219-220). This verse is indicative that *tafakkur* is not confined to eschatological matters of the Hereafter and what relates to the relationship of the individuals to their Lord in quest of reward in the Hereafter. *Tafakkur* applies also to temporal matters, which would be of benefit to the individual, society, and the Ummah in this world and in the Hereafter. In interpreting the part of the Qur’anic verse “...in order that you may give thought,” Ibn ‘Ashur says that the purpose is “so that the Ummah contemplates and acquires knowledge of the affairs of this world and the Hereafter, because contemplation applies to the conditions of this world and the afterlife...where it is meaningless for contemplation to occur on Judgment Day, for if it is confined to elucidating prohibition and obligation, and reward and punishment, it would have been a statement to think upon the matters of the Hereafter exclusively, while if it was confined to elucidating the benefits and harms, then it would be a statement to think upon the matters of this world exclusively, but the mention of benefits and harms, along with reward and punishment, entails the interests of the two realms [the temporal world and the Hereafter], and this indicates the necessity of reforming the affairs of the Ummah in this world.”⁴

Moreover, *fikr* and *tafakkur* occur frequently in the Qur’an in the form of a verb, and also through other terms, such as: *tadabbur*, *i’tibār*, *‘aql*, and *naẓar*, such as in the Qur’anic verse: “Do they not consider [yataḍabbirūn] the Qur’an with care? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy” (4:82). Al-Rāzī says in his commentary on this verse, “May you know that when God Almighty spoke about the hypocrites insofar as the facets of their cunning and connivance, it was entirely due to the fact that they did not believe that [the Prophet] was truthful in the Message that he conveyed, but rather believed that he was a slanderer and deceiver, and God commanded them to reflect and contemplate on the proofs indicative of the truth of his prophethood...and *tadbīr* and *tadabbur* [forethought] are a matter of consideration of the repercussions of things.”⁵ Similarly, Al-Shawkānī states in *Fath al-Qadīr*:

Afalā Yatadabbarūn: this is in repudiation...that is: do they not practice forethought? That is why they shun the Qur'an. It is said: *tadabbartu al-Shay'* is to contemplate and ponder upon the consequences of the matter. *Tadbīr* is when a person administers their affair as if they are looking and considering the aftermath and ramifications...Allah says: 'Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an [*yatadabbarūn*], or are their hearts locked up by them [from understanding it]?' (47:24), the verse indicates the imperativeness of *tadabbur* upon the Qur'an to reveal its meaning.⁶

Moreover, Muhammad Rashid Rida says in *Tafsīr al-Manār* in regard to this same verse: "...*al-tadabbur* is to consider the outcomes and consequences of matters, and *tadabbur* of words is to consider and contemplate their aims and purposes, and the fate of those that comply with them or violate them."⁷

It would be possible to deduce from the totality of the Qur'anic verses that deal with *tafakkur* (contemplation) a set of specific significations, including four basic elements, namely: the process of exerting mental effort, the manner in which the exerted effort takes place, the subject matter of *tafakkur*, and the aim or result of *tafakkur*.

In other words, we may identify the following elements of *tafakkur*:

1. The process of exerting intellectual effort, or engaging reason and thought concerning known matters, in order to achieve new specific aims and purposes.
2. A process that takes place by repeating, continuing, and reflecting on involvement in intellectual concerns with a view to achieve the desired outcomes.
3. Material for *tafakkur* that necessitates mental focus and contemplation upon its elements and the details of its subject matter.
4. The result of *tafakkur*, which is the actualization of the desired aim of effecting *tafakkur*, the aim of which includes drawing lessons or learning, thus forming a new acquisition of knowledge, followed by putting this acquired knowledge to use.

As for the Prophetic Hadith, the word *fikr* occurs in various locations in the compilations of the Sunnah, some of which occur accompanied by a Qur'anic text. The meaning is relayed by diverse terms, such as the words '*aql* (mind/reason), *naẓar* (sight/insight) and *tadabbur* (foresight/forethought). The term *fikr* also occurs in the language and classifications of the *muhaddithīn* (Hadith traditionists), in the books and chapters of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, and other books of Hadith such as the *Sunan* and *Musnads*.⁸ Furthermore, the term occurs in the language of Hadith

narrators from among the Prophet's companions, and it occurs through the texts of Qur'anic verses which the Hadiths mention.⁹ As is the case in the Qur'an, the meaning of *fikr* or thought occurs many times through the terms of 'aql, naẓar, and tadabbur. The Hadith of Ibn 'Abbās are among those that mention the word *tafakkur*: "Contemplate (think upon) all things but do not contemplate the actual Being of God."¹⁰ The word *tafakkur* is also mentioned in the Hadith of Rabī'ah ibn Ka'b, related by Imam Aḥmad in his *Musnad*: "...I engaged in self-thought and realized that the world is transient and ceasing..." and in another narration of the same Hadith: "However, I looked into my affair and recognized that the world is fleeting...". It becomes evident from the two narrations that *naẓar* is used interchangeably with *tafakkur*.¹¹

2. Thought in Islamic Heritage

The terms *fikr* and *tafakkur* as the process and the product of this process occur in many of the works of scholars in the Islamic heritage (*turāth*), occurring in the titles of some of their writings in view of the fact that the effort exerted by the authors is but a product of their thought on the subject of the book. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that 'thought' is the subject of the book. Examples of this are found among the following books:

1. *Nata'ij al-Afkār fī Tākhrīj Aḥādīth al-Adhkār* (The Results of Thoughts on the Takhrīj [the science of Hadith extraction and authentication] of Hadiths on Divine remembrances), by al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī (d. 852 AH), edited by Ḥamdī 'Abd al-Majīd al-Salafī, (2nd edn., Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2008).
2. *Nata'ij al-Afkār al-Qudsiyyah fī Bayān Sharḥ Ma'ānī al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah* (The Results of Sacred Thoughts on Elucidating the Meanings of the Qushayriyyah), Epistle of Zakariah al-Anṣārī al-Shāfi'ī, the Annotations of Muṣṭafa al-'Arūsī, (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2007). The book is an explanatory commentary by Al-'Arūsī on al-Anṣārī's commentary of al-Qushayrī's *al-Risālah*.
3. *Nata'ij al-Afkār fī Kashf al-Rumūz wa al-Asrār* (The Results of Thoughts on Revealing the Ciphers and Secrets), Volume 7, part of: *Al-Ināyah 'Ala al-Hidāyah*, annotations of al-Sa'dī on *Sharḥ al-Ināyah*, Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Qawdar (known as Qaḍī Zādeh Effendi), and in its margin: Akmal al-Dīn al-Bāberti, Sa'dī Jalabī Sa'ad Allah ibn 'Issa al-Mufti, (Egypt: al-Maṭba'ah al-Amīriyyah al-Kubrā, 1316 AH).

4. *Nata'ij al-Fikr wa Thamar al-Mu'allafāt* (The Results of Thought and the Fruit of Writings) by Aḥmad ibn Yūnis al-Khalīfī, (Jerusalem: al-Maktabah al-Barīdiyyah, 1827).
5. *Natījat al-Fikr fī al-Jahr bi al-Dhikr* (The Results of Thought on Saying Remembrance of God Aloud) by al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Suyūṭī, (Beirut: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 2002). This is a book of *fiqh*.
6. *Ḥusn Nata'ij al-Fikr fī Kashf Asrār al-Mukhtaṣar* (The Excellence of the Results of Thought on Revealing the Secrets of [Khalīl's Book] *al-Mukhtaṣar*) by al-Zarqānī 'Abd al-Bāqī ibn Yūsuf, (al-Aḥsaa, Saudi Arabia: The manuscripts of the library of King Faisal University). This is a book of *fiqh*.
7. *Nukhab al-Afkār fī Tanqīḥ Mabānī al-Akḥbār fī Sharḥ Sharḥ Ma'ānī al-Aṯḥār* (Selection of Best Thoughts in the Review of the Bases of Narration in the Commentary on [Al-Ṭahāwī's Book] *Sharḥ Ma'ānī al-Aṯḥār* [Explaining the Meanings of Traditions of the Companions and Followers]), by Imam al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Muḥaqqiq Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad al-'Aynī al-Ḥanafī (762-855 AH), edited by al-Sayyid Arshad al-Madani, (Jeddah: Dār al-Minhāj, 2011). This is a book of *fiqh*.
8. *Tawdīḥ al-Afkār li Ma'ānī Tanqīḥ al-Anzār* (Clarifying Thoughts on the Meanings of [Al-Wazīr's Book] *Tanqīḥ al-Anzār*), by Muḥammad ibn Isma'īl al-Amīr al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 1182 AH), (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah, 2010). This is also a book of *fiqh*.

Even though the term *fikr* and its plural *afkār* occur in the titles of this sample of books, none are about the subject of thought, thinking, or thoughts. However, we rarely find a book from the Islamic heritage that does not include an indication to the necessity of *tafakkur* and *tadabbur*, whether in the books of '*aqidah* (creed), *kalām* (Islamic theology), *fiqh* and *uṣūl al-fiqh* (Fundamentals of Jurisprudence), *tafsīr* (Qur'anic exegesis), or Sufi and *tazkiyah* treatises. Yet, many works have been written with *fikr* as the main subject, or included a chapter on the themes of *fikr* and *tafakkur*, '*aql* and *ta'aqqul* (reason), *dhikr* and *tadhakkur* (remembrance). It suffices here to refer to three scholars who are distant in time from each other, each of whom had his particular background, school of thought, and circumstances. Nonetheless, their presentation of the issues of reason and thought are almost completely congruent; they are al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243 AH), Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505 AH), and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751 AH). Between the first and the second is a period of around two and a half centuries, as is also between the second and the third.

The first of these '*ulamā*' is al-Muḥāsibī who discussed '*aql* (mind/

reason) and the differences among people about it, and whose book on this topic became a hallmark of his work in other writings. The second, al-Ghazālī, wrote a valuable chapter under the heading “*Kitāb al-Tafakkur*,” (The Book of Contemplation) which is the ninth book of the part on *al-Munjiāt* (things that deliver a person from torment) from his famous work *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* (Revival of Religious Sciences). The third, Ibn al-Qayyim, produced a major work on ‘ilm (knowledge) and *tafakkur*, entitled *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa‘ādah wa Manshūr Wilāyat Ahl al-‘Ilm wa al-‘Irādah* (The Key to the Abode of Happiness and the Decree of the Sovereignty of Knowledge and Will).

One of the published books of Imam al-Muḥāsibī is entitled *Kitāb al-‘Aql wa Fahm al-Qur’ān* (The Book on Reason and Understanding the Qur’an),¹² which was originally two books, the first *Mahīyat al-‘Aql wa Ma‘nah wa Ikhtilāf al-Nās Fīh* (The Essence and Meaning of Reason, and People’s Disagreement about it), and the second *Fahm al-Qur’ān wa Ma‘ānīh* (Understanding the Qur’an and Its Meanings). In the first book, al-Muḥāsibī elaborates his position on the argumentation that took place on the soundness of related Hadiths concerning reason, ‘aql, which was in reaction to Mu‘tazilite thought, the dominant culture of his age. The Mu‘tazilites emphasized the role of reason in religion, and relied on narrated Hadiths about reason. On the other hand, Ahl al-Hadith (traditionists), under the leadership of Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, confronted the Mu‘tazilites by challenging the soundness of these Prophetic traditions. The position of al-Muḥāsibī, who began his life a traditionist (*Muḥaddith*), is that these Hadiths are compatible with the significations of Qur’anic verses, and that the Prophet’s companions and their immediate successors related sayings about reason that do not depart from the context of these Hadiths. In his particular method in this relatively small book on *al-‘aql* (as is the case with his method in his larger book *al-Ri‘āyah li Ḥuqūq Allah*), al-Muḥāsibī begins his work with the Qur’an, then proceeds to the Sunnah, and then the traditions related by the Companions and the successors. Based on this method, he emphasizes the necessity for the believer to comprehend (*ya‘qil*) in the Book of Allah; that is, to seek deep understanding and engage in elucidation of it. Hence, we find his phrase regarding the action of ‘aql (reason) as a verb recurring in every paragraph of the book “‘aqala ‘an Allah...” (comprehended about God), “for understanding and elucidation is termed ‘aql, because it is a product of reason.”¹³

Al-Muḥāsibī concludes the book by explaining the signification and meaning of ‘aql and its centrality to the activity of the individual human, whereby he says:

The servant of God has no substitute for thinking, reflecting, and remembering, in order to enhance his learning of lessons and augment his knowledge, and raise his status, for one whose thinking decreases his standing by result diminishes, and one who is less edified then his knowledge diminishes, and one whose knowledge diminishes only increases in ignorance, and his deficiency becomes evident, and [he] shall not have savored the taste of *birr* (righteousness), nor enjoyed the contentment of rightness, nor attained the spirit of wisdom. Of what use is the knowledge of one who has only studied knowledge with his tongue, and memorized its words by his heart, but failed to reflect, remember, and have forethought of its meanings and extracting its benefits...Genuine attainment is only through prolonged pondering, reflection, remembrance, and repeated thought.¹⁴

In the book *Fahm al-Qur'ān*, al-Muḥāsibī begins by discussing God's creation of the creations, and the choosing of "Adam and his descendants, whereby He formed the covenant based on their innate accepting minds, hearts, and understanding, for them to practice forethought, insofar as they are endowed with the rules of comprehension, whereby He endowed them with the proof of reason." Then he includes a heading "*Fī al-'aql*," (On Reason) stating in it:

...and [God] addressed them through their reason where He says: 'It is those who are endued with understanding who will remember,' 'for people who use reason' and 'for the people who contemplate'; this is because He rendered minds or reason to be the essence of wisdom and the source of opinion and understanding, the bastion of knowledge, and the light of vision...And Allah Almighty did not give them certain belief in Him and His words by virtue of their direct vision of God, nor by their consideration of what He promised and admonished, but rather by virtue of their understanding of what God Almighty says in His Book, through remembrance, thinking, contemplation and forethought, whereby they engage in frequent cognition and remembrance, and ponder the ultimate outcomes...¹⁵

Al-Muḥāsibī adds: "Subsequently, He told them that He revealed His Book for them to reflect on it with their reason...and then He said: 'they may ponder over its verses,' whereby He told that He revealed it for remembrance and contemplation upon it, specifying in particular people of reason and rationality: "*ulū al-albāb*."¹⁶

In his larger and more famous book entitled *al-Ri'āyah li Ḥuqūq Allah* (Observance of the Rights of God), al-Muḥāsibī states at the outset under the title "*Bāb fī Awwal mā Yajibu 'ala al-'Abd Ma 'rifatuhu wa al-Tafakkuru*

Mapping Intellectual Building

Fīh” (Chapter on the Foremost Matter which a Servant of God Should Know and Contemplate Upon):

I said: ‘What is your principal commandment to me?’ He said: ‘to know that you are a servant under the Sovereignty of God... Therefore, reflect on and contemplate the purpose of your creation... whereupon if you know that you are a servant under Divine sovereignty, and you understand why you were created... you shall know that there is no salvation for the servant of God except by obeying his Lord, and that the manifestation of obeying his Lord is knowledge, and then obedience to the commands and prohibitions of God... because obedience is the means to salvation, and knowledge is the guide to the straight path, for the essence of obedience is piety, and the essence of piety is fear of God [righteousness], and the essence of righteousness is holding the self to account, and the essence of self-accountability is fear and hope.’ I said: ‘How is fear and hope attained?’ He said, ‘by magnifying knowledge of the magnitude of God’s promise and admonition...’

And I said: ‘How is fear of consequence attained?’ He said: ‘by remembrance and thought on the afterlife and the ultimate outcomes; because God Almighty knows that the servant, if concealed from him fear and hope, will become God-fearing only by remembrance and reflection...’

I said: ‘the thought might escape me and I would not know its path, so what actually unveils it?’ He said: ‘the coming together of concern and the demand for reason, and placing of trust in God rather than in reason... Reason occurs when there is concern; because the mind is diverted from understanding and thought about the afterlife by being preoccupied with the concerns of this world, whereas if concern is strongly present then reason will occur, and will not eschew reflection on what pleases God Almighty.’

And it has been reported by Abū al-‘Āliyah that it was said to him: ‘what leads to thought?’ He said: ‘the occurrence of concern, for when the Servant of God feels concern, he contemplates, and if he contemplates he observes, and if he observes he acquires sound vision.’¹⁷

In *Risālat al-Mustarshidīn* (Treatise for the Seekers of Guidance), al-Muḥāsibī advises, “Know that there is no better adornment than reason, nor a better garment than knowledge; because God is known only by reason, and is obeyed only by knowledge.”¹⁸

We conclude by citing what al-Muḥāsibī says in *Kitāb al-Waṣāyā* (The Book of Spiritual Counsels): “Asceticism varies in the hearts of the ascetics, for each one of them is ascetic to the extent of their knowledge, and their knowledge is to the extent of their reason, and their reason is to the extent of their faith.”¹⁹ It is as if al-Muḥāsibī renders faith as primary and from it emanates each of reason and knowledge that the level of faith determines

the level of rationality and comprehension, and the level of rationality determines the level of acquisition of knowledge.

In discussing the influence of Imam al-Muḥāsibī on Islamic thought, it suffices to mention what Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī states in his treatise *al-Munqidh Min al-Ḍalāl* (Deliverance from Error) insofar as falling into the pitfall of doubt and anxiety, and his striving to overcome it by studying the schools of thought known in his age, beginning with the writings of the theologians, then philosophers, then esotericists (al-Baṭīniyyah), and finally Sufis. He says that he began “acquiring their knowledge by reading works, such as *Qūt al-Qulūb* by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī and the works of al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī...”²⁰ And even though al-Ghazālī did not specify which of al-Muḥāsibī’s books he read, his treatise *al-Munqidh Min al-Ḍalāl* is akin, in terminology and meanings, to the contents of al-Muḥāsibī’s writings, in addition to the numerous topics addressed by al-Ghazālī in *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* which are similar to al-Muḥāsibī’s al-Ri‘āyah.

In the chapter on *tafakkur* in the section of “*al-Munjiyāt*” from *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* (Revival of the Religious Sciences), al-Ghazālī discusses the virtue of contemplation, and elucidates the reality and fruits of thought, and the method of contemplating God’s creation.²¹

Al-Ghazālī asserts that thought is the beginning and the key to all good, and connects thought with its fruit by saying:

As regards the fruits of thought: these are the sciences, conditions, and actions, but its special fruit is solely knowledge; indeed, when knowledge is formed in the heart the state of the heart changes. When the state of the heart changes, the functions of the limbs change. Functions follow the state of the heart, which itself follows knowledge, and knowledge follows thought. Thought, then, is the beginning and the key to all good, and this is what reveals to you the virtue of contemplation, and that it is superior to *dhikr* and *tadhakkur* (remembrance), because thought includes remembrance and much more ... Hence, contemplation is superior to the totality of actions... There are, in this context, five steps:

First: *tadhakkur* (Remembrance), which is to evoke the two forms of knowledge in the heart.

Second: *tafakkur* (Contemplation), which is to seek the knowledge intended by both of them.

Third: attainment of the intended knowledge and the resultant illumination of the heart.

Fourth: change of the state of the heart from its former condition due to the light of knowledge.

Fifth: the limbs’ service of the heart according to the renewed state of the heart.²²

Mapping Intellectual Building

Al-Ghazālī reports that al-Ḥassan al-Baṣrī said, “The people of knowledge have been resorting to thought through remembrance of God, and resorting to remembrance through thought, imploring their hearts to speak, until their hearts gushed forth with wisdom.”²³

As for Ibn al-Qayyim, we choose two of his books to explain the manner in which he treats the issues of thought and contemplation, which are *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa‘ādah wa Manshūr Wilāyat Ahl al-‘Ilm wa al-‘Irādah* and *al-Fawā’id*.

In the first book, “The Key to the Abode of Happiness”, Ibn al-Qayyim refers to the story of the descent of Adam to earth, and God’s promise to Adam and his descendants to give them guidance, and that those who follow guidance shall not go astray nor fall into misery, but rather shall enjoy happiness in this world, as is evidenced in the following verse: “(Allah) said: ‘Get down, both of you – all together, from the Garden, with enmity one to another: but if, as is sure, there comes to you Guidance from Me, whosoever follows My Guidance, will not lose his way, nor fall into misery’” (20:123). Ibn al-Qayyim then emphasizes that the degrees of happiness and success are achieved through: “strength of perception and vision, and what follows of science, knowledge, and speech, and the strength of will and love and what follows of intent, determination, and action.”²⁴

The two principles, he says, are “knowledge and will, where will is the gate to attainment [of happiness], and knowledge is the key to that gate, the opening of which is dependent on knowledge, and where the perfection of each human being materializes with these two types: determination that elevates his standing, and knowledge that gives him vision and guidance.”²⁵

The book in its entirety is thereafter an expounding of the first principle: namely knowledge and its superiority and honor, and an elucidation of the general need for it. Ibn Al-Qayyim elaborates on the virtue of knowledge in 153 facets. The last of these facets comes under the heading “The saying of some of the *salaf* (early generation of Muslims): *tafakkur* (contemplation) for one hour is superior to worship for sixty years.” He then writes in the fields of *tadhakkur* (remembrance) details that span 280 pages. It is noteworthy that the classifications of Ibn al-Qayyim of the topic of *tafakkur* almost correspond exactly with Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī’s classifications; however, they are more detailed. In fact, many of the excerpts which Ibn al-Qayyim includes in his book *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa‘ādah* are from the sayings of the early generations, and are the same quotations which al-Ghazālī includes in his *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, despite the more than two and a half centuries separating the two renowned scholars, and despite the differences between them in their jurisprudential affiliation and philosophical and theological leanings.

Ibn al-Qayyim returns to discuss *tafakkur* in another book, entitled *al-Fawā'id* (A Collection of Wise Sayings), which is of no less significance than *Miftāḥ*. In it, he discusses in some detail the relationship of thoughts with actions and what they entail of processes of transformation and development within the human being. He states, “the basis of every theoretical knowledge and practical action is ideas and thoughts, for they necessitate conceptualizations, and the latter foster wills, and wills involve the occurrence of action, and frequent repetition provides habit, where the soundness of these steps depends on the soundness of the ideas and thoughts, and their corruption also leads to their corruption.”²⁶ These ideas are varied in benefit and quality, and human beings have an innate ability to pursue what occurs to them of ideas, whereby they select from them what is of benefit, and exclude what is harmful. Ibn al-Qayyim says, “The ideas and thoughts that occur in the mind are like the grain that is put in the rotating mill, and the mill never stops grinding, and it necessarily requires something to be placed in it. Among people are those whose mill grinds grain to produce flour that is beneficial to themselves and to others, but most people grind sand, dirt, stones and so forth, and when the time of kneading and baking arrives, the reality of their grind becomes apparent to them.”²⁷

Ibn al-Qayyim elaborates on the relationship between contemplation and remembrance through his examination of the contexts in which the two processes occur in the Qur'an. For example, he mentions the following verses: “(10) It is He who sends down rain from the sky: from it you drink, and out of it (grows) the vegetation on which you feed your cattle; (11) With it He produces for you corn, olives, date-palms, grapes and every kind of fruit: verily in this is a sign for those who give thought [*yatafakkarūn*]; (12) He has made subject to you the Night and the Day; the sun and the moon; and the stars are in subjection by His Command: verily in this are signs for [those who reason: *ya'qilūn*]; (13) And the things on this earth which He has multiplied in varying colors (and qualities): verily in this is a sign for [those who praise Allah in remembrance: *yadhakkarūn*]” (16:10-13). In his commentary on these verses, Ibn al-Qayyim refers to the status of *tafakkur* in the first verse, and the status of *ta'aqqul* in second verse, and the status of *tadhakkur* in the third verse; he states:

In Allah Almighty's designation of *Ahl al-tadhakkur*, or the people of remembrance, the method of the Qur'an is to render His signs and proofs for remembrance and enlightened vision, as Allah says in *Surah Qāf*: “And the earth - We have spread it out, and set thereon mountains standing firm,

Mapping Intellectual Building

and produced therein every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs). [An insight] to be observed and [a Reminder] commemorated by every devotee turning (to Allah)” (50:7-8); thus, *al-tabṣirah* (insight) is rational illumination, and *al-tadhkirah* is *tadhakkur* or remembrance, and *fikr* (thought) is the gateway and the first stage of this, whereby if people think they would gain insight, and if they gain insight they will remember. In the above verses, remembrance is mentioned as a stage that follows reason, and reason is based on thought; thought is mentioned as the first stage, for it is the entrance and gate, and He positioned reason in the middle ground, for it is the fruit of thought and its product, and He rendered remembrance last for it is what is wanted from thought and reason. Hence, reflect upon this very well.

If you say: ‘what is the difference between remembrance and contemplation?’ ... I would say: ‘contemplation and remembrance... are the basis of guidance and success, and the two pivots of happiness... So let it be known that contemplation is the search of the heart to acquire from the knowledge already attained knowledge that is yet to be attained. This is the reality about thought, for if there is no objective to be sought, then thought would be impossible; contemplation without a focal subject is not possible, and these facts are already acquired. If the desired knowledge is already known there will be no thought. Realizing this, we say that the contemplating person proceeds from the premises and assumptions he already knows towards the end he strives to unveil. Once this is attained and acquired, he shall remember on the basis of that, and perceive what to seek and what to shun, and what should be avoided. Thus remembrance is the intent of contemplation and its fruit... Once the person remembers, that remembrance enhances his contemplation to the extent that he is rational...; because knowledge and the will have no limits to stop at, but rather the person continues to draw on knowledge and will, indefinitely. If you realize the meaning that the signs of God are eye-openers and reminders, enlightening one to overcome the heart’s blindness, and to awaken it from its forgetfulness, for the antithesis of knowledge is either the heart’s blindness, which is remedied by enlightened vision and insight, or its forgetfulness, which is remedied by divine remembrance.’²⁸

On the associations between the various terms that connote different manifestations and utilization of thought, Ibn al-Qayyim states:

Hence, ‘thought’ is to evoke two forms of knowledge in the heart, in order to produce a third form of knowledge. This third form of knowledge may be a matter that was heard without complete certainty or verification, or to reach conviction of its soundness, and in both cases the person shall possess levels of knowledge of the matter, which is called contemplation, remembrance, insight, meditation, consideration (learning lessons), forethought, and enlightened vision. These are similar meanings that converge in one

thing, and diverge in another: where it is termed *tafakkur* (contemplation) because it is a utilization and evocation of the thought. And, it is termed *tadhakkur* (remembrance) because it is an evocation of the knowledge which must be considered after the person forgets and is absent from it...

And it is termed *naẓar* (insight); because it involves the heart perceiving what is looked into. And it is termed *ta'amul* (meditation); because it is reconsideration again and again, until it is unveiled and uncovered for the heart.

And it is termed *i'tibār* (learning a lesson); which is a pattern of crossing from it to another, and proceeding from the matter of which the person thought about to a third form of knowledge, which is the intent of *i'tibār*, and that is why it is called *'ibra* (lesson); acknowledging that this knowledge has become known to the person who will cross over from it to what is intended by it...

And it is termed *tadabbur* (forethought); because it is forethought of the outcomes and consequences of matters...*Tadabbur* of words is to consider its beginning and end, then reflecting again and again...

And it is termed *istibṣār* (enlightened vision), which is the unraveling and unveiling of the matter to the vision. And each of remembrance and contemplation has a benefit other than the benefit of the other; for remembrance connotes the recurrent apprehension of the heart of what it knows, in order to instill the meaning without its being removed from the heart, and contemplation denotes augmenting knowledge and bringing about what was not known to the heart...²⁹

Thus, goodness and happiness are in a closet, the key of which is contemplation, for there must be contemplation, and knowledge is the outcome of thought, and a state occurring to the heart from such knowledge. For each person who knows something that is loved or hated, this produces a state in the heart, and the heart is imbued by his knowledge, and this state necessitates for him will, and that will necessitates the occurrence of action. In this context, there are five matters: thought, and its fruit is knowledge, and their fruit is the state produced in the heart, and the fruit of this is will, and the fruit of will is action... Thought is, then, the principle and key to all good... And generally speaking, the basis of each form of obedience is thought. Likewise, the basis of every sin is actually a result of a thought.³⁰

At this point of the discussion, the reader may endeavor to clarify what he or she attained in terms of the meanings and connotations of *tafakkur*, *tadhakkur* and *tadabbur* and the relationships or differences between them.

3. Thought as *Tawḥīd*, *Tazkiyah*, and *‘Umrān*

The teachings of al-Muḥāsibī and other scholars regarding *tazkiyah* (purification of the self), is instructive. The processes of rationalization, contemplation, and remembrance in which a person engages in order to attain *taqwa* (piety), *zuhd* (asceticism or disinclination towards worldly life), and quest for the afterlife, does not mean that the person should not enjoy a worldly life. Enjoying a worldly life entails interacting with scholars, attending their lessons, traveling in quest of knowledge, seeking provisions of life, and seeking to develop professional skills, such as in trade, or agriculture. All such endeavors require one to practice reason and engage in thought and remembrance. Furthermore, contemplation and remembrance are essential practices for the reward of believers who strive in the path of God.

Hence, seeking to benefit from worldly life and seeking the afterlife through effort means sowing in this world and reaping in the Hereafter. Those who understand what God commands of them are keen to carry out His command, such as when God commands compassion and mercy towards His creations. Compassion is reflected in the individuals' relationship with others. Al-Muḥāsibī says that if “the person understands God’s command of compassion, he would compel his heart to have compassion to the Ummah, whereby he would love the ones with good deeds, would feel compassion towards those that commit misdeeds, would ask God Almighty – if possible – for them to take heed, would not withhold money from the poor... whoever would ask him for something within his means he would not decline... he would not be averse to forgiving those who injured and harmed him, and would consider all of them to be the nearest of creatures to him, where the elderly among them is like his father, and the young is like his offspring.”³¹ Al-Muḥāsibī adds that if this person comprehends God’s command of learning and reform he would “remind people of what they learned but forgot, and he would alert the lax of what they are distracted from doing, and he would point out to the deviant from the straight path that they have strayed.”³²

It is also worthy to note that just as believers undertake reasoning, contemplation, and remembrance in quest of what they desire of the matters of this world and the Hereafter, so do unbelievers as well undertake these processes in quest of knowledge of what is apparent of this world, and some people attain an astounding degree of worldly knowledge. In this context, al-Muḥāsibī relates on the authority of al-Ḥassan al-Baṣrī concerning the Qur’anic verse: “They know but the outer things in the life of this world:

but of the End of things they are heedless” (30:7). He says, “Indeed, by God, some have attained a knowledge of the world reaching a point where he would hold a coin in his hand and would inform you of its weight, while having meager knowledge of how to pray.”³³

Furthermore, while in the section of “*al-Munjiyāt*” in his book *Ihyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, al-Ghazālī presents details about *tafakkur* upon the recited verses (*āyāt*) of God and the observed signs (*āyāt*) of God, which result in knowing God and approaching Him through *zuhd* (disinclination) towards worldly life and quest for the Afterlife, he posited several requirements of *tafakkur* in the matters of livelihood, related to the types of occupations and professions, eating, clothing, matters of marriage and etiquette of social life. In every chapter, he commences with citing what is relevant to the topic from Qur’anic verses and Prophetic Hadiths. He then follows with the sayings of the Prophet’s Companions and their succeeding generations as well as other predecessors. Even in discussing *zuhd*, he speaks at length about the necessities of life and the levels of asceticism in regard to fulfilling these necessities. Hence, there are necessities which must be fulfilled to a certain measure, among them matters related to the ordinary habits of people. Such include contemplation and reflection around the performing of necessities, and the knowledge and skills in performing them well.

Ibn al-Qayyim also discusses some examples of the involvement of individuals in worldly life. He says: “God Almighty, just like He loves beauty in words, deeds, attire and outward appearance, He hates ugliness in words, deeds, attire and outward appearance. He Almighty hates ugliness and its people, and loves beauty and its people.”³⁴ He then discusses a group of people who were misled in their view of beauty, where even the ‘knowing’ among this group “consider beauty to exist in the absolute sense and do not see that there is ugliness in existence, and those have no sense of jealousy for the sake of God, and no hatred and enmity for His sake, or denouncing what is evil, or strive for His sake, or enforce His *hudūd* (punishments and limitations).”³⁵ Hence, Ibn al-Qayyim does not perceive a problem in yearning for the Hereafter, striving in the path of the seekers towards it, and conforming with what God commands in terms of loving what is beautiful and disliking what is ugly, including loving and hating for the sake of God, engaging in effort to the greatest possible level for His sake, and the enforcement of His *hudūd*, all congruently.

He settles the dispute in the aesthetic matter by saying, “...beauty in image, attire, and appearance is of three kinds: one of which is commendable, one blameworthy, and one neither. The commendable is what is done for the sake of God, and which helps in obeying God and implementing His

Mapping Intellectual Building

commands, such as when the Prophet used to adorn himself when receiving delegations. This is like wearing armor for combat, or wearing silk in war and being boastful of it. Such is commendable if it includes elevating the Word of God, supporting His religion, and spiting His enemies...³⁶ Ibn al-Qayyim lays down a classification of the types of thought under the heading “A Beneficial Rule,” where he says, “The origin of good and evil begins in one’s contemplation. Thought is the basis of will, seeking *zuhd*, avoidance, love and hate. The most beneficial kind of thought is the thought devoted to the interests of the Hereafter, and the means of attaining them, as well as thought in avoiding that which does not serve the path to the Hereafter, and means of avoiding them. These are four of the loftiest thoughts, followed by four others: thought devoted to worldly interests, and the means of attaining them, thought devoted to the corruption of the world, and means of avoiding corruption. The thoughts of rational people revolve around these eight kinds.”³⁷

Based on the foregoing, it is expected from the believer, as he or she responds to the insistent and repeated call of God Almighty with numerous terms to practice thought, consideration, insight, reason, forethought, and deep understanding, to begin this response with a series of stages of learning, deepened understanding, and increase in knowledge that is compatible with the details offered by the Qur’anic verses and signs in various domains, among these: cosmic verses, which number in excess of 1,300 verses in the Qur’an, and other verses that illuminate the creation of the human being stage after stage, the alternation of night and day, the formation of the heavens, leveling the earth, the growth of plants and the wondrous animals, the basic purpose of which is *tafakkur* (contemplation). There are also the verses about stories, history, and past civilizations, which are, as Ibn Taymiyyah relays, a third of the Qur’an,³⁸ the basic purpose of which is *ītibār* (to draw lessons). Furthermore, the recited verses of the Qur’an, as a whole, have the purpose of stirring *tadabbur* (forethought), as evidenced in the following verses: “(Here is) a Book which We have sent down unto you, full of blessings, that they may mediate [*li yaddabarū*] on its Signs, and that [those] of understanding may receive admonition” (38:30), and “Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur’an [*yataḍabbarūn*]” (47:24).

Taddabur of Qur’anic verses in general, and *tafakkur* on the cosmic verses in particular, and gaining *ītibār* from the stories of the past, all aim to lead ultimately to belief in the Creator; in His Oneness, Names and Attributes, and then to earnestly strive to *tazkiyah* (purify the heart and the self) by yearning for the good pleasure of the One Creator, and avoiding His wrath.

But what actually happens on the path towards this destination is prolonged contemplation, the drawing of lessons, and consideration during such striving, which leads to building thought, knowledge, understanding, and discovery.

From where, then, do the laws and theories come? Are they not scientific and intellectual elaborations of that knowledge, understanding, and discovery, and the result of the required measurement, comparison, and experimentation?

And what is the value of these sciences and discoveries if they are not accompanied by practical applications and real benefits that facilitate for the seekers the means in this life and on this earth, the means to bear the *amānah* (trust) in this world, to fulfill the *khilāfah* (vicegerency) on earth, and to comprehend the practical significance of the verses of *taskhīr* (subjection for the purpose of utilization) and gain enlightened vision of the verses of *tamkīn* (empowerment)?

And did not God fulfill the supplication of Abraham in the construction of the Sacred Sanctuary (Ka'bah), to ensure that the land is safe and endowed with provisions through the voyage of the winter and summer, whereby He fed them from hunger and afforded them security from fear?

Trade, industry, agriculture, the enactment of laws and legislations that provide security and infrastructure, management of civil relationships between individuals, groups and nations, and the management of the affairs of society, the economy, and political life, etc., all are beneficial sciences. So why, then, did not the believers in the Hereafter excel in them while engaging in *tafakkur* and *tadabbur* on the path to the Hereafter? Was it not possible for these sciences to develop and become an extension of the seeds planted by the predecessors from among the scholars as relates to the *fiqh* of worldly transactions?

Should Muslim societies achieve all of this while they simultaneously strive towards God, or would such have impeded their ability to reach their ultimate destination? True, people will be on the path yet will be distracted from considering the consequences and destination towards God, and some of them may become afflicted with oblivion, pride, and arrogance over knowledge that they possess: for “They know but the outer things in the life of this world: but of the End of things they are heedless” (30:7), and those may be the majority of people, for “...but most of the people do not know. They know but the outer things in the life of this world: but of the End of things they are heedless” (30:6-7). Nevertheless, believers ought to be more aware of this knowledge than other people; because they combine the knowledge around the larger matters of this world and understand such as,

in fact, the path to the Hereafter. Muḥammad al-Shanqīṭī says that if Muslims learn these worldly sciences, and:

...where all their teaching and utilization is congruent with what God has commanded...they would be the noblest and most beneficial of sciences, because they may be harnessed to raise high the Word of God, and achieve His pleasure and the rectification of the conditions of this world and the Hereafter. Hence, there is no fault in acquiring these sciences, as God Almighty says: ‘Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power’ (8:60), for endeavoring to prepare the necessary power in compliance with God’s command, to seek His pleasure and to raise high His Word, is not of the same kind as the knowledge of the unbelievers who are heedless of the Hereafter.³⁹

If this combination and union of *tawḥīd* (Oneness of God), *tazkiyah* (purification of the self), and *‘umrān* (civilizational development) is actualized, then the cosmic, psychological, social, and historical verses, as well as the verses of the Qur’an, as a whole, shall become headings of the themes of *tafakkur*, *tadabbur*, and *i’tibār*, and topics for profound research projects that would expand the frontiers of knowledge through time, and elevate the Muslim Ummah to the position of leadership and pioneership.

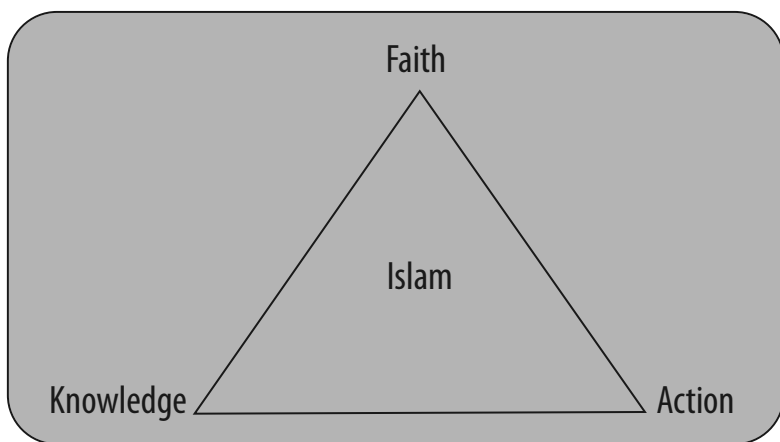
However, and while God Almighty castigates those who only know the external aspects and phenomena of this life, and who are heedless of the Hereafter, it is nonetheless a deficiency for those who claim to have knowledge of the Hereafter – while being ignorant of the worldly sciences – to say: praise be to God, for them is this world and for us is the Hereafter; or to say: praise be to God for providing for us those unbelievers who are heedless of the Hereafter, and who are immersed in this world, to extract from our lands minerals and petroleum, and who industrially produce for us splendid things, and who provide us with the finest foods, beverages and clothes, in order for us to be preoccupied with the Hereafter just as they are preoccupied with this world! Woe to them!

4. Thought as Faith, Knowledge, and Action

Religion in the essential Islamic understanding is: faith, knowledge, and action. Yet, wherein then lies the position of thought relative to these three concepts? In the previous discussion, we quoted texts for al-Muḥāsibī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn al-Qayyim regarding the relationship of thought with knowledge and action, in light of the understanding of these scholars and

others like them of the Divine Guidance and the Prophetic elaborations. It is clear that thought is a fundamental element of these three components. We, thus, emphasize, as Ibn al-Qayyim states: “The basis of every theoretical *knowledge* and practical *action* is ideas and *thoughts*...”⁴⁰

Through observing the Qur’anic associations between the concepts of faith, knowledge, and action, we can gain a better understanding of the position of thought relative to these three concepts.



4.1 Association of Faith with Knowledge

It pleases those interested in the numerical inimitability of the Qur’an to calculate the number of times in which a certain word is mentioned in the Qur’an, or the term and its derivatives, to arrive at particular conclusions. Certainly, these conclusions are based on an intellectual effort, or *ijtihad*, in understanding that may or may not be correct. Nonetheless, some numerical findings are interesting. For example, the term *īmān* (faith) and its derivatives occur 811 times in the Qur’an. The term *‘ilm* (knowledge/science) and its derivatives occur 782 times; moreover, the term *ma‘rifah* (knowledge) and its derivatives occur 29 times. The numerical total of the two subjects is 811, which is equal to the number of places in which the term *īmān* and its derivatives occur!⁴¹

The relationship between faith and knowledge is, in reality, the

Mapping Intellectual Building

relationship between faith and thought, for faith in Islam is an intellectual responsibility that is actualized through rationalization of the subjects of faith, knowledge of its realities, remembrance of its elements, and consideration of its contents. Through this responsibility, the humanness of the human being is actualized and his or her dignity is respected. Thus, faith without this knowledge is a degradation of the responsibility of the human being, and a deprivation of his or her dignity. In this connection, the knowledgeable and the ignorant are not on equal footing, for the knowledgeable is secure by virtue of his or her faith, while the faith of the ignorant is shaken upon the first trial; God says: “Say: ‘Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?’ It is those who are endowed with understanding that receive admonition” (39:9).

God associates *īmān* (faith) with *‘ilm* (knowledge) in numerous verses, including: “But those endowed with knowledge and faith will say: ‘Indeed you did tarry, within Allah’s decree, to the Day of Resurrection, and this is the Day of Resurrection, but you - you were not aware’” (30:56). Ibn ‘Ashūr explains the entwining of the words *īmān* and *‘ilm* in this verse by stating: “He made the conjunction of faith and knowledge and gave it importance; because knowledge without faith does not guide to the true beliefs through which gains of the Afterlife are achieved...”⁴² This conjunction of faith and knowledge occurs in numerous other verses, including: “...Allah will rise up, to suitable ranks and degrees, those of you who believe and who have been granted [well-grounded] knowledge. And Allah is well-acquainted with all you do” (58:11), and: “But those among them who are well-grounded in knowledge, and the believers, believe in what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed before you: And (especially) those who establish regular prayer, and practice regular charity [Zakat] and believe in Allah and in the Last Day, to them shall We soon give a great reward” (4:162).

Faith is entwined and associated with knowledge in the Prophetic Hadith as well. Yazīd ibn ‘Amīrah related that “Mu‘adh ibn Jabal, when he was about to die, was asked: ‘O Abū ‘Abd al-Rahmān, advise us.’ He said: ‘Make me sit,’ and then he said: ‘knowledge and faith are available, so whosoever seeks them will find them,’ and he said this thrice...”⁴³

On the extent of the association of faith with knowledge, Ibn al-Qayyim states:

Faith and certain belief bequeath soundness of knowledge and will, and these foster faith and nurture it. From here, it becomes evident that most people who deviate from faith do so due to their deviation from sound

knowledge and will. Faith does not materialize except through receiving knowledge from the beacon of prophethood and the liberation of the will from the impurities of whims and passion of creation, whereby their knowledge is derived from the beacon of Revelation and the orientation of their will is towards God and the Hereafter. Such people are of the soundest knowledge and deeds, and are among the imams who guide people by the commands of God and are the successors of the Prophet (SAAS) in his ummah.⁴⁴

However, *‘ilm* in the Islamic view is knowledge in the broad Qur’anic sense, which includes knowledge of the science of things (natural and material sciences), and knowledge of the facts of behavior, psychology, society (human and social sciences), and knowledge of creed and matters of belief (religious sciences). All of these may be beneficial sciences. God elevates the value of beneficial knowledge, enjoins acquiring it, and favors scholars and scientists. God favors some of those He has chosen from among people who He granted beneficial knowledge, whereby the value of knowledge and its benefits are actualized when the knowledgeable employ their knowledge in beneficial action; for Dhū al-Qarnayn utilized his knowledge in engineering and the sciences of minerals to build an impregnable wall to protect those weak people between the two dams from the corruption of Gog and Magog. The prophet Joseph (Yūsuf) utilized his knowledge in economics and supply to formulate an economic program to protect the peoples inhabiting Egypt and the neighboring areas from famine. Furthermore, the prophet Noah (Nūḥ) utilized the knowledge endowed to him by God to build, through knowledge of carpentry, an ark to save those believing with him and to also save the creatures that humanity needs from perishing in the flood. Such stories are numerous in the Qur’an, urging the acquisition of knowledge, which is available to those who seek it and strive to acquire it.

The most exalted form of knowledge is knowledge of God and knowledge that leads to faith in God and belief in what the Messengers communicated from what He revealed to them. This relates to knowledge of God, His angels, books, the Hereafter, and compliance with the commands and rules of God in human affairs. Yet the Qur’anic text broadens the meaning of *‘ilm* so as to include various forms of knowledge granted by God. For example, God taught prophet Jacob (Ya‘qūb) something and he then was knowledgeable of what God taught him: “And when they entered in the manner their father had enjoined, it did not profit them in the least against (the plan of) Allah: It was but a necessity of Jacob’s soul, which he discharged. For he was, by our instruction, full of knowledge (and

Mapping Intellectual Building

experience): but most men know not” (12:68). God taught prophet Solomon (Sulaymān) the language of the birds: “...He said: ‘O people! We have been taught the speech of birds, and on us has been bestowed (a little) of all things: this is indeed Grace manifest (from Allah)’” (27:16). He taught prophet David (Dāwūd) the art of producing war armor: “It was We Who taught him the making of [metal coats of armor] for your benefit, to guard you from each other’s violence: will you then be grateful?” (21:80). He taught Joseph (Yūsuf) the ability to interpret dreams: “He said: ‘Before any food comes (in due course) to feed either of you, I will surely reveal to you the truth and meaning of this ever it befall you: this is part of the (duty) which my Lord has taught me...’” (12:37). He taught Dhū al-Qarnayn engineering and the science of minerals: “He said: ‘The (power) in which my Lord had established me is better (than tribute): Help me therefore with strength (and labor): I will erect a strong barrier between you and them. Bring me blocks of iron.’ At length, when he had filled up the space between the two steep mountain-sides, he said: ‘Blow (with your bellows),’ Then, when he had made it (red) as fire, he said: ‘Bring me, that I may pour over it, molten lead’” (18:95-96). He also taught prophet Noah the art of building ships with the care and guidance of God: “But construct an ark under Our Eyes and Our Inspiration, and address Me no (further) on behalf of those who are in sin: for they are about to be overwhelmed (in the Flood)” (11:37).

Perhaps the noblest value and exaltation that God bestows on *‘ilm* is manifested in that the very first verses revealed were about knowledge, its skills in reading and writing, and its essential tool, which is the pen. God includes within these verses the knowledge which He teaches the human being through revelation, which is written with the pen, learned by reading, and comprises the knowledge which God makes available for learning through observation, contemplation, and reading of the created Universe. God says: “Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who created (all that exists), Created the human being out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood. Read! And your Lord is Most Bountiful, Who taught by the pen, taught the human being that which he knew not” (96:1-5).

Hence, the society which Islam seeks to build is one in which faith and knowledge are complementary and integrated, and where there is association and connectedness between the *‘faith* of the scholars’ from all scientific specializations and the *‘knowledge* of the believers’ who specialize in them.

Ibn al-Qayyim says, “The best that is acquired by souls and gained by hearts and through which a servant of God attains high standing in this

world and in the Hereafter, is knowledge and faith, and thus God associated between them in the following verse: ‘Allah will rise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees) those of you who believe, and who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do’ (58:11). Those are the epitome and core of existence, and the most qualified for lofty standing.”⁴⁵

Therefore, some people err when they suppose that thought and culture concern just a segment of society, that differs from another segment that is preoccupied with the issues of faith, refinement of conduct, and acquisition of praiseworthy traits. Such is as though the thinker is not required to possess the qualities of faith and good conduct, or that the pious believer who worships God copiously and is not heavily immersed in the world is an ignorant person without thought or culture.

4.2 Association of Faith with Action

In the Qur’an, there are fifty-one verses in which faith is associated with good action. These include the verses: “Allah has promised to those among you who believe, and work righteous deeds, that He will of a surety, grant them in the land inheritance (of power) [succession and vicegerency]” (24:55), “But give glad tidings to those who believe and work righteousness, that their portion is Gardens, beneath which rivers flow” (2:25), and “Those who believe, and work righteousness,- their Lord will guide them because of their faith” (10:9). Moreover, there are numerous other verses that emphasize the necessity of associating faith with action, and which decry the disassociation and disharmony of the two elements: “The desert Arabs say: ‘We believe.’ Say: ‘You have no faith; but you (only) say, “We have submitted our wills to Allah,” For Faith has not yet entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not belittle anything of your deeds: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.’ Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the Cause of Allah: Such are the sincere ones” (49:14-15), and “O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Grievously odious is it in the sight of Allah that you say that which you do not do” (61:2-3).

The recognized religious meaning of *īmān* (faith), according to the religious scholars, is that it is an oral utterance, belief in the heart, and performance of the pillars of the faith. In other words, it is reflection and deed, because it is through reflection that knowledge and thought are

Mapping Intellectual Building

attained, and through action there is fulfillment of the requirements of reflection, which include conduct and practice.

Ibn al-Qayyim states:

Faith has an outward manifest aspect and an inward hidden aspect: its manifest aspect is the saying of the tongue and action of the limbs. Its inner aspect is belief, abidance, and love of the heart. The outer aspects are useless without the inner ones, even if by it lives are saved and property and offspring are protected. An inward aspect cannot materialize without an outward one, unless it is hindered by incapacity or coercion and fear of perishing. The lack of outward deed without there being a hindrance indicates that the inward aspect is corrupt and void of faith. The deficiency of one aspect is indicative of the deficiency of the other, and its strength is indicative of the strength of the other. Faith is the heart and essence of Islam, and certainty is the heart and essence of faith. Every form of knowledge and action that does not strengthen faith is internally infected, and every form of faith that does not lead to action is also infected.⁴⁶

The association of “those who believe and perform good deeds” in the Qur’an occurs in most cases in the plural form: for those who believe are a group, and those who perform righteous deeds are a group, where the believing community unites on an epistemic vision, and its righteous deeds emerge in accordance with such a vision.

‘Abd al-Rahmān Ḥelali deduces from this a civilizational significance that is important for achieving the civilizational revival of the Ummah, which is achievable through the community and Ummah when they carry out what is required. Revival, he says, entails a common vision for the community, which is *īmān* (faith), and this faith is the catalyst of righteous deeds.⁴⁷

4.3. Association of Knowledge with Action

The concept of *ibādah* (worship) in Islam is broad, and it encompasses all the voluntary actions performed by an individual seeking reward and nearness to God Almighty, and in implementing the precepts and laws of God’s Religion. Knowledge of whether the action performed brings one near to God – rather than being a psychological or physical desire – requires knowledge. Gaining awareness of the commands and laws of God in order to implement them also requires knowledge. Thus, religious scholars

emphasize “*Iqtidā’ al- ‘ilm al- ‘amal*” (knowledge necessitates action)⁴⁸ and the correlation between knowledge and action, for “worship is of two facets: knowledge and action, and the two ought to be connected, because knowledge is the foundation and action is the building. A foundation without a building is valueless, and the building cannot be firmly established without the foundation. Likewise, knowledge is without value if not accompanied by action, and action is valueless without knowledge.”⁴⁹ This emphasis is most evident in the words of the Prophet where action is knowledge, and where according to Anas ibn Mālik: “A man approached the Messenger of Allah (ṢAAS), and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, which are the best of actions?’ He said: ‘Knowledge of Allah Almighty.’ He said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, which are the best of actions?’ He said: ‘Knowledge of Allah.’ He said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I am asking you about action, and you inform me about knowledge?’ The Messenger of Allah then replied: ‘A little work is fruitful if accompanied by knowledge, and much work is of no value if based on ignorance.’”⁵⁰

Al-Rāghib al-Isfahāni says, “Some of the learned people say: ‘Action emanates from knowledge, and knowledge is the deed of the heart, and action is the deed of the limb, which stems from the deed of the heart, which is knowledge.’”⁵¹

While knowledge for non-Muslims is a theoretical structure or epistemic pattern that does not necessarily require practical conduct, knowledge and action for Muslims are intertwined, and indeed knowledge is on an equal footing with action, as observed in the aforementioned Prophetic Hadith, because knowledge is the action of the heart, and it is mental contemplation that does not require the activity of the external limbs, and because it is the action required for “producing knowledge and arriving at facts.”⁵²

Moreover, action in a particular context connotes *comprehending* a particular reality, and *practicing* that reality, “for knowing the truth makes action on equal footing as knowledge, and there is no action without knowledge, and vice versa.”⁵³

The association of knowledge with action is akin to the association of faith with Islam, for faith (*īmān*) is a part of knowledge, and exoteric Islam is part of action. Hence, “*īmān* is submission to truth: in terms of certain belief in the truth, and thus God describes faith and knowledge through a single characterization, where He says: “Those truly fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge” (35:28), and He says: “Believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts” (8:2), where the tremor of the heart is fear for the truth through attaining certain belief, and this is the basis of faith.”⁵⁴

4.4 *Ideas and Programs*

In many countries there are governments and opposition, where the governments present programs that are based on ideas. Those programs are then implemented and the opposition presents ideas, and perhaps programs as well. However, they are not accepted by the government, or the legislative branches, because the number of votes that support the opinion of the opposition is not sufficient to make a decision that is binding to the government. Therefore, the ideas of the opposition remain just that, ideas. Yet, does this diminish the importance of these ideas, and does this mean that these ideas are of less weight or value than the ideas of the government? Or, is it that their proponents are just politically weaker? Nevertheless, the balance of power could change, whereby the former opposition would come to power and embark on implementing its programs and applying its ideas. Thereby, the ideas and programs become the arena of competition, where the people will incline towards the more beneficial programs, and be averse to the ones that are evidently harmful.

In some countries, the opposition is unable to develop programs to actualize its ideas, because it is deprived of access to information necessary for developing the programs. Often the government monopolizes information and decision making, and furthermore, its state-sponsored media hurls accusations at the opposition of inability to provide alternative programs, where the alternative ideas remain just ideas, irrespective of their value and sophistication. Thus, the practices of the government continue to hold sway even if the ideas on which they are based are backward.

Some ideas, as they emerge, are not accepted, and the advocates of those ideas may even be considered insane due to the perceived farfetchedness of the ideas. Many science fiction ideas were in the past mere imagination, just for entertainment and storytelling, but have become realities today and of great benefit. Did not the dream of Abbas ibn Firnas who tried to develop the idea of flying eventually materialize,⁵⁵ and so did the dream of al-Ḥassan Ibn al-Haytham in building the High Dam on Egypt's River Nile?⁵⁶

God's messages to the Messengers are reformist ideas concerning the Creator and creations and about life and the purpose of life which God intended people adopt. The messages include systems and regulations of relations between people to achieve security, justice, and material wellbeing, as well as worldly welfare. The intent is for humankind to be able to gain God's good pleasure with the people of faith and good action, in order to reward them abundantly in the Hereafter. These messages are ideas, and

practical exercises based on these ideas. Until today, hundreds of millions of people have embraced these ideas and engaged in their practice.

Since ancient times, philosophers and thinkers have posited ideas that were highly ambitious; yet, some of these simple ideas remain as dreams across time and place, even though they are achievable. Other ideas, however, are impossible to achieve in reality, because they contradict the nature of things and the laws of the universe. Meanwhile, some ideas enjoy enough determination and adequate resources and are thus achieved.

To summarize the relationship of thought with faith, and knowledge with action, we say that thought is an essential element of these three concepts. We observe that knowledge, in its broad Qur'anic sense, includes three fields: knowledge of things, knowledge of behavior, and knowledge of beliefs, all of which may be beneficial sciences. Likewise, thought has three conceptions, by virtue of it being a process of deductive reasoning, moving from known matters to unknown matters, normative or corrective reasoning, and in terms of their benefit to people:

- Consideration of the material interests to human beings, which is *tafkīr* (thinking) or *ta'aqqul* (reasoning);
- Consideration of the interests of creation, which is *iftikār* (engaging thought) or *i'tibār* (drawing lessons);
- Consideration of spiritual interests, which is *tafakkur* (contemplation) or *tadabbur* (forethought).⁵⁷

On this basis, the connection between knowledge and thought is as follows:

- a) Knowledge needs thought to be validated: for knowledge is not legitimate unless it is beneficial, and is not beneficial unless it embodies thought. What is called beneficial knowledge is knowledge that is coupled with thought.
- b) Thought needs knowledge to be credible: for thought is not sound unless it is real and factual, and is not real unless it embodies knowledge. What is called sound thought is thought that is coupled with knowledge.⁵⁸

As for the relationship of thought and action, it is summarized by al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī in his discussion of the kinds of *fi'l* (doing), and according to him, *fi'l* is broader than *'amal* (action), in the following way: "Human doings is of three types: purely psychological doings, which are the ideas and forms of knowledge and what is ascribed to the actions of the hearts;

Mapping Intellectual Building

and physical, which are the movements that the human performs such as walking, standing up, and sitting; and industrial, which is what the human does involving the body and the soul, such as crafts, skills, and professions.”⁵⁹ It is obvious that the ideas and the forms of knowledge performed by the hearts are what drive the human being to physical action, including the requisites of faith, obedience and good conduct. They also serve as incentive to undertake industrial work, which requires proficiency and excellence in beneficial industries and professions, and serving people in their livelihoods.

Knowledge yields and increases faith, and faith is followed by action and application, as is indicated in the Qur’anic verse: “And that those on whom knowledge has been bestowed may learn that the (Qur’an) is the Truth from your Lord, and that they may believe therein, and their hearts may be made humbly (open) to it: for verily Allah is the Guide of those who believe, to the Straight Way” (22:54). Hence, when those endowed with knowledge become aware that this Qur’an is the truth revealed by God, they then believe and stand firm in their faith, and their hearts submit and are reassured; therefore, these believers deserve to be guided by God to the straight path in both their religion and life.

5. The Term Islamic Thought

The term ‘thought’ had come to denote the moral and rational contribution of an individual or nation. ‘Western thought,’ has referred to the totality (of the product) of the Western mind, in terms of sciences, humanities and arts. But the meaning primarily denotes what distinguishes Western thought in terms of its ideological premises that give this thought its Western characteristic. This thought manifests in the form of major interpretative theories in social and human sciences, and also in the elements of the prevailing culture that in a society. Westerners, for example, consider that the frame of reference of Western thought is the accomplishments of modernity and Enlightenment, represented in rationalism, individual freedoms, democracy, and other developments that occurred in European life since the seventeenth century. However, Western thought in the twentieth century came to depend on a mixture of the achievements of modernity and post-modernity, and particularly on American political culture, which promotes what is termed the Judeo-Christian heritage, as the primary frame of reference of Western thought.⁶⁰

It would be feasible to say that the term ‘Islamic thought’ is a modern

term that gained currency in the twentieth century, in particular to distinguish what is intended by Muslim thinkers as an authentic alternative to the elements of imported Western thought. This term was not known in Islamic heritage, even though the concept of thought and contemplation in the Qur'an and the Islamic tradition, as we have seen in detail, is a deep-rooted and longstanding concept. Perhaps the reason for not using the term 'Islamic thought' in the past is due to the fact that there was no need for differentiating between what is Islamic and what is not Islamic, for the reality of the Muslims was generally Islamic, whether in terms of beliefs or dealings. Even the state did not need to have the name 'Islamic' added to it, considering that the Islamic Caliphate was known by the names of ruling dynasties: Umayyad, Abbasid and Ottoman. Similarly, the Islamic schools of thought were identified by the name of the trends and intellectual schools of thought to which they belong: there were schools of theological, Sufi, or jurisprudential thought. Moreover, the differentiation between the Islamic creed (*'aqīdah*) orientations was known as *fīraq* or sects, and differentiation between the Islamic and non-Islamic creeds was known through headings, such as *al-milal wa al-niḥal*, and then the science of religions.

As for Islamic thought, in general, early writings in Islamic history predominantly used other terms to denote this thought, such as *'ilm* and *fiqh*, which came into early usage in the fields of recording and authorship. For example, the term *fiqh* was used in the general sense, meaning "absolute understanding," as derived from Qur'anic texts, such as the following verse: "Nor should the Believers all go forth together: if a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies in religion, and admonish the people when they return to them - that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil)" (9:122), and the texts of the Hadith, such as the reported saying of the Prophet: "If Allah wishes good for someone, He bestows upon him the understanding in *Dīn* (Religion)."⁶¹ Hence, *fiqh* of religion denoted absolute understanding and what the processes of education and learning aim to achieve. Nevertheless, among the companions of the Prophet were those who were distinguished with extensive knowledge in particular fields, such as Zayd ibn Thābit, who was the most knowledgeable among the companions in inheritance laws, and Mu'ādh ibn Jabal, who was the most knowledgeable of what is licit (*ḥalāl*) and illicit (*ḥarām*), and so forth.

The term *fiqh* later came to signify a particular meaning, namely knowledge in practical religious rules and principles deduced from the detailed proofs, which is referred to by the term *al-fīqh al-asghar* (minor *fiqh*), known in the works of jurisprudence of various schools of thought,

Mapping Intellectual Building

as distinct from the term *al-fiqh al-Akbar* (major fiqh), which refers to the science of creeds (*‘aqā’id*).⁶²

Moreover, creative intellectual contributions in various fields of science, in addition to the prevalence of *millah* sciences, that is, the religious and Shari‘ah sciences in terms of jurisprudence, *uṣūl* or fundamentals of religion, Qur’anic sciences, the sciences of Hadith and *al-Sīrah* (biography of the Prophet), philology and literature comprise part of the history of Islam. To exemplify what we may regard as the intellectual seeds of human and social sciences, we mention al-Jahīz in the second Hijri century, who wrote in economic thought; al-Hārith al-Muḥāsibī in the 3rd Hijri century, who wrote in psychological thought; al-Qābisi in the 4th Hijri century, who wrote in educational thought; al-Māwardī in the fifth Hijri century, who wrote in political thought; al-Zarnūjī in the sixth Hijri century, who also wrote in educational thought; Ibn Khallikān in the seventh Hijri century, who wrote in historiography and historical thought, and Ibn Khaldūn in the eighth Hijri century, who wrote in social thought, sociology, and human civilization building (*‘umrān*).

But the more familiar picture in describing the evolution of sciences and ideas, and the differentiation of their fields in the Muslim world, was the division of sciences into two categories: *naqli* (revealed and transmitted) sciences and *‘aqli* (acquired and rational) sciences. The sciences of the first category are religious and linguistic sciences that depend on narration (*riwāyah*), exegesis based on transmitted traditions (*tafsīr bi al-ma‘thūr*), and the deduction of rulings from the original texts (*istinbāt al-aḥkām*). The sciences of the second category are philosophical sciences that initially emerged as a result of the preoccupation of many Muslim scholars in translating the sciences of the Greeks, Persians, Indians, the Syrians and others.

This portrayal could be partial and unfitting in describing the stages of the development of sciences and ideas in Muslim society across the ages; where it would be possible to study this evolution while distinguishing between knowledge and thought, and it would also be possible to distinguish between the characteristics of the scientific or intellectual schools, the jurisprudential and *uṣūlī* school, the historical school, the philosophical school, the *‘irfānī* (gnostic and mystical) schools, etc., and the conditions in which each of these schools flourished and the factors that contributed to their prosperity, etc.

Nevertheless, there is no dispute that the Muslim Ummah suffered waves of weakness, political fragmentation and intellectual chaos, which contributed to the deterioration of the scientific and intellectual condition

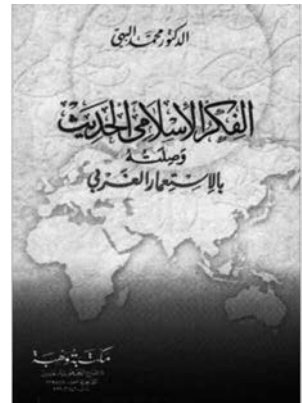
of Muslim societies. This was accentuated by the experience of these societies with foreign colonial powers since the fall of Baghdad at the hands of the Mongols in the mid-seventh Hijri century. This decline was also exacerbated by the Crusader wars, the first campaign of which began in the late fifth Hijri century and continued for two centuries, followed by the widening conflict between the Muslim World and the European West until the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1798.

At a time when intellectual and scientific activity was slowing down in the Muslim World, Europe was undergoing accelerating scientific and industrial progress, which ultimately enabled it to colonize most parts of the Muslim World. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Muslim World found itself in a state of backwardness relative to the Western world. Some scholars began to discuss the relationship of the Islamic East with the European West, alongside the need of the Muslim World to benefit from the sciences of the West. Urgent questions were posed concerning what may or may not be borrowed from those sciences. Furthermore, the issue of renaissance (*nahḍah*) began to crystallize in a number of countries of the Muslim World, and some of the Islamic books and writings began to be distinct from the traditional jurisprudential scholarship, characterized by a greater extent of critical thinking and rational analysis, and the concept of Islamic thought began to crystallize in contrast to Western thought.

However, the traditional Islamic education of al-Azhar University, for example, did not welcome the writings of Islamic thought, and for this reason, the Dār Al-‘Ulum College was established in Cairo primarily as an alternative to al-Azhar in teaching Arabic and Islam, before it was merged into the University of Cairo. Hence, many scholars graduated from this college who were recognized in the field of Islamic thought, and their oeuvres were scholarship in Islamic thought in various fields of jurisprudential and Qur’anic studies, and other literary, political, and economic studies.

It would be fair to mention here that a number of al-Azhar scholars were major thinkers, for example, Dr. Muhammad al-Bahi.

Yet some scholars within the Islamic circle are not comfortable talking about Islamic thought, preferring instead to talk about Islamic sciences within their traditional frameworks that emerged in the first five Hijri centuries. There are also those who believe that knowledge in its totality is



Mapping Intellectual Building

what God and His Messenger said, those who view knowledge as just the science of *'aqīdah* (creed), and those who view knowledge as just *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and that *uṣūl* (fundamentals) is the methodology of deriving *fiqh*. Yet, there are others who prioritize *tahqīq* (editing and verification) and publishing manuscripts, and so forth. Many of those believe that the term *fikr* is a departure from authentic knowledge, and that focus on Islamic thought that is rooted in rational criticism and a *maqāṣidi* (intents of religion) approach, is a devaluation of the sacred texts and a means to escape their requisites.

There are numerous authors and activists whose reference is Islamic, and who strive and sacrifice a great deal for the sake of Islam and Muslim causes, make valuable intellectual, scientific, and practical contributions, and come from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, including engineering, medicine, chemistry, physics, psychology, and so forth.⁶³

Such Islamic personalities have been a part of the field of 'intellectual striving' since the twentieth century; yet, some who have worked in the field of Islamic thought, or attempted to identify themselves in this field, were intruders on Islamic thought, and ignited within its circles battles that exhausted effort and time. It may be that the efforts of some of them were the product of erroneous intellectual efforts and judgements, or that some comprised sincere attempts but were lacking in knowledge. It remains that the efforts of some others were malicious attempts intended to cause intellectual chaos and confusion in Muslim societies.

6. Thought and Emotion

Intellectual building is not merely an arid intellectual dialectic that is devoid of emotions and feelings. It is a belief that fuels action, and it is a mental state of consciousness that produces forms of conduct and deals with ideas, things and people. While thought is self-consciousness and consciousness of one's surroundings, human feelings are a basic element of the human self. Consciousness of these feelings is no less important than consciousness of the knowledge necessary for making suitable decisions, or performing particular actions.

Are ideas devoid of feelings? Can ideas be separated from feelings? And, should one endeavor to separate them, if that is possible?

When you *judge* an idea to be good or bad, and when you *decide* that that idea is positive or negative, does this not mean that you are responding to the question: How do you *feel* towards such idea?

When you have to perform an action, do you not *feel* a big difference between having an idea *imposed* on you in order to perform a particular action, or yourself *choosing* that idea?

Muḥammad ‘Abdullah Drāz wrote under the heading “Persuading the Mind and Fulfilling Emotion”:

The human soul has two powers: the power of thinking, and the power of conscience; the need of each one of the two differs from that of the other, for one of them searches for truth to know it, and for good to act according to it, and the other registers its feelings of pleasure or pain intrinsic in things, and the complete exposition is what fulfills for you these two needs...Thus the share of mental benefit and emotional pleasure are fulfilled all at once...Every person, when he thinks, is a small philosopher. And every person, when he feels, is a small poet...Therefore, when a person is immersed in thinking, his consciousness decreases, and one who falls under the influence of pleasure or pain, his thinking weakens...This is a criterion through which you can ascertain whether what is spoken or written was more influenced by reason or emotion at the time it was spoken or written: if you find that the person proceeds to posit a theoretical truth, or describe a practical method, then you would say: this is the product of thought, and if you find the person inciting the self or disaffecting it, constricting or expanding it, and stirring its inner pleasures or pain, then you say: this is the product of emotions. If you see that he shifts from one of these two axes to the other...then you could tell that it is the alternating influence of thought and emotion on him.

But a unitary style, that is of a single direction and which perfectly combines these two poles together, just like a single tree branch bears leaves, flowers and fruits all at once, or like the spirit runs through the body, and water in a green twig – such has not been accomplished in human speech, nor is it one of the laws of God in the human soul... such is the Lord of creation...Who is solely Capable of addressing the mind and heart simultaneously in the same word, and to Combine truth and beauty together so they meet, without one overstepping the other... This is what one finds in the Qur’an wherever one looks. Do you not find that within the space of relating stories, it does not overlook the right of the mind in terms of satiating its quest for wisdom and lesson? And, do you not see how amid the abundance of proofs and rules, it does not overlook the fair share of the heart, in terms of arousing interest, gentleness, admonition, reproach, and stirring fear and awe? This is related at the outset of Qur’anic verses and throughout them: “Allah has revealed (from time to time) the most beautiful Message in the form of a Book, consistent with itself, (yet) repeating (its teaching in various aspects): the skins of those who fear their Lord tremble thereat; then their skins and

Mapping Intellectual Building

their hearts do soften to the celebration of Allah's praises. Such is the guidance of Allah: He guides therewith whom He pleases, but such as Allah leaves to stray, can have none to guide" (39:23).⁶⁴

Al-Bukhāri related that the Prophet said: "A judge should not make judgement between two persons while he is angry."⁶⁵ This Hadith is a basis for understanding the relationship between thought and emotion. Imam Aḥmad spoke on the same subject when relaying the saying of the Prophet: "Your love for a thing causes blindness and deafness."⁶⁶

Mary Lore says that feelings embody the relationship between mind and spirit. This relationship expresses that: "Self-awareness is key. Self-mastery is key. Being on purpose is key... The mind-body-spirit connection is very real. Can you remember a time when you felt in great physical condition? Didn't you feel happy? Focused? Energized? Powerful? Confident? Didn't things that might normally bother you simply roll off your shoulders? Weren't you able to think clearly?"⁶⁷

Lore likens the process of self-cultivation, according to this equation, with a circular dance, where "we can start anywhere in the circle. Some of you may choose to begin by cultivating your thoughts. This increases your energy, improves your life, improves your choices in eating, drinking, and exercising, and develops your spirit. Some of you may choose to cultivate your energy, which develops your spirit and helps you refine your thoughts and emotions. Some of you may choose to work on your spirit first, which favorably affects your thoughts and your energy. However you choose to start, just start."⁶⁸

It is known that when a person is anxious, angry, frustrated, or shy, and struggles against feelings of pain, and experiences of bitterness, all of these are states that hamper the ability to think sensibly. There are many resources and books that discuss the relationship between ideas and feelings, particularly in the field of psychotherapy. One of these books is entitled *Thoughts and Feelings: Taking Control of Your Moods and Your Life*. The book is based on a simple insight that constitutes the heart of cognitive behavioral therapy: "you can change your feelings by changing your thoughts."⁶⁹

The emotional states that afflict an individual, such as anxiety, anger, fear, frustration, inability to reach perfection, bad habits, shyness, etc., cause major problems to the person coupled with an inability to engage in life in a normal way, and perhaps lead some people to commit suicide, even though there are suitable treatments for each of these emotional states. The book, in general, consists of exercises that show the individual how to take control

over his or her feelings, the accompanying painful physical symptoms, and how to treat them so that the individual might live a life of greater contentment and make life decisions successfully.

The authors of the book note that “hundreds of studies over the last thirty years have proved that this simple insight can be applied to relieve a large variety of problems more easily and quickly than any other therapeutic technique.”⁷⁰

It is important for a person to observe, with some calmness, how feelings distort thinking, and lead to distortions in thinking that further deepen the feelings with which the person started. Through obtaining suitable treatments and techniques, one can think in a more balanced and mature manner, and make wiser choices.⁷¹ The poet Eliā Abū Māḍī said:

Refresh the feeling of love in you if it is asleep,
If not for the feeling of love, people would be like puppets
Beauty is only for those who appreciate it
While the ignorant cannot tell the difference
Do not you seek love from the ignorant
The love in a person only comes with understanding

Malik Badri finds that the psychological factor is one of the factors that affect the varying levels of depth of contemplation among people. He states: “Indeed, contemplation requires peace of mind and tranquility, as well as both psychological and physical health. Physical health is without doubt essential for enhancing the depth of contemplation.” He notes that the psychological factor may at times be manifest cases of disorder, for as he further notes:

The Believer who is afflicted with anxiety, depression, obsession, hypochondria or any other psychological disorder cannot be expected to contemplate with a high degree of concentration. Neurotics may be able to meditate on a low level, but those afflicted with psychosis, mental derangement, severe mental retardation or senility may not even be able to do that. Thus, between tranquil normality and severe psychosis there are degrees of psychological and emotional states that affect the ability to contemplate in proportion with the severity of each case.⁷²

We mentioned previously some references to *tafakkur*, *tathakkur*, and *tadabbur* in the Qur’an, but references to emotions, feelings and reactions in the Qur’an are of no lesser importance in guiding the soul and in balancing the human personality. Unless the rational perceptions and the

intellectual beliefs interact with the psychological state, it is feared that the heart would harden, and relations of sincere affection, solidarity, and mercy between people would weaken. The Qur'an emphasizes love, affection, compassion, devotion, kindness, and mercy: between spouses, parents and children, relatives, brothers and sisters in faith, and even between those who are partners in humanity. Included is also an emphasis on compassion to animals. God blessed His Messenger by making his heart tender towards his companions, and so he gathered them around him, and was commanded by God to forgive them and to ask God for their forgiveness: "So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him]" (3:159).

The relationship of thought with will (determination) and action was also manifested in the works of Islamic heritage, as previously mentioned.

It is important to note that the distinction between the mind (*ʿāql*) and heart (*qalb*), in terms of functions, in the majority of modern sources does not appear consistent with what we understand from the Qur'an. Modern sources consider the mind to be a tool for understanding, perception, science and knowledge, while considering the heart to be a venue for feelings, emotions and reactions. They consider the location of the mind to be the brain, and speak of the anatomy of the brain, specifying various locations therein for specific kinds of perception. Other studies connect between the mind and the heart in a kind of interaction, but these are few studies in comparison to the larger body of literature which deals with the brain.

The Qur'an is decisive in considering the heart a tool for understanding, comprehension, rationality, and perception, and then a tool for belief or unbelief. Just as the eye is a tool for vision, and the ear is a tool for hearing, the heart is a tool for rationality and comprehension, as the Qur'anic verse says, "Do they not travel through the land, so that their hearts (and minds) may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear? Truly it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are in their breasts" (22:46). The hearts in the chests are the agents of reason, and not the brain in the head; God states in *Surah al-A'rāf*: "Many are the Jinns and men we have made for Hell: They have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle,- nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning)" (7:179), and in *Surah al-Mā'idah*: "O Messenger! Let not those grieve you, who race each other into unbelief: (whether it be) among those who say 'we

believe' with their lips but whose hearts have no faith" (5:41).

Thus, we find that the hearts are agents of belief, while hearts that do not allow faith to enter are hearts sealed by God due to unbelief; they are impervious to faith. This is explicitly evidenced in the following verse from *Surah al-Nisā'*: "(They have incurred divine displeasure): In that they broke their covenant; that they rejected the signs of Allah; that they slew the prophets in defiance of right; that they said: 'Our hearts are the wrappings (which preserve Allah's word; We need no more)'; Nay, Allah has set the seal on their hearts for their blasphemy, and little is it they believe" (4:155).

Hence, the heart is the element that bears responsibility, whether in understanding, perception, or reasoning. It holds knowledge and thought, love and hatred, fear and desire, despair and hope, fright and tranquility, and other reactions, feelings and emotions. All of this is explicitly stated in the Qur'an. It is not surprising then to also find the Hadith of the Prophet pointedly attributing righteousness and corruption to the heart; "Surely, in the body there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupted, the whole body is corrupted, and that is surely the heart."⁷³

The Qur'an and the Sunnah, which constitute the frame of reference of religious texts, unequivocally place the responsibility for belief and unbelief, and guidance and error, on the heart. Scientific and empirical studies in psychology, neurology, anatomy, physiology and other medical sciences offer hypothetical knowledge, which progresses with time. Some become relevant in a particular stage, but thereafter progress continues, whereby we come to understand something differently from what we used to understand. This does not mean neglecting the benefits of these sciences, which perhaps enhance our knowledge of the horizons of the universe and of human nature; as the Qur'anic verse states: "Soon will We show them our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this [the Qur'an] is the Truth. Is it not enough that your Lord does Witness all things?" (41:53). On the contrary, pursuit of scientific studies is part of advancement, observation, and striving, all of which are among the requisites of true vicegerency on earth. Any shortcoming in bearing this trust is illustrative of deficiency in deriving the guidance to which the Holy Qur'an calls.

Conclusion

This chapter addressed the topic of thought in Islamic sources. It is evident

Mapping Intellectual Building

that the Qur'an chooses to present the action of thought in its highest level, namely the process of contemplation (*tafakkur*). Thought is a basic element in each of faith, knowledge and action, and that thought is also a basic action in achieving the higher values espoused by religion: to convey knowledge about God (*tawhīd*), the building of the human personality and human society on the basis of piety and purification (*tazkiyah*), and the construction of human civilization in its moral and material dimensions (*'umrān*).

Rarely do we find a book from among the scholarship on the Islamic heritage that does not emphasize the necessity of *tafakkur* and *tadabbur* and indeed, there are some books that focus on thought as their main subject, or dedicate one of their chapters to thought, and so discuss thought and contemplation, reason and rationality, and remembrance and recollection. This is what al-Muḥāsibī, Ibn al-Qayyim, al-Ghazālī and others did. Islamic history has several examples of creative intellectual contribution in all fields, which were intellectual seeds for human and social sciences, ever since al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Muḥāsibī, al-Qāḥisī, al-Māwardī and al-Zarnūjī and culminating with Ibn Khallikan, Ibn Khaldūn and others, each in his field of specialization and discipline. We tried to redress some of the conceptualizations related to human thought, particularly those that separate between thought and emotion, the mind and the heart, or where there was confusion in knowledge of the tools of thought and reason.

This chapter has attempted to provide the groundwork for discussing individual intellectual building where one is shown to be characterized by thought, and thus is a thinker, who can realize higher levels of intellectual building. Thus, the discussion helped identify the boundaries of and common spaces of the individual whose intellectual building is complete, and so merits the description of 'thinker,' and the one who is described as a scientist, scholar, intellectual, philosopher, or other.

2

Intellectual Building and Its Levels

Introduction

Chapter One addressed the concept of thought and other concepts directly related to it as they are dealt with in Islamic sources in particular: the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and the *ijtihad* of Muslim scholars. This chapter discusses the process of intellectual building, and its manifestations in contemporary usage. Intellectual building is viewed as a 'process' that takes place in accordance with a particular conceptualization, passes through successive stages, and reaches manifold levels. Each level represents a hallmark of a recognized character from among the characters in contemporary culture. There is the thinker, the person of culture, the scientist or scholar, the *dā'iyyah* preacher, the reformer, and the philosopher, each characterized by their own particular intellectual building. This chapter also views intellectual building as a process of change in time, and movement in place. Intellectual building comprises a description of the individual, the group and a characterization of the Ummah. Hence, this chapter looks at the relationship between the movement of thought and the thought of the movement. It also discusses the intellectual buildings of movements and schools of thought, and investigates what distinguishes each from the other.

Islamic history witnessed extensive use of terms such as *'ilm* (knowledge) and *fiqh* (deep comprehension), in a manner in which has caused some people to be averse to the use of other terms, such as *fikr* (thought) in referring to the value of contribution of an individual or a group. Therefore, we emphasize here that we do not wish to render these terms as oppositional or alternatives to each other. It is the context which determines the appropriate term, and each term has its value and place where it fits more appropriately than others.

We observe that variation in the level of intellectual building is not limited to individuals, but could apply to groups, societies, and the Ummah. This variation is manifested in between the degrees of intellectual richness and intellectual bankruptcy. It is also not confined to the level of intellectual

building, and can also relate to the extent of one's interest in the world of ideas, in contrast to the world of things or the world of people.

The Ummah has passed through stages and cycles of progress and regression in regards to interpretive reasoning (*ijtihad*) and renewal (*tajdid*). We find that the efforts of Islamic intellectual reform did not cease across the ages, but simultaneously, Islamic history was also not devoid of movements marred by intellectual deviations that occupied the Ummah depleting its intellectual and practical energies.

1. Intellectual Building: A Building in Thought

Intellectual building is a title consisting of two words: 'building' and 'thought' Both are key words relating to human activity, each of which is the verbal noun of 'doing' an action, and each refers to the action and the result of such action; for thought is a subject that is built, and building is an action whose subject is thought. Indeed, engagement in thought is one of the noblest endeavors, and thought does not arise in an individual as a complete corpus, nor is it acquired from those who provide it as a complete block, whereby its possession is transferred from the giver to the taker. Instead, the individual builds it one brick on top of another.

The concept of building is accompanied by the actions of planning, design, and organization, as opposed to haphazard stacking and accumulation. The concept of thought is accompanied by knowledge that is firm, culture that is comprehensive, and awareness that is well guided, as opposed to imitation without firm knowledge, dependence without guidance, and blind fanaticism without insight. The actions of those who are lacking in thought are subservient to whim, whether it is their own whims, or that of others.

Building is a process, and is the product of this process; it is a process that is carried out through an approach and method, and the product of this process is manifested through specific characteristics and features. The process of building means the process of transitioning from an existing state to an aspired state; hence, there is a goal, and a plan to arrive at that goal, implemented through specific steps. As for 'building,' in the sense of the product of the building process, it is a synthesis of materials or components, with amounts and proportions, interconnected and intertwined. It is, furthermore, manifested in the form of a specific structure that may be defined both qualitatively and quantitatively.

To simplify the concept of intellectual building, we can compare material building to intellectual building, in terms of the necessity of having an *a priori* conceptualization in both cases concerning the purpose of the building, its materials, elements, the method of construction, and the timeframe of its implementation, etc. Even so, there are fundamental differences between the two kinds of building that are particular to the essential differentiation between what is material and what is human. Intellectual building is the building of the human being, characterized by movement, development, change, and growth within the human being, where the personality of the individual is formed as a result of his or her intellectual and psychological building. And while intellectual building relates to the aspects of beliefs and rational convictions – in that they comprise of facts, concepts, principles and theories – psychological building, on the other hand, has to do primarily with the emotional and reactionary aspects, where the will, motivations, and feelings govern the practical behavior of the human being. Just as human beings need education and development in the intellectual-rational aspect, they need education and development in the psychological-emotional aspect as well, and each of the two aspects has its materials and techniques in education and development.

Thought is the product of the thinking process, and the thinking process is an internal mental activity that the individual performs consciously or unconsciously. This process includes the passing of thoughts, imaginings and sensory or reactive perceptions that precede or accompany the individual's manifest behavior or conduct. Thus, thought is a human effort that may be either correct or incorrect, and so is not characterized by infallibility or sanctity. To the extent that this thought is based on true revelation and sound reason, and in agreement with facts and nature, the thought is closer to correctness and more distant from error.

Since human beings engage in thinking on a perpetual basis, understanding the thinking process and the faculties that perform it requires a considerable degree of effort, and many aspects of this process remain unclear. Research in developmental psychology, neuropsychology, and human learning theories, among others, provide insufficient indications as to the role of the brain, heart, and external environmental factors. Nevertheless, there is differentiation between the types or modes of thinking, each of which has its role and importance in effecting adaptation of human life and in building the capabilities of human society. These types include: deep thinking, divergent thinking, creative thinking, *maqāṣidi* (purposeful) thinking, strategic thinking, critical thinking, causal thinking, etc.

The characteristic of human beings as 'thinking beings' is known and

Mapping Intellectual Building

has been recognized since ancient times, because it is a form of self-consciousness and a consciousness of what is external to the self. Ibn Khaldūn states:

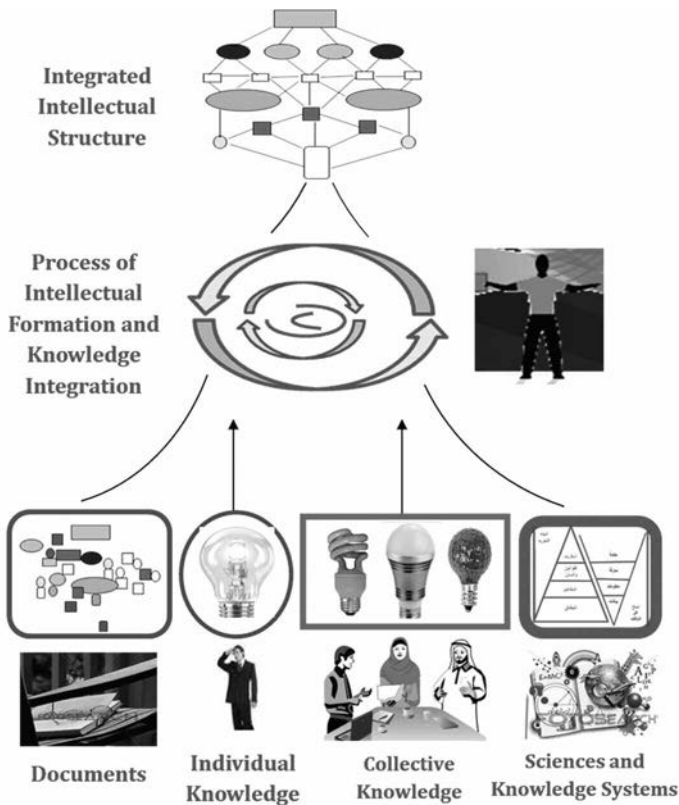
It should be known that God distinguishes man from all the other animals by an ability to think which He made the beginning of human perfection and the end of man's noble superiority over existing [creation]. This comes about as follows: Perception [*idrāk*] – that is, consciousness, on the part of the person who perceives, in his essence of things that are outside his essence – is something peculiar to living beings to the exclusion of all other being and existent things. Living beings may obtain consciousness of things that are outside their essence through the external senses God has given them, that is, the senses of hearing, vision, smell, taste, and touch. Man has this advantage over the other beings that he may perceive things outside his essence through his ability to think, which is something beyond his senses. It is the result of (special) powers placed in the cavities of his brain. With the help of these powers, man takes the pictures of the *sensibilia*, applies his mind to them, and thus abstracts from them other pictures. The ability to think is the occupation with pictures that are beyond sense perception, and the application of the mind to them for analysis and synthesis. This is what is meant by the word *af'idah* (hearts) in the Qur'an: "He gave you hearing and vision and hearts" [67:23]. *Af'idah* 'hearts' is the plural of *fu'ād*. It means here the ability to think.⁷⁴

There is a close connection between thought (which is a natural human instinct), rational logic (which is a craft that is produced), and human language (which the human acquires through learning). Ibn Khaldūn states:

Man's ability to think is a special natural gift which God created exactly as He created all His other creations.... Now, the craft of logic is (knowledge of the) way in which the natural ability to think and speculate operates. Logic describes it, so that correction operation can be distinguished from erroneous... Thus, it is a technical procedure which parallels (man's) natural ability to think and conforms to the way in which it functions.... Besides the technical procedure called logic, the (process of) study involves another introductory (discipline), namely, the knowledge of words and the way in which they indicate ideas in the mind by deriving them from what the forms (of the letters) say, in the case of writing, and from what the tongue - speech - says in the case of spoken utterances....⁷⁵

Islamic psychologist Malik Badri differentiates between thinking (*tafkīr*) as a process of notions, reflections, and ideas passing through the human mind in a conventional and ordinary manner, and what he calls

contemplation (*tafakkur*), which he regards as a more esteemed level of thinking. *Tafakkur* here is a deliberate and conscious effort to reach the truth into a matter that the individual desires to perceive, such through the reasoning of the mind, the meditation of the heart, and the seeking of evidence and reflecting upon it. Remembrance of God (*tathakkur*) is a form of contemplation that includes evoking in the mind what the individual already knows about the matter, and what opposes or corresponds with it, in an effort not to overlook matters, and to ensure that remembrance serves as a source of admonition and insight. Regarding forethought (*tadabbur*), it is, furthermore, essential to consider the consequences of matters.⁷⁶



Illustrative chart showing the sources of intellectual building and the building process

2. Stages and Levels of Intellectual Building

Malik Badri delves deeply into the issue of contemplation in the Islamic heritage, and then calls to mind the status of the believer in his or her relationship with God. He, therefore, concludes that human thinking passes through four stages. All people, believers and non-believers, share in common the first and second stage, while the believers can move to the third stage, and some of them advance to the fourth stage. Badri does not give particular names to the first three stages, with the exception of the fourth stage, which he calls the stage of 'spiritual cognition' (*shuhūd*).

In the first stage, the individual contemplates the knowledge that is acquired through direct sensory perception – via the senses, or indirectly, through imagination of sensory facts, or through abstract rational phenomena whereby he or she would perceive the significations and meanings of this perception, and would explain the laws and relations existing between things, events and phenomena, thereby acquiring theoretical knowledge and, therefore, may construct beneficial practical applications. This is a form of knowledge that is naturally very important, but can be purely mental and often with no relation to emotional or sentimental aspects, which Badri characterizes as cold knowledge. In interpreting this initial stage, we may describe it as the 'stage of material perception.'

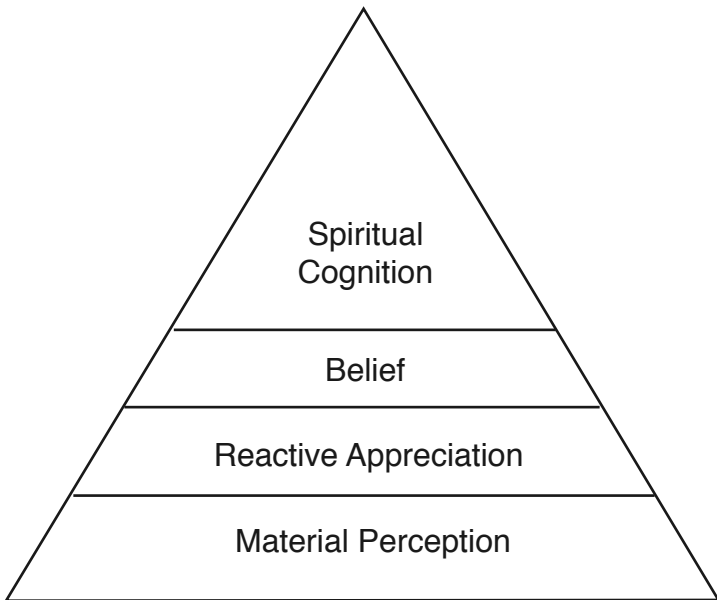
In the second stage of contemplation, the individual takes a closer look at the various forms of knowledge that he or she acquired in the first stage, inspecting their aesthetic aspects and particular qualities. In his or her contemplation the individual transcends the cold state of perception, to experience an emotional tremor of the heart, whereby feelings gush forth and the individual reaches a state of warm reaction, wonder at the beauty, excellence, vastness of structure, and miraculous appearance of the perceived object, thereby acquiring a state of fine appreciation. We may characterize this stage as the stage of 'reactive appreciation.'

Undoubtedly, any individual who strives to do so, attains the first and second stages of contemplation, irrespective of his or her belief in the existence of an Omniscient and All-Wise Creator, or lack thereof.

In the third stage of contemplation, the individual crosses over from appreciating the inherent beauty and precision of the created object to embracing the Creator who perfected it or enabled the human being to perfect it. This is one who, furthermore, contemplates on the sublime qualities of the Creator, and is carried away by feelings of realization of His greatness and benevolence. This is one who submits to His All-Mightiness, and is sincere in worshipping Him.

Regarding the fourth stage, the believer transitions from perception of the All-Wise Creator of humanity and the cosmos, devotion in worshipping Him and maintaining His presence in the heart, continual remembrance of Him, which is accompanied by an enhanced feeling of awe and glorification of God, to a point of ‘spiritual cognition’ where he or she becomes unconscious of the surroundings, and perhaps attains an elevated consciousness through meditation, remembrance, love, and emotional transparency. The individual may also reach a point of feeling he or she is in the Heavenly realm, whereby he or she would experience what is beyond verbal description.⁷⁷

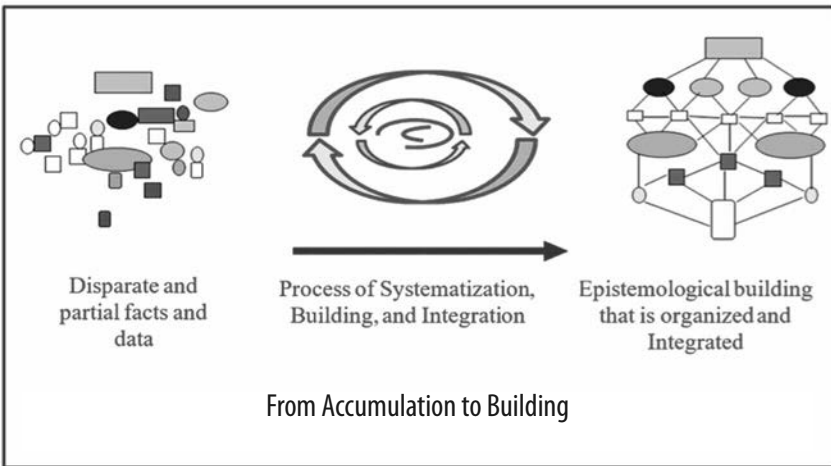
This is the stage which Sufis call the state of ‘*shuhūd*,’ which Ibn Taymiyyah calls *al-shuhūd al-ṣaḥīḥ* (true cognition).⁷⁸ Without doubt, this stage is only attained by a select and special group of believers.



Stages of Contemplation
According to Malik Badri

Mapping Intellectual Building

In his discussion of civilizational building, Malik Bennabi presents a pleasant idea in differentiating between building and accumulation, or piling up. He speaks of the Muslim World which has been ‘outside of history’ for a long time, though it awakened at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century to reformist appeals urging civilizational renaissance. However, effort toward this end reached the point of merely importing the products of civilization from others. Civilization, in reality, consists of material products that have their own essence, thought, tools, and systems, which cannot be sold or lent, because they represent the inherent characteristics of the civilization and the society that builds it. The society that imports the products along with their thought and essence will have forfeited its civilizational identity and becomes an extension of the society from which it imported its products. The society that imports the products of civilization without their essence and thought simply accumulates and stacks structures devoid of essence, and accumulates things that contain no thought.



In the view of Bennabi, civilization in any society is one that generates and ‘gives birth’ to its products, and imbues it with its own essence and thought. The Muslim World has not been able to build a civilization because it limited itself to accumulating and stacking material products.

Civilizational building, according to Bennabi, takes place in accordance with a formula in which three elements interact:

- The human being, with all that he or she represents in terms of intellectual energies and creativity;

- The soil, which represents material and economic capabilities; and
- Time, in which experience is nurtured and matured.

The interaction between these three elements does not materialize except with a supplementing factor, namely the spiritual flame, represented in the strength and energy of emotions.⁷⁹



Elements of Civilization According to Malik Bennabi

Civilizational building in society is actualized when the realm of people innovates the realm of ideas, which people utilize in producing the realm of things. All people perish, and most objects wear out and diminish in value, whereas some ideas are alive, enduring, and indispensable irrespective of the passage of time. Some ideas die and, so, may be discarded without loss, while others are fatal and must be discarded.

Each of these three realms is not a single homogenous one. The realm of persons is the world of politicians, business people, and media people, etc. The realm of things is the world of food, houses, cars, and the world of space, etc. The realm of ideas is the world of *fiqh*, economics, history, art, etc. Each one of these realms is, hence, not harmonious or homogenous, but is rather often closer to being intellectually contradictory and involves some conflict of interest. Is there then a means to considering an ‘intellectual building’ that transcends contradictions and difference, and reveals ideas that would be accepted and spread widely within these realms, and within a particular geographical and historical scope? And what are the characteristics that distinguish the ideas which have such wide dissemination and, hence, a significant degree of influence and effectiveness.

Think of the relationship between three realms when one attempts to distinguish between the way people assess the value of a specific book. Some people are keen to acquire the book to place it in their libraries, because it is a large volume that suggests prestige and deserves to be placed where it may be easily viewed. Others are keen to acquire the book because its author is a renowned figure that they esteem and value. A third type of people is keen to acquire the book neither for its size and shape, nor for the name and fame of its author, but for its subject and thought.

Mapping Intellectual Building

You may think of another example that expresses the relationship between the three realms and the varying ways in which people value each realm.

Malik Bennabi notes that the endeavors of scholars culminate with formulating and understanding things, whereas the endeavor of the cultured intellectuals persists in embellishing and improving them.

In an effort to elucidate the levels of thinking and the distribution of aptitudes among people, we find that it is easy to identify the person who specializes in a particular discipline, where it is said that he or she is a *specialist* in that discipline. If that person delves deeper into this specialty, becomes competent in it, innovates in it, contributes further to it, and solves its problems, it may be said that this person is a *scholar* in that field of specialization. Moreover, the specialist scholar may have a degree of knowledge in other disciplines that are related or close to his or her area of specialization and necessary to that person, but it is not ordinarily required of a specialist scholar or scientist to be capable of speaking about general topics outside the framework of his or her specialization.

Some specialists are scholars in their field of specialization and, yet, may have other interests, such as linguistic, artistic, or political interests, a significant degree of knowledge, and an ability to think and speak about general issues, whereby they might be described as *cultured*. Whereas the specialist scholar attains such a characterization ordinarily by means of formal academic studies and specialized research, the cultured builds his or her cultural capabilities mostly through personal efforts, including reading and dialoguing with others. Thus, the cultured could build their cultural knowledge without being a specialist in any particular subject.

Some researchers are inclined to speaking about thought and culture as two concepts that are almost identical or convergent, whereby they frequently refer to Islamic culture and Islamic thought interchangeably. This occurs in the following references, among many other occasions that serve to substantiate the preceding: “it was necessary to expound...at the level of Islamic thought and Islamic culture;”⁸⁰ “we attempt...to discuss the foremost characteristics of Islamic thought and Islamic culture;”⁸¹ “it is not a sound opinion, but is rather more akin to ignorance of the particularities of Islamic thought and Islamic culture;”⁸² and “our continuous discussion of the foremost characteristics of Islamic culture and Islamic thought.”⁸³

Moreover, some researchers are inclined to writing about thought or culture using the same contents, as evident in the titles of books pertaining to university academic curricula in ‘Islamic thought’ or ‘Islamic Culture,’ where, in most cases, the content is one. It would appear that the issue is

related to the title that the discussion revolves around, whether in articles or books, as when the title references culture, there is increased mention of the word culture with thought. Interestingly, when the title is about thought and thinking, these words are used frequently with little mention of culture.

- What is the point in differentiating thought from culture?
- What is the relation of depth and breadth in determining the difference between thought and culture?
- What is the relation of the capability to contribute, and the capability to acquire in elucidating such difference?
- How does culture convert into thought, and how does thought convert into culture?

There is also the individual who is a specialist in a discipline, is somewhat a thinker and is perhaps even cultured, but he or she employs all of this in an attempt to influence the largest number of people, as in to move them from a particular intellectual or behavioral state to another one which he or she advocates. Such a person would encourage adherence to that particular state of thinking or being, and he or she exercises diverse techniques in order to influence others, such as writing, preaching, and engaging in dialogue, etc. He or she is often keen to meet and interact with people directly.

Such individual would be predominantly characterized as a *dā'iyah* (advocate or preacher), as he or she calls people to embrace the thought that they espouse, the thought of the political party or group to which they belong, or to follow particular patterns of moral or social conduct. The thought to which the *dā'iyah* calls does not necessarily have to be his or her own production, but that person nonetheless adopts and propagates it. The issues the *dā'iyah* propagates may be partial and specific issues that deal with the behavior of individuals, and relate to particular virtues, and involve a degree of emotional intensity. The issues may also be public matters related to social, economic, and political conditions, and a desire to resolve their related problems, with the hope to change the situation for the better, and where this person's vision for change is clear, defined, novel, and ambitious. Such a person is described as a *reformer*.

There is yet the person who belongs to another category of individuals – which is much less numerous compared to the aforementioned categories. This is a person who is a specialist in a discipline, and perhaps has some culture and some reformist ideas. However, what distinguishes this person from others is his or her focused concern to build a theoretical view of

Mapping Intellectual Building

scientific and practical issues or cases. While the specialist scholar researches partial issues that define the discipline, the person from this last category reformulates these branches within comprehensive intellectual elaborations, raises general questions, critiques prevalent intellectual formulations, exposes potential inherent contradictions, and posits new conceptual systems. Instead of discussing the problems of a particular society or a particular environment, he or she is primarily interested in the human/society and more broadly the universe as context. Such a person is called a *philosopher*. What most distinguishes a philosopher is their critical spirit, which makes him or her question what people habitually consider as facts, and hence the philosopher engages in much reflection, investigation, and reconsideration of all that he or she reads and hears.⁸⁴

The individuals who carry these descriptions we mentioned (the specialist-scholar or scientist, the cultured, the preacher-reformer, and the philosopher) are present in every society, and each one of them has his or her position and importance. However, these characterizations do not have dividing boundaries or preferential hierarchy among them, and it is easy to distinguish individuals who have varying levels of the characteristics of each group or category. There are other descriptions as well that may fall within or outside these categories, such as the literati, the researcher, the writer, the analyst, the consultant, the expert, the technician, etc., which are descriptions that may be affixed to any individual from the mentioned categories, or may come to distinguish a category of their own.

It appears that thought represents the distinguishing contents which characterize the personality whom we call a thinker, and even so, some of these contents may be shared – at varying levels – with other personalities, such as the scholar, the cultured, the philosopher, etc. However, these contents are clear and stable in each of these personalities, to a point where one could describe the intellectual foundation, or the intellectual building, of each of these personalities. One could also speak of the degree of intellectual richness of individuals belonging to any of the categories, and compare, for example, between the levels of depth and diversity in intellectual richness from a number of cultured intellectuals, or a number of scholars...etc.

And since we are able to discuss intellectual richness, why wouldn't we be able to discuss intellectual poverty, intellectual emptiness, intellectual bankruptcy, or intellectual sterility, etc., to describe the state of intellectual weakness characterizing an individual, a segment of people, a society, or a generation of people...?

Let us attempt to examine the intellectual contents of personalities of

significant influence on contemporary society, who perhaps have an effect greater than that of scholars, intellectuals and philosophers; among these, for example, are those involved in the economic, media and political arenas. What are the intellectual contents of an economic personality who owns millions, and rose to decision-making positions in certain institutions, controlled the markets, and perhaps utilized a team of journalists and elite politicians to serve his or her power and interests?

Let us conjure examples of people in media whose share of thought does not exceed mere oratory praise or satire, practiced in response to payment (benefit) or lack thereof, and the extent of such benefit or lack! What are the inherent contents that motivate those individuals to certain actions?

Let us also consider what happens after major transformations in society insofar as the emergence of dozens of political parties, each gathering dozens of personalities, only to see each party soon after splintering into several parties. What are the intellectual maps upon which those political parties are distributed, and based upon which they elaborate their party platforms that are present to the public during election seasons? And what is the fate of those political parties in the wake of election results?

The phenomenon of intellectual bankruptcy among a majority of contemporary personalities in the fields of finance, economy, business, the media business, and political arenas nearly erases from our memory the memorable names and eminent personalities in the media and economic and political arenas, who are recognized for their intellectual repertoire, which is characterized by clarity, maturity, and balance. The challenge with which I confront the reader is to name three persons in his or her country who are distinguished economic thinkers, three among the notables of media thought, and three renowned political thinkers! Perhaps whoever succeeds in mustering such examples may consider this talk of intellectual bankruptcy to be mere hyperbole or frivolous talk!

3. Dialogue of Knowledge and Thought

Given that our discussion is about thought, we hope that the reader does not think that raising the standing of thought is a sanctification of the thoughts that a human being generates, for our discussion here is about human thought, which is prone to being right or wrong. Yet, we also hope to grasp what is correct in thought, in accordance with the Islamic frame of reference which we espouse, because what is correct in thought is objectively so because it is intrinsically true, and because – in the field of Islamic thought

– it is necessarily congruent with what is religiously known, and because it is a correct understanding in itself, is of a profound level, and beneficial when applied.

We also hope that our discussion about thought is not construed as a departure from the discussion of knowledge, as some of the seekers of knowledge, particularly among the religious sciences, favor using the term *‘ilm* (knowledge or science) and to seek it through the familiar pathways in the texts of religious sciences and the books of the heritage, beginning with the discussion of the merits of *‘ilm* and *‘ulamā’* (scholars), and in the pursuit of knowledge. Some students of the religious sciences state repeatedly that knowledge is what Allah and His Messenger say. Some others communicate from their teachers and their books a zealous spirit or even fanaticism towards a particular branch of science, whereby they view the noblest of sciences to be that of *fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence, the science of Hadith, or the science of *tafsīr* (Qur’anic exegesis), etc., in which they compete. What is more important is the aim and purpose of *‘ilm*; insofar as increasing connectedness with God and achieving benefit for His creations. The nobleness of any knowledge increases when it is more desirable and more urgently needed.⁸⁵

On the other hand, some cultured intellectuals or those who claim to be cultured, as well as some thinkers, suppose that academic disciplines, whether in the field of Islamic religious sciences, natural sciences or even applied sciences, are scientific prisons that only deal with the branches and particularities of science, while depriving those immersed in them from the gentle breezes of culture and thought that involve interest in the issues of society and the Ummah and the ability to contribute to the reform and improvement of existing conditions. Given that a part of this supposition could be true, we nonetheless should not overlook the fact that there are esteemed scholars who are brilliant in their fields of specialization, and who are at the same time at the height of cultural or intellectual knowledge.

We emphasize in this context that we do not compare between *‘ilm* (knowledge) and *fikr* (thought), just as we do not compare between thought and culture, between thought and *da‘wah* (religious call), or between thought and philosophy, etc., to ascribe superiority to any one over the other. We may say here that knowledge is thought, culture is thought, and philosophy is thought, for all of these are human thought, and all are a product of the thinking undertaken by human beings. However, it is thought of various levels and of diverse specifications, all of which could be truthfully right, and we strive to treat all as Islamic thought.

We have no justification for rejecting the other view which considers

thought to be knowledge. Culture is knowledge, and philosophy is knowledge, on grounds that knowledge within the context of human knowledge is what the human being has known at some level or within some subject matter. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib says in *Nahj al-Balāgha*, "...there is no knowledge superior to *tafakkur* (contemplation)...and there is nothing of greater nobility than knowledge..."⁸⁶

Differentiating between knowledge and thought on the basis of the extent to which each has a methodology is not of much benefit because the methodology could be a claim rather than a truth, and the methodology could be a straight path to the truth, or a path to error. Differentiating between the two concepts on the basis of the degree of evidence present is not of great benefit either for the same reason. Evidence could be clear in supporting knowledge or supporting thought, and it could otherwise be an illusion of no value in supporting either one.

This does not necessarily mean congruence between the concepts of knowledge and thought, because the task of differentiating between them is rooted in the term rather than the concept. The term *'ilm* is old, and we mean by it the extent of knowledge that a human being acquires about a particular subject, in a purposeful manner, with a specific goal, and is characterized by a degree of organization, and done according to a particular methodology. This *'ilm* could be applied to the science of *uṣūl al-fiqh* (fundamentals of jurisprudence), or the science of analytical chemistry, alike. Accordingly, *'ilm* or science has its institutions, literature, programs, curricula and methods. It is not recognized as a science, from which an individual derives unorganized and aimless information, nor is accessed by various means such as listening or reading, or a result of either superficial or deep thinking.

Thought is a modern term by which we mean the totality of perceptions, opinions, and judgements that human thinking attains whether through methodological institutional learning or as a product of inner mental processes and conceptualizations undertaken by the human being about a particular subject, with the aim of understanding the subject and analyzing its elements, causes and effects, and the connection of this subject with prevailing reality, what it poses of problems, opportunities or challenges, and what it needs in terms of proposals and solutions.⁸⁷

While science is concerned with the subject in itself and delves into elucidating its elements and details, and organizing the available information and detailed knowledge, thought, on the other hand, addresses the relationship of the subject with reality, and the means of treating the subject with a view to improving this reality.

Mapping Intellectual Building

We have no reason to confine the concept of *‘ilm* to the sciences of the Shari‘ah and its branches. We can learn the science of *uṣūl al-fiqh* and the science of analytic chemistry from within a universal Islamic worldview, at an Islamic university in a Muslim country, or at an Islamic European or American university. We can also learn the two sciences from within a non-Islamic worldview, at one of the universities of the Muslim world, as well as at a European or American university.

Let us do an exercise where we recall the names of those individuals who are renowned for treating science and thought together. Let the examples of such personalities be varied insofar as field of specialization in Shari‘ah sciences (*tafsīr*, *Hadith*, *‘aqīdah*, *fiqh*...), social sciences (economics, sociology, education...) linguistics (grammar, literature, literary criticism...) natural sciences (geology, chemistry, physics...) or applied sciences (medicine, engineering, agriculture...)

On this basis, we ask: who is the thinker?

When a person is described as a thinker, what does this description mean? This does not mean that the thinker is any person who practices the process of thinking, as all people practice this process consciously or unconsciously and, hence, all people have thought. The description of ‘thinker’ is given to the person who possesses an intellectual building characterized by clarity, consistency, and integration, and the ability to produce thought that distinguishes him or her from the vast majority of people, and which merits naming that person a thinker. Where then lies the position of the thinker within the categories of people who are given other descriptions directly related to thought?

Do you know anyone who describes himself or herself as a thinker? Is there a difference between those who call themselves thinkers and those who are described as such by others? Recall the names of some of the people who are described as thinkers, consider their scientific disciplines, the quality of their contributions of books, research, etc., and how they present the topics they discuss. What distinguishes them from others who are considered among the intellectual elite? Perhaps you can now identify a number of key descriptions of a thinker.

The pressing question in this context is focused on the thinker: what is the position of the *thinker* vis-à-vis the descriptions of other categories? Does a thinker fall within one of the aforementioned categories, or does he or she occupy a distinctive position that is completely different from them?

The first that comes to mind is that the thinker perhaps has many of the characterizations of the mentioned categories, albeit to varying degrees. Many of those who were endowed with the description of ‘thinker’ began

their intellectual journeys as specialized scholars, but subsequently transcended a preoccupation with the particularities of the specialized discipline toward the general issues of society. Instead of preoccupation with the current and urgent problems that ordinarily concern the cultured, they proceeded to place these problems within their historical and social context, with a view to building a better understanding of them, to address the real causes of problems rather than their symptoms and manifestations, and to formulate a holistic view of the efforts toward the desired reform and change. However, even so, the thinker does not eschew concern for the reality he or she seeks to reform, and does not abandon contributing intellectual formulations that engage with the current reality in order to attain the desired goal. The description of ‘thinker’ connotes distinction in culture and knowledge, and an inclination to reform and development.”⁸⁸

There does not appear to be a direct relationship between the intellectual identity of the thinker and the specialized discipline within which his or her intellectual formation began. Yet, the thinker is a cultured intellectual, and it would be possible to view the intellectual project of the thinker as a reform program for the reformer to adopt. The thinker’s quest is to find solutions through a holistic view and through his or her ability to expose the problems in the prevailing intellectual and practical formulations. Moreover, the thinker is akin to the philosopher in the level of concern that afflicts him or her in the continuous endeavor to understand, explain, and view matters from various angles. With such anxiety and concern, the thinker is further ahead of the scholar who stops at matters of certain in his or discipline, and from the *dā’iyah*-preacher who presents his or ideas with absolute confidence and unbridled zeal. The thinker, instead, is immersed directly in the general issues of society, in contrast with the philosopher who is not.

Since both the philosopher and the thinker usually begin their intellectual journeys in a specific area of a specialized discipline, the nature of this discipline influences the language in which they compose their intellectual formulations, and the methodology they follow in this formulation. Perhaps this is manifested clearly in the intellectual works of thinkers such as Ismā’īl al-Fārūqī (philosophy and comparative religion), Edward Said (comparative literature), Sayyid Qutb (language and literary criticism), Ali Shariati (sociology), and Tāriq al-Bishri (law and justice), etc.

You have a list of names, try to classify them within five categories: scholar, thinker, *dā’iyah* (preacher), reformer, philosopher, and cultured intellectual. If you find it difficult to accurately define the category to which each person belongs, you may initially classify them into two or more categories, then attempt to be more specific in order to place each of them into one particular category.

Mapping Intellectual Building

We have adopted, in the foregoing, a theoretical approach in discussing the characteristics of the thinker, which includes identifying the characteristics that are ascribed to categories of persons. Perhaps we would reach the same conclusion if we pursued another approach, which identifies at the outset a number of persons who are described as thinkers, and then analyze the intellectual and practical characteristics that each one of them embodies. Perhaps the dear reader would engage in such exercise, where he or she would identify a number of persons they consider to be thinkers, and then identify the characteristics and features of the thinker.

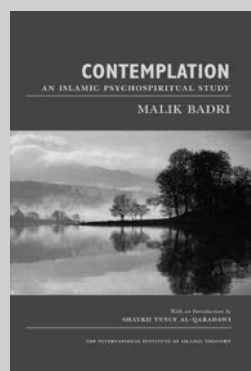
Examples of Suggested Books for Reading

Contemplation: An Islamic Psychospiritual Study

Al-Tafakkur min al-Mushāhadah ila al-Shuhūd:

Dirāsah Naḥsiyyah Islāmiyyah

The book is a simplified psychological study in contemplation from an Islamic perspective. The author, Malik Badri, sheds light on the value of contemplation as a form of worship from the perspective of modern psychology, and discusses the value of contemplation in guiding human behavior, in formulating human drives and habits, in treating human disorders, and in enriching human psychological and spiritual life. This small book presents a rich exposition of the relationship between thought and thinking, contemplation, reflection, forethought, and remembrance, and is a detailed study that embraces religious texts with the contributions of Islamic heritage, modern psychology, theories of learning, differences between individuals in degrees of contemplation, the relationship of thought and language, and the relationship of contemplation to what is known insofar the scientific method in material and applied sciences.



The Problem of Ideas in the Muslim World

Mushkilat al-Afkar fī al-‘Ālam al-Islāmī

The book is an attempt to expose the “difficulties in which the Muslim society muddles in facing problems that exist in the two domains: the moral domain and the domain of effective ideas. The analysis addresses the root of the problems that bear contradictory ideas, and in bringing up the problem of ideas, [the author aims] to demonstrate its weight in history and in the fate of humanity.”

The book is laden with terms that came to distinguish the author, Malik Bennabi, in his intellectual writings: the world of ideas, dynamic (living) ideas, dead ideas, fatal ideas, effective ideas, contradictory ideas, elitist thought, the problem of ideas, forsaken ideas, the revenge of ideas, the betrayal of ideas, fundamental ideas and common ideas, inherited ideas and acquired ideas, inheritance in the domain of ideas, intellectual breathing, copied ideas and fabricated ideas, confining thought, quantitative thought, the idea-thing dialectic, the idea-idol conflict, intellectual conflict, the lifespan of ideas, the intellectual system, the death of ideas, and the relationships of ideas.



The Making of a Thinker

Takwīn al-Mufakkir

The title of the book may suggest that it is a handbook for any person who aims to become a thinker, or any institution that aims to produce thinkers; which implies that there is a clear and systemized technique to reach this aim. However, the author, Abd al-Karim Bakkar, cautions against this hasty understanding, and emphasizes that the thinker becomes so in an unintended and spontaneous manner. Nonetheless, it is conducive that the person takes care of him or herself “through earnest efforts in reading, contemplation, research, writing, and dialogue” so that he or she “becomes, with time, a person with a special view and a distinguished presentation,” and would come to be characterized by some of what “thinkers are preoccupied with, in terms of concern for reforming the public condition, attempting to understand it and analyze its causes and work to enhance it.” The author attempts to highlight the characteristics of each of the thinker, the philosopher, the cultured, the scholar, the preacher, and the reformer, and elucidates the meaning of thinking, its various types, levels, obstacles, and its relationship to language and creativity.



Mapping Intellectual Building

Intellectual Readings

These are two books about thought, each with a different purpose. Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Namlah is a professor at the Imam Muhammad ibn Sa'ud University in Riyadh, who specializes in library information science. Abd Allah ibn Salim Bahammam is a training supervisor in educational training management in Riyadh, and specializes in business management and marketing. The first book, *al-Fikr bayna al-'Ilm wa al-Sulṭah*, is a collection of short newspaper articles, connected in a single thread represented in the title of the book (Thought between Knowledge and Authority: From Clash to Coexistence). The second book, *Sawwīq Fikrak* (Market Your Thought), is a methodical book that is coherent in its content and purpose, and is material for training in 'marketing ideas.' The two books discuss thought, in great detail, but each has its own central idea that its author intends to present to the reader. The central ideas do not necessarily unfold in particular sentences of either book, directly, but are rather implicitly and indirectly conveyed and are deduced through the 'intellectual reading' of the two books. Such intellectual reading is that of the reader, and it may not necessarily correspond with the ideas of the authors.



4. Movement of Thought and Thought of the Movement

We have attempted to shed light on the content of thought and thinking, and the characteristics of the thinker in relation to other personalities within the semantic field of these characteristics, which meet or intersect with issues of thought and the features of thinkers. In this context, we embarked on identifying the field of specialized discipline in relation to the thinker. We observed that the thinker perhaps begins his or her intellectual endeavors through his or her initial immersion in a field of specialization, then expands

an interest towards other disciplines, and formulates his or her understanding of some of the elements of specialized scientific knowledge, thereby making them general cultural knowledge. The thinker then begins to advance in this culture towards elaborating intellectual concepts and visions characterized by precision, focus, and depth, and deriving from them a specific intellectual discourse that offers answers to questions and solutions to problems, in a manner that is essentially different from the varieties of prevailing discourses.

The intellectual formation of the individual does not occur independently from the conditions in which the psychology and mentality of the individual are formed. There are numerous factors that contribute both positively and negatively to this formation. Educational experts and psychologists discuss the influence of psychological and environmental factors on the personality of the individual and the manner in which the said personality forms. Undoubtedly, some individuals are influenced more than others by those factors, and with some of the stages of growth than other stages. The thinker, or the person who enjoys specific intellectual capabilities, is not born with these qualities, but rather begins as any other human individual begins, as the Qur'an states: "It is [Allah] Who brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers when you knew nothing; and He gave you hearing and sight and intelligence and affections: that you may give thanks (to Allah)" (16:78). Hence, the individual becomes influenced in the stages of his or her intellectual formation by various factors. The psychological and social environment that the family provides the individual enables him or her to absorb, consciously or unconsciously, the feelings of belonging to the religion, sect, or school of thought. Such feelings subsequently become intellectual facts that the individual sometimes strongly adopts, and to defend them the individual musters intellectual arguments and evidences. This environment may also negatively influence the individual, causing an adverse reaction whereby the individual develops an aversion to the thoughts he or she knows from this environment, provoking the individual to strive to refute and renounce it.

Some families carry conservative ideas, and are strict in emphasizing intellectual homogeneity within the family, whereas other families exercise a degree of freedom and provide an atmosphere of varied experiences that afford the individual an opportunity to develop his or her ideas independently. Moreover, some families provide a rich intellectual environment, with a library full of valuable books and relations with diverse intellectual leaderships. Certainly, such an environment contributes to the intellectual formation of the individual who grows up in it.

Mapping Intellectual Building

In addition to the factors represented in the ideas of the family, school education also involves psychological factors that contribute to invigorating intellectual formation or the stifling of it. In university education, the opportunity is available to a student to study a course with a distinguished professor, which may be a decisive factor in the intellectual formation of that student.

The life experiences that the individual passes through in his or her lifetime are a determinant of the psychological building of the individual in a particular manner, in which he or she becomes optimistic or pessimistic and, therefore, whereby their ideas are consequently imbued by either optimism or pessimism. In fact, the spirit of optimism or pessimism constitute for the individual or group decisive ideas that become the basis for making important decisions, culminating in either positive or negative consequences.

The belonging of the individual to a school of thought or movement with a particular frame of reference influences the intellectual building of the individual. In a quest to understand the commonalties between the thought and the movement in terms of the components of each and the interaction in their functions, it is important to understand the relationship between the movement and thought, and how thought could be an element in building the movement

Some members of Islamic movements or Islamic groups become uneasy when it is mentioned that there is need for distinguished thought that is capable of achieving the desired change. The terms of *'aqidah*, *da'wah*, and *'ilm* which fill the discourse of the movement and its literature, become beloved Islamic terms, while these members come to see in *'fikir* (thought) an intrusive term that threatens to replace those beloved Islamic terms. It is their view that thought and thinkers have to theorize, are removed from the concerns of reality, and belong to ivory towers that are detached from the practical issues and the daily suffering that inflict the movement and its members. There is a need to ponder the relationship of thought with movement, and the relationship of movement with thought, and then to speak of 'the thought of the movement' and 'the movement of thought.'

It would be possible to argue *a priori* the difficulty of conceiving of a movement without thought. The questions that remain are around what type of thought the movement espouses, and the presence of thinkers among its ranks, the value of thought in its efforts and programs for developing and renewing thought and the expansion of its horizons. Such is with a view to enabling the movement to sound comprehension of the successive and emerging challenges and developments, and to develop the necessary

programs for confronting them. While we say that thought is the movement of the mind, when the mind of the thinker innovates his or her idea, whereby thought and movement are associated concepts, we can also envisage that there are ideas that are deprived of a movement after they are generated, due to the absence of proponents and practitioners of it, and in such case those ideas will be devoid of value and significance that give it the desired impetus to be influential, effective, and an agent of change.

The term movement '*harakah*' has become a valued term in reformist efforts in the Arab and Muslim world since the outset of the twentieth century, by virtue of the advent of reformist movements concerned with the situation of Islam and Muslims, particularly in view of the weakness and backwardness from which the Ummah suffered. There appeared on the world stage forces that are of great power and advancement, and the situation developed into the vivisection of the Ummah into nation states. These mini-states fell under the political, economic and military dominance of European powers. In effect, the concern of the reform advocates was to confront the foreign powers or the regimes that were subject to those powers, and to call for restoring the Islamic identity in the myriad arenas of public life. For these purposes, movements and political parties emerged that were interested in forming movement identities and belonging among their members, fortifying relations among them, and mobilizing their energies for expansion, struggle, and conflict. The activities of these movements were characterized by a spirit of rebellion against prevailing conditions that were incongruent with Islamic ideals and principles. These movements and their members were distinguished from the general pattern of people who were overcome by subjection to the demands and pressures of their personal lives.

Reform movements, therefore, are based on reformist ideas, whose exponents strive to utilize in order to change the situation of the Ummah or society. For thought to become manifested in a movement, two conditions should be met: the first is for this thought to be adopted by people who would put it into motion in real life (moving from thought to action), and the second is for this movement from thought to action to be implemented so that it may produce change in reality.

Thus, the thought that has no adherents would be lacking in influence in reality. An idea may be adopted by a single person who would individually apply it, or would establish for it an institution to widen the scope of the idea and its manifestations in reality, or it may also be adopted by society as a whole whereby the influence of the idea on prevailing reality expands. Naturally, the movement of prevailing reality, accompanied by the changes

that arise within it and the problems it faces, constitutes the basis for generating ideas in order to adapt to changes, and in order to devise solutions to problems. Hence, there is a mutual relationship between thought and reality.

Many who study the history of Islamic movements consider them a novel phenomenon in the history of Muslims, one that emerged as a result of the substantial changes that took place in the reality of the Muslim Ummah at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, which are changes that culminated with the demise of the Caliphate. The reason for this perspective is that this chronicling treats the modern phenomenon on the one hand, and the term on the other. In this manner of historical specification of the origins of the Islamic movements, the concept of Islamic movements would be more akin to a discussion of the quest for reaffirming the concept of Ummah, and an attempt to formulate the desired image for this Ummah in the thought of those movements.

Regarding contemporary movements, whether social, political, intellectual or military movements, we notice that the term 'movement' refers essentially to the desire to change the prevailing reality. Hence, the concept of movement connotes the presence of a group or organization that moves within the prevailing reality with a view to changing it, and uses for such purpose particular means to effect change. Accordingly, we may say that this concept was present in Islamic history since the earliest manifestation of the Islamic message. If we were to consider 'the movement' as an effort to effect change in reality, then we could consider the succession of Divine Messages to be a movement of religion, a manifestation of Divine guidance, and a renewal in Revealed Laws. Therefore, the Message of Prophet Muhammad is a movement of revival and renewal of the Divine religion, in order to remedy the condition of misguidance and oblivion which humanity was witnessing, and the deviation of the adherents of the previous Messages.

Islam was a movement within the prevailing reality at the time it was revealed. After the state and Islamic society became stable and entrenched on a particular form of understanding and practice, there emerged opposition movements, particularly at the end of the caliphate of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān. Some of these movements called for imposing what they espoused in terms of an understanding that was divergent from what was prevailing, and they used violence in an attempt to achieve their oppositional revolutionary vision. Thus, the rebellion against 'Uthmān ended with his death, and the movements to avenge his murder led to Islam's first civil war. Furthermore, the Kharijites who rebelled against the fourth rightly guided Caliph 'Alī ibn

Abī Ṭālib were an armed opposition movement, and later, the movement demanded entitlement of the family of the Prophet to the caliphate in subsequent eras. This included the military movement of al-Ḥussayn ibn ‘Alī that culminated with his death as well. Also, there was the Zanj rebellion in southern Iraq, which was a revolutionary armed movement that demanded change, and that exhausted the Abbasid state for over fifteen years.

The concept of movement was present throughout Islamic history. Some of these movements considered themselves Islamic movements that sought to formulate the political system and the ordering of society in accordance with their own Islamic vision. In this context, there were movements of change and reform which were of a political nature, such as the movement of Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb in Najd (1703-1791), the movement of Shah Walī Allah al-Dehlawī in India (1702-1762), the movement of Usman dan Fodio (‘Uthmān ibn Fodio) in Nigeria (1754-1817), the movement of Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Sanūsī (1787-1859) in North Africa, the movement of Muḥammad Aḥmad al-Mahdi in the Sudan (1843-1885), and others, in addition to numerous movements before and after them that were of a mystical character, including the Naqshaband-iyyah, Shādhiliyyah, Qādiriyyah, and in subsequent eras the Khalwatiyyah, Idrīssiyyah, Tījāniyyah, Samāniyyah, Khatmiyyah, etc. This means that the frames of reference for the emergence of these movements were internal, and the circumstances and orientations were defined and conditioned by the conditions facing the Muslim Ummah. In most cases, they were movements of reform and renewal of the religious and worldly condition of the Muslim Ummah.

There were also other movements that emerged in the Muslim World that were affected by the state of the Muslim Ummah where there was a need for reform, and at the same time, they were watchful of the political and intellectual threat represented by the case of European powers. Some sectors of the Ummah were influenced by this external influence. These subsequent Islamic movements were conceivably influenced by the efforts of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and his disciple Muḥammad ‘Abduh, who both sought to create a global Islamic organization named “al-‘Urwa al-Wuthqā” (The Firmest Bond) and collaborated in producing a journal bearing the same title. Their influence continued through Muhammad Rashid Rida and *al-Manār* journal, and subsequently through Hassan al-Banna and the establishment of the Movement of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The aim of the many movements that were established in the nineteenth century was for reform and change in the political system of the Ottoman

Caliphate state, some of which had Islamic orientations and others were of nationalist inclinations. Some were established for European protection to safeguard Christianity in the Islamic East. Meanwhile, some movements did not have a political vision, but were rather established in the form of Islamic social associations aimed to spread religious awareness and social services, in light of the decline of the role of the state in providing services and the increasing need of society for them. Among the earlier associations that were established was the Islamic Charitable Society, which was established by Imam Muḥammad ‘Abduh in 1892. This Society was “the first social work in Egypt in that period, and represented the beginnings of establishing a wide social reform movement aimed to create a society that is capable of solidarity.”⁸⁹

At the outset of the twentieth century, some movements began to emerge advocating adherence to religion and the framing of the Islamic personality, without direct political involvement. One of these for example was al-Jam‘iyyah al-Shar‘iyyah (The Shar‘iah Society for the Cooperation of those Abiding by the Qur’an and Sunnah) in 1912 in Egypt.

There are numerous studies that attempted to historically study and chronicle the origins of Islamic movements in the Muslim World, and classify these movements in terms of their intellectual orientation and pivotal interests. One such study was published by *al-Muslim al-Mu‘āṣir* Journal in 2001.⁹⁰ We will focus on the terms movement of thought and thought of the movement

A working paper submitted to the first symposium of the advisers of the International Institute of Islamic Thought held in Washington D.C. in 1989, entitled “Thought of Movement and Movement of Thought,” was mentioned in a book by Taha Jabir al-Alwani. This title was one of the four headings included in the book, but did not garner the same attention and elucidation as the other three headings, occupying only a page and a half. This indicates that the idea was present in the mind of the author, and he wished to stir it in the mind of the reader, for it to be given consideration. It would appear that al-Alwani wished for this idea something different than what is ordinarily understood by the term. His brief reference focused on what the author termed “Movement of the Ummah” and what it needs to crystallize “the contemporary and alternative Islamic intellectual framework” the aim of which is to “nourish the movement of the Ummah with the necessary intellectual sustenance that it lacks.”⁹¹

He then refers to the movement of thought by emphasizing the need for thoroughly investigating the movement of Islamic thought “from the moment of the initial revelatory Qur’anic commandment: ‘Recite’ (*Iqra*)

and until the present day - a precise investigation that enables us to comprehend the process of this thought, its components, and the various factors that had had an effect on it, and to ascertain its positive and negative aspects, the ways in which it was formed and shaped, and then to critique it... given that it is a response to the reality in which people find themselves ... for it requires continuous efforts and intellectual striving for development and revision.”⁹²

Then the author reemphasizes the importance of the movement of the Ummah by underlining the need for the emergence of “specialized institutions (enterprise)...to supply the movement of the Ummah with what it needs in terms of intellectual awareness, and to endeavor to form intellectual leaderships in the Islamic arena...considering that the constant problem posed in every age is: to what extent can the Muslim mind produce tangible ideas that drive the Ummah forward and are able to connect it with the primal sources of guidance, the Qur’an and the Sunnah.”⁹³ Thus, the crisis from which the Ummah suffers is an “intellectual crisis; that is, in the ability to generate thought that emanates from the religious frame of reference, accompanied by consideration of time, place, and the human being. Such thought is skillful in applying these values to reality, and capable of drawing and building the method of applying and effectuating it in reality, while securing this method with continual renewal, and a perpetual consciousness of invariant laws. How then can we produce these ideas and transform them into living ideas that govern the movement of our Ummah in light of the needs and realities of the age?”⁹⁴

The title: “Movement of Thought and Thought of the Movement” evolved in the revisions that were introduced to the book in subsequent editions, whereby the title became: “The Major Features of the Project to Revitalize the Thought of the Movement, and the Movement of Thought.” The concept remained present, evident in the author’s statement in the second edition insofar as the necessity of tracing the movement of Islamic thought “and to connect our movement with it.” He asserts that, “we cannot overlook this collective task, the task of providing the Ummah’s movement with the intellectual fuel it needs, and of working to build the movement of thought in Islamic and world arenas.”⁹⁵

Al-Alwani was not concerned with the thought of the movement in the sense of the ideas that are espoused by Islamic movements. Rather, he was more concerned with the thought of the Ummah and the movement of the Ummah through this thought, and the movement of thought in the Islamic arena.

Ahmad al-Raysuni has used the same title in a short article: “Critique

of Islamic Movements: Between the Thought of the Movement and the Movement of Thought.” His is a different approach that occurs in his critical papers. Al-Raysuni observes that the genesis of Islamic movements carrying political concerns was accompanied by weakness in producing thinkers, scholars, and researchers, and that those who did emerge within these movements emerged incidentally. He says, “The Islamic movements were formed insofar as their leaderships, ranks, interests, and priorities on the basis of the concerns of the *da‘wah* and practical education, and on the basis of jihad and soldiery with what this demands in exertion and sacrifice.”⁹⁶

Hence, the thought of the movement that actually emerged was thought “in the service of the movement and the demands of the battle, a thought that defends the positions, orientation, instructions, choices, and interest of the movement. A thought that confronts what happens daily and is immersed in what is immediate, and is governed by the instructions, requirements, and directives [of the movement]. This is the ‘thought of the movement,’ and is in reality more akin to what is commonly known as the party thought or the party mentality. The thought of the movement in this sense is thought that is directed, dependent, and restricted, whether in its issues and topics or its positions and choices.” Therefore, “this thought of the movement was incapable of coping with the latest developments within the Islamic movements themselves or around them; and moreover, failed to be the producer of developments and innovator of independent reasoning.”⁹⁷

While al-Raysuni was understanding of the conditions of the rise of the Islamic movement in the form of “a liberation movement...that is in dire need of disciplined thought of struggle that is consistent with its choices,” he asserts that the Islamic movement today “has become obligated and asked to be a movement of renewal and *ijtihad*, in itself and within society, and therefore, it has become in dire need of free and creative thought, and is in need of unleashing and driving ‘the movement of thought’ without subjugation to and dependence on the thought of the movement.”⁹⁸

The Islamic movement today is in need of thought that guides its activity with much wisdom and maturity, in light of evolving challenges and successive developments. It is difficult for this thought to grow and renew without a great extent of freedom of “thinking outside the box.” Moreover, it is in need of appreciating the elements and personalities that appear to be “singing in a different tune” and take what they say into consideration. Furthermore, it is in need of enlisting the help of those outside the movement to look into the problems that need solutions from viewpoints with which the movement is unfamiliar. In fact, the movement has tried to present a vision towards ‘globalized’ issues, which are influenced by many internal

and external factors, and which demand specialized experience, broad knowledge, and intensive follow up, which the apparatuses of the movement may be incapable of providing. In so doing, the Islamic movement becomes a movement of open thinking, rich in resources, quick to adapt, and more able to embrace the capabilities of the Ummah while harnessing them and guiding their movement.

When thought precedes the movement and where the movement of thought leads the thought of the movement, there becomes greater hope for the movement to be actualized through guidance and sound vision, and to be able to present initiatives and propose alternatives and scenarios, create the events, maintain a multitude of thinkers notwithstanding their diversity in intellectual views. Where the movement is in a state of continuous renewed productivity, such adds to its growing repertoire of thought and contribution.

However, when the movement precedes thought and where the thought of the movement governs the movement of thought, it is feared that this would be a prelude to the search for justifications, excuses, and arguments. Such would compel the movement to remain in a position of reaction, awaiting the occurrence of events and getting lost in explaining them, which would lead to its falling hostage to an intellectual monochrome that repels intellectual capabilities of other colors. This is where the movement becomes confined to an orientation towards consumption that depletes its available resources, forcing it to become misguided and unstable.

5. Schools of Thought

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a group of personalities who were concerned with Islamic thought. Some were within Islamic movements, political parties, and organizations; others were critical of the traditional intellectual trends, such as traditional *Salafi* or contemporary progressive and revivalist trends. Those who held a critical stance stood outside these trends, in that they endeavored to practice methods and approaches within Western modernist schools of thought, or postmodernist schools. Some of these practices were explicit and proclaimed, while others were implicit and hidden.

The term 'intellectual project' was used to describe the contributions of an author or researcher. Muhammad al-Ghazali, for example, had an intellectual project, as did Khalid Muhammad Khalid. At some point these two projects were distinctly different from each other, and an intellectual

Mapping Intellectual Building

battle ensued between them, taking place within the folds of the two books *Min Huna Nabda*, and *Min Huna Na 'lam*. Some university professors are considered scholars in their specialized disciplines, known more for their thought than for their knowledge. Perhaps the reason for this is the nature of the philosophical discipline as each of them became recognized for their distinguished intellectual project, for example, Isma'il al-Faruqi, Muhammad Arkun, Hassan Hanafi, Muhammad 'Abed al-Jabiri, Taha 'Abd al-Rahman, and Fahmi Jad'an, despite the differences between these figures in their content and intellectual orientations. Some of these figures left their scientific specialization in medicine, engineering, or geology, to work with intellectual issues in which they produced significant contributions that occupied a substantial degree of intellectual interest, for example, Malik Bennabi, Mustafa Mahmoud, and Zaghlul al-Najjar.

Some of those present themselves as bearers of an intellectual project, whereas others humbly leave such recognitions up to others to endow them with. Of course, there are also those who exaggerate in describing themselves as 'pioneers' of a school of thought that has its disciples and followers.

Numerous figures emerged in the past decades who illustrated great interest in Islamic thought, some establishing institutions to train those interested in their thought to develop their own intellectual building. Interest in the intellectual field occurred among many activists in their *da 'wah* and charitable and volunteer work. Numerous websites became available, specializing in issues of thought, thinking, and intellectual development, and educational and training programs that are of a cultural nature, or scientific-academic nature leading to academic degrees.

In the preceding discussion we looked at the individual in terms of his or her endowment with thought and, hence, we could say: such an individual has a particular intellectual building, or that he or she is a thinker. Yet, intellectual building may also be an attribute of a group of people who share in common one intellectual building, or belong to one school of thought. A school of thought may be reformist, religious, political, or scientific within a particular discipline, or it may be a broadly intellectual current that encompasses substantial segments of society, or which predominate in society as a whole. Furthermore, adherents of a school of thought may adopt a particular paradigm or approach insofar as viewing matters, practicing thinking, research, and conduct, as is the case with the Sufi or Salafi or philosophical schools of thought. Paradigms and approaches may also vary between the different schools of thought in the form of various jurisprudential schools.

Following are examples of schools of thought:

a) The Muslim Brotherhood

The majority of members of the Muslim Brotherhood have in common certain thoughts in terms of their perspective towards society, the state, history, and the West. Most agree on what is needed for social and political reform and change. Certainly, the educational approach of the Muslim Brotherhood and the culture they acquire from various forms of literature sanctioned by the movement, constitute the basis of significant commonality in their intellectual building. The Brotherhood adopts education as the basis for reform and change, beginning with the individual, then the family, society, and ultimately the state. It collaborates with others in educational and reform initiatives under the banner of “we cooperate in what we agree upon, and excuse each other for what we disagree in.” The movement takes the path of political and partisan competition for decision-making, believes in gradual application of Islamic provisions (*aḥkām*), and considers that Muslims live in societies afflicted with deviation in many aspects and to varying degrees. It calls for the autonomy of Muslim countries and opposes political or economic dependency on other nations. However, it supports cooperation with other nations on the basis of greater interests.⁹⁹

b) Hizb ut-Tahrir (Islamist Liberation Party)

A shared and homogenous intellectual building is much more notable in the case of Hizb ut-Tahrir than it is with the Muslim Brotherhood. Hizb ut-Tahrir’s fundamental cause is to establish the Islamic *Khilāfah* (caliphate), which would be accomplished by forming a political bloc that engages in intellectual struggle and opposes unjust rulers. The movement does not recognize the legitimacy of existing regimes in Muslim countries, deeming them *kāfir* (unbelieving) regimes, and considers that Muslim societies live in *Dār al-Kufr* (the abode of unbelief). It does not believe in democratic systems as a means to reform, and adopts the concepts of political awareness, intellectual conflict, political struggle, opposing unjust regimes, and non-participation in political affairs. It rejects gradual application of Islamic provisions; rather, the group calls for implementing them all at once as the basis for change. The movement awaits political conflict to reach a degree of tension that may lead to the establishment of a political authority that would adopt the Islamic system of governance and reinstall the Islamic *Khilāfah*, with all its ideas, systems, and tenets.¹⁰⁰

c) The Frankfurt School (Philosophy)

The Frankfurt School is the foundation of most theories and trends that are

Mapping Intellectual Building

critical of post-modernism, particularly in philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and even in literature, music, and the arts. Its philosophy is based on a critical social theory that attempts to understand and diagnose the causes of the dismal conditions of social reality.¹⁰¹

d) The Chicago School of Economics

The Chicago School of Economics refers to the approach used by faculty members of the Economics Department at the University of Chicago throughout the twentieth century. This school of thought adopts a particular trend in economics, described as a neoclassical model of economic liberalism, particularly related to free market economics that is distinct from Keynesian economics. The school transcends the idea of general equilibrium in favor of result-oriented partial equilibrium analysis. It espouses tax cuts and is against regulation of the private sector. It differs, however, from a pure free market economy in that it supports the government's role in regulating fiscal policies.¹⁰²

e) The Vienna Circle

The Vienna Circle was founded by a group of German and British scientists and philosophers in the second quarter of the twentieth century headed by Rudolf Carnap and others. The Vienna Circle adopted the philosophy of logical positivism, which was laid out earlier by Auguste Comte. Its members believe that all human sciences, except logic, must be empirically supported by observation and experience. Logical matters – which define the method of human thinking and prevent it from error – are the only scientific and fundamental issues that should not be subject to observation and experience, because they teach us the method of correct thinking. The Vienna Circle dismisses metaphysics from the fields of scientific and philosophical interests as meaningless because such cannot be reduced to statements about experience. The school nonetheless suffered heavy blows at the hands of the second generation of philosophers in the field, such as Thomas Kuhn and Willard Van Orman Quine.¹⁰³

f) Islamization of Knowledge School of Thought

This school of thought is adopted by the International Institute of Islamic Thought and a number of other institutions in the Muslim world. It views the challenges of the Muslim Ummah presently as an intellectual problem that reflects on further political, economic and social issues. The source of this problem is the educational system, which renders knowledge taught at school and university institutions devoid of religious and value-based

foundations, and finds that religious education, when provided by these educational institutions, is done so in a manner devoid of contemporary knowledge.

The school of the Islamization of knowledge stresses reforming Islamic thought through necessarily utilizing *tajdīd* (renewal) and *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) in order to apply Qur'anic and Prophetic guidance to reality in terms of time and place, and through purging Islamic heritage of the deficiencies and stagnation that afflicted it and which continue to constitute a crisis in the contemporary Muslim mind. Simultaneously, this school espouses the study of contemporary human and social sciences analytically and critically, in order to liberate these disciplines from what accrued to them in terms of epistemological and methodological problems on the one hand, and to effectuate the Islamic worldview in its theoretical and philosophical formulations, on the other.

As one of the problems of social sciences in the West is inherent in the attempts to subject these disciplines to the strict scientific method, which believes only in physical empiricism, the Islamic view instead relies on the integration of rational and empirical experiences in understanding religious texts on the one hand, and understanding the natural facts of the universe and the realities of human nature and human society, on the other. Utilizing this method – according to its proponents – will not only present human knowledge to Muslims in a suitable manner, but will contribute to solving the problems of the philosophy of science and the epistemological theory in the Western world itself.¹⁰⁴

g) The Salafi School

There has been debate around whether it is possible to consider the contemporary *Salafi* trends as a school of thought?

There are many terms related to the history of the term *Salafiyyah*: Ahl al-Hadith, Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, the victorious group, the Wahhabi movement. There are also several prominent figures: Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH), who is characterized as the imam of Ahl al-Sunnah, the exponent of the well-known school of thought in doctrine and jurisprudence, the well-experienced antagonist of philosophy, Mu'tazilite thought and Sufi mysticism – which emphasizes steadfastness and patience in tribulation known as the case of the creation of the Qur'an. A further example includes Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 AH), especially in regards to the theological and practical battles he engaged in in defense of the lands of Islam and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Included are Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 1206 AH), who attempted to revive the legacy of

Ibn Taymiyyah, and advocated reforms that combated religious innovations, superstitions, and veneration of tombs; and Muḥammad ibn Sa‘ūd, the Emir of Dar‘iyyah, who entered into alliance with Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, which is an alliance that endured throughout the first and until the current Saudi state. Thus, the term Wahhābiyyah (Wahhabism) appeared.

There are sources and specialized books that discuss the genesis of *Salafiyyah*, the circumstances of its spreading, and how it transformed from being a scholarly characterization that religious scholars and preachers endeavor towards, to becoming the name of institutions, groups, organizations, and states that monopolize this description, and deny it to others.

Especially in the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century, much discussion has been devoted to the *Salafiyyah* in contradictory ways. Indeed, regimes and states have used the *Salafiyyah* slogan, and there are other forces opposing these very regimes and states – with arms – using Salafi justifications, and yet are confronted by those who defend these regimes, also using Salafi arguments. In this context, various trends of *Salafiyyah* are distinguished, including scientific Salafiyyah, Jihadi Salafiyyah, political Salafiyyah, etc.

The concept of *Salafiyyah* has been associated with negative connotations under the influence of many factors, including state-sanctioned media in the Arab World, as well as foreign media, which sought to distort the image of Islamists in general and the movements of political opposition to dictatorial regimes and to foreign influence. Such has included writers who classify themselves or are described by others as modernists, secularists, and liberals. Another factor is also the practices of various Islamic groups that use the slogan of *Salafiyyah*, but maintain an exclusionary discourse, and resort to violence in dealing with those who disagree with them, whether rulers or the ruled. The *Salafiyyah* school is not devoid of problems, many of which stem from historical antecedents and political positions. Of greater impact in confusing matters concerning *Salafiyyah* are the media battles, and the numerous groups that declare affiliation to *Salafiyyah*, notwithstanding the profound differences in the orientations and practices of those groups.

Following is an example of Salafi thought, in its defense, and another which rejects partisanship and fanaticism based on adherence to *Salafiyyah*. In the first book, the author defines *Salafiyyah* in an unequivocal manner, where he says: *Salafiyyah* is, “an orientation that give precedence to religious texts over other alternatives, in both method and subject, and which adheres to the guidance of the Prophet, and that of the Companions in terms of religious knowledge and conduct, and that excludes the

approaches that diverge with this guidance in creed, worship, and legislation.”¹⁰⁵ Based on this definition, it is the right of most Islamic groups and most Muslim scholars to consider themselves Salafis. Hence, there is no problem in espousing the Salafi orientation, as long as it sanctions *ijtihād* in interpreting and applying the religious texts. The second book does not discuss the opinions and ideas of Salafi groups, but affirms nonetheless that the age of the *Salaf* (righteous first generations of Muslims) is a beacon to the one Muslim Ummah, and questions the right of any group to disengage from the Ummah to innovate from within *Salafīyyah* a new framework for a distinct Islamic group, in light of what partisanship within this framework has caused at the level of the Islamic reality and in the field of the Islamic *da'wah*.¹⁰⁶

In light of this input, the definition of *Salafīyyah* referred to above does not preclude considering it a title for a school of thought in the face of other schools that rely on interests outside of the framework of religious texts, neglect Prophetic guidance insofar as applying the religious texts to reality, and which import systems, ideas, and practices that are inconsistent with what is manifestly Islamic. There is nothing that prevents talking about a school of thought with these specifications, particularly if we isolate the intellectual and scholarly context of this school from its political positions, and the outcomes of these political positions which manifested in forms of conflict.

A school of thought is often distinguished by its various pioneers, whose writings become references to clarify the positions of the school, and who share common ideas, hopes, and ambitions that they strive to achieve through cooperation and coordination between the school's adherents. A school of thought is also distinguished by having a professional or scientific association that embraces the proponents and followers of this school, and those who are close to it. Such an association holds periodic conferences and workshops to effectuate the school's vision in discussing the issues it considers worthy of interest, research, and discussion. Some schools of thought also have publishing houses and cultural or scholarly periodicals that publish the literature produced within this school.

Thus, the intellectual building of a school of thought is a set of ideas (beliefs) and aspirations (feelings) that constitute the individuals' view of themselves individually, of their society, the history, present, and future of this society, the history and reality of the world around them, and of the method of change required to reform the reality of their society and solve its problems. The members of the single school of thought share in common the totality of these ideas and aspirations.¹⁰⁷

Mapping Intellectual Building

It is true that the ideas and aspirations within a school of thought may not be completely convergent, considering the innate differences between the individuals that distinguish each from the other. But the level of commonalities between the group of individuals within a school of thought is sufficient to describe the individuals as one group, and distinct from others.

Each society distinguishes between its elite and the general public. Therefore, it is necessary to differentiate among the elites, such as the 'political elite,' or the 'economic elite,' or the 'intellectual elite.' In the case of the latter, the members of the intellectual elite in society do not necessarily share a homogenous intellectual building, but rather we may differentiate within the elites, for example, between an Islamic school of thought and a secular school of thought. Ultimately, what these schools have in common is that they bear ideas that distinguish them from the general public, given the assumption that it would be difficult to refer to the general public (the common people) as possessing a particular intellectual building.

Conclusion

The concept of building should be accompanied by planning and design, and the concept of thought should be accompanied by a great degree of knowledge and culture. One without thought is one who is a follower of his or her own whims or those of others. The process of building is merely a process of transitioning from an existing state to a desired state, following a plan and objectives, which are implemented through clear steps. Building consists of components, available in proportions that are interconnected and intertwined.

Contemplation is more sophisticated than thinking, because it is a purposeful effort to arrive at truth; remembrance is a form of contemplation, because it entails using the mind to conjure what the human being knows about the subject. Forethought, however, goes beyond all the preceding towards considering the consequences of matters.

Some researchers have divided thinking into four stages. The first is where the human contemplates the knowledge which he or she acquires through sense perception or imagination, which is what we may call the stage of material perception. The second stage is for the human to focus his or her reflection on manifold areas of knowledge, and we may describe this stage as reactive savoring. The third stage is to contemplate the Attributes of God the Creator, and to acknowledge His greatness and benevolence.

The fourth stage is for the believer to move from being conscious of the All-Wise Creator towards continual reflection, remembrance, love, and emotional transparency, thereby feeling having a sense of presence in the Heavenly realm, where the person would perceive what cannot be described. This stage may be described as the state of *shuhūd* (spiritual cognition).

The task of differentiating between *fikr* and *‘ilm* is dependent on the term rather than the concept, for the term *‘ilm* is old, and may be ascribed to the science of the *uṣūl al-fiqh*, or chemistry, or otherwise, while *fikr* is a modern term that connotes the totality of perceived realities and the principles attained by human thinking with a view to understanding the subject and analyzing its elements, causes, and effects, and the relationship of this subject to prevailing reality.

Given that thought is the movement of reason, thought and movement are thereby entwined, necessitating for thought to lead any movement that seeks reform and change, whereby the movement of thought is what leads the thought of the movement. It is also necessary that the movement should not be held captive to the demands of the organized movement, which may be lacking in intellectual richness, initiative, development, and renewal.

It has become evident to us that intellectual building has foundations and rules, and sources, tools and methods, etc., where if a number of individuals are able to construct their intellectual building based on these same foundations, we can then envisage that they belong to a single school of thought. Nevertheless, individual differences between people will reflect on adherents of a particular school of thought and as such be distinct from each other, despite the commonalities. We appreciate that the need exists for the two matters to exist in combination: intellectual commonalities, on the one hand, and differences in individual talents, capabilities, and inclinations, on the other. Balance between these two elements is necessary as commonalities allow for cooperation in achieving the common goals of the group, society, and the Ummah; diversity allows integration between the varied experiences between the individuals of the group, the segments of society, and the communities that make up the Ummah.

3

Intellectual Building of Society and the Ummah

Introduction

The Qur'an uses the term *Ummah* (nation) to refer to a group, a path, or a religion, but the term in the common Arabic language today – and its corresponding terms in other languages – bears different connotations. It means the totality of people in a particular society or a particular nation (for example, the Egyptian or the American nation). It also means the totality of people in one religion (for example, the Muslim or Jewish nation), and so forth. The term 'society' means a group of people living in a specific geographical area, who are united in a common system that they adhere to, and which regulates their affairs and determines their relationships with each other and with other societies. Among individuals within society, there may be a general level of harmony and congruence in one or more of the foundationals of society, such as religion, language, or nationality. Different societies may also share in common some of these factors, which in turn unite all or most of those who live in these societies within a larger circle, whereby there would be one 'people' (*sha'b*) who live in a number of societies.

The description of Ummah may also be ascribed to a people to denote particular ethnic, linguistic, or religious criterion, such as the Arab Ummah, which includes categories from different religions or peoples who live in different societies, or the Muslim Ummah, which includes categories from different languages, races, and ethnicities who exist in various societies, countries, and continents.

We also observe that some inherited factors hinder the individual from coming out of the circle of voluntary affiliation to a society or an Ummah, such as the place of birth, language, tribe, or race. Further, through free will the individual might also choose factors such as religion and thought.

Intellectual identity may describe a group, small or large, the totality of

ideas that members of this group espouse, the methods of thinking they use, and their intellectual building or formation that includes the system of beliefs, values, and patterns of behavior. This 'building' is formed from various sources related to the historical heritage, the educational and social nurturing methods, or the forced culturing by political systems, among other sources of influence.

This chapter discusses some of the factors that shape the intellectual identity of the individual and society. It also addresses the role of the individual and the elite in innovating thought, and the role of the institutional environment in embracing, cultivating, and marketing thought, and in building the intellectual capital of society and the Ummah. Finally, the chapter discusses the role of the Muslim Ummah in intellectual leadership.

1. Intellectual Identity

God created each human individual in a distinct fashion that distinguishes him or her from others, despite the fact that there are many common characteristics among individuals. God also made people into nations and tribes, distinct from one another in language, color, religion, and traditions. Present-day human societies are represented in political entities called states, which have political and geographic borders, distinct social, political, economic, and religious characteristics and elements, as well as their own cultures and customs in food, drink, and clothing.

Within a society, there are sub-societies that are distinct on the basis of the civilizational environment: rural and urban, the economic status (rich and poor), or categories of professions and trades, and so on.

Societies are usually keen to maintain their intellectual and cultural identity through various methods, means, and procedures, such as:

1. Family upbringing and edification programs where the individual learns the mother language and many of the social values and norms.
2. Institutional education programs where the individual learns the basics of science, history of his or her country, its geography, systems, and the rights and obligations that ought to exist between individuals and groups within the society.
3. Public or private civil society institutions, which have special interests in cultural, political, or social fields, but nonetheless contribute to the building of the national identity of individuals in the society, including its intellectual and cultural elements. Examples of such civil society

Mapping Intellectual Building

institutions include political parties, professional associations and trade unions, youth and sports clubs, public libraries, and others.

4. The laws and regulations that individuals must abide by, drawn in a manner that promotes social cohesion, preserves society's interests, and imposes the penalties that individuals face if they violate these laws and regulations.

Together, such methods contribute to the shaping of minds, mentalities, and behavioral patterns of individuals in society in a manner that distinguishes the identity of the individuals and their belonging to their societies. The Intellectual building of a society is defined by the totality of thoughts, feelings, and behavioral patterns shared among members of that society, which are different than those of another society. Hence, each society would have a different intellectual building unique to its own.

We should notice, in the context of discussing intellectual building of the Ummah, that the concept of 'Ummah' (nation) is no longer confined in its linguistic or religious roots and connotations, as any community of people within the state may call itself an Ummah, and strive to rebuild its heritage and historical roots to justify giving itself this label. Intellectual building was notable among human societies particularly after a series of transformations witnessed in Europe, and particularly with the rise of the nation-state within political boundaries that were previously unknown in the era of empires and theocratic regimes. This phenomenon then moved to other continents following the division of colonized areas into states, or mini-states, each with its own political borders, a distinct flag, a national anthem, and a political system. Certainly, the drawing of borders, whether in Europe, Asia, or Africa, was not based on particular racial, linguistic, or religious distinctions; nonetheless, each society or group came to have its own nation.

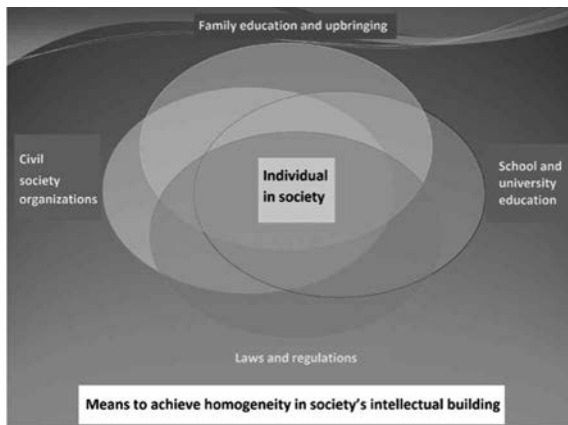
The concept of Ummah in Islam is a multi-faceted religious concept. The Qur'an uses the term to describe one person who acts as an 'Ummah' in bearing the religious message, such as the case of Prophet Abraham "Abraham was indeed a model [Ummah])" (16:120); a group of people that undertakes a specific religious task "Let there arise out of you a band of people [Ummah] inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong" (3:104); the followers of Prophet Muhammad "You are the best of peoples [Ummah], evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah" (3:110); the collective followers of prophets that bore the message of *Tawhīd* "Verily, this brotherhood [Ummah] of yours is a single brotherhood [Ummah], and

I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore [worship] Me (and no other)” (21:92); or all of the diverse humanity “If your Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind one people [Ummah]: but they will not cease to dispute” (11:118).

When we speak of the Muslim Ummah in its connotations as specified in the Qur’an, Prophetic Hadith, and Islamic heritage, we distinguish that it witnessed two trends: first the meanings of unity, cohesion, solidarity, and support, and subsequently, a second trend in its contemporary reality of disintegration into states and societies, sects and schools of thought, ethnicities and languages, etc. We will discuss the meaning of intellectual building of the Ummah in both of the aforementioned conditions, separately or collectively.

The one unified Muslim Ummah is united in its faith, worship, rituals, sentiments, rules and religious systems, and is unified in both its hopes and pains, as the Prophet described it: “as one body.” The Ummah, as such, would undoubtedly embody a unified intellectual building that distinguishes any of its societies or individuals by their distinct identity and belonging to this Ummah. But an Ummah torn into societies and states, with different allegiances and loyalties, conflicting over their borders, and competing for their own interests would not succeed in possessing what unites it, and each part of it would strive to distinguish itself from other parts, even in the means of “competing in the construction of grand buildings” (*al-taṭāwul fī al-bunyān*).¹⁰⁸

The intellectual building of an Ummah is unified to the extent to which societies within this Ummah cooperate and share in common methods of upbringing, educational programs, establishment of public and private institutions, and systems of life.



2. Intellectual Building between Stagnation and Renewal

Movements are distinguished by the fact that they build schools of thought that continue even after the death of their founders, and especially in how they affect the reality of thought and society. However, the school thereafter often goes a long time without seeing much renewal and, so, remains constant to the original ideas that it was built upon, and to the characteristics of brilliance in intellectual building that its leadership had possessed. Stagnancy on the first and original ideas may not be a positive aspect.

This does not mean denying the founders' contributions, or undermining the recognition of their brilliance in formulating the thought of the movement in a manner that intertwines the movement strongly with the identity of society and its intellectual belonging, or undermining their brilliance in formulating the movement's thought and ideas in a manner that is adoptable and sustainable. Sayyid Qutb echoes this in his statement about Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, he says:

Hassan al-Banna...it is just a coincidence that this would be his name...but who says: it is a coincidence, the real truth of this man is [his ability in] building (*binā*'), and his perfection in building, and even brilliance in building? The Islamic creed knew many *du'āa* [preachers]...but preaching and proselytizing the call is different from building...and not every preacher has what it takes to be a builder (*bannā*'), and not every builder can bring forth this grand genius in building. This great building...the Muslim Brotherhood...It is the manifestation of this great brilliance in building organizations...For they are not merely a group of people, whose consciences have been aroused by this preacher, and thus they rallied around a creed...The brilliance of the builder is manifested in every step of the organization...it is the brilliance of the building, which continues to extend even after the departure of the builder!¹⁰⁹

Certainly, an important development occurred in the circles of the school of thought Hassan al-Banna established, on the basis of which the Muslim Brotherhood was founded more than eighty years ago, and is today witnessing considerable presence in local, regional, and international politics and media. The thought of the movement is also transitioning from one condition to another, and has become a topic for dialogue and controversy between proponents and opponents. All this will require new intellectual efforts, which perhaps need to be accompanied by revision, reformulation, and adaptation not only to face the challenges (the likes of

which the movement has faced before). Such will need to emphasize the dynamism of the Islamic thought it espouses and to reach a balance between the constants and the changes within this thought. Furthermore, it needs these new intellectual efforts to ensure that the movement remains a deeply-rooted school of thought, not merely a political party that can be easily swept away by developing events.

The presence of Islamic thought in history exposed the difficulty of confining this thought to a single school that emerges according to the determinants of time and place. The affiliation of this thought with Islam does not justify the argument that says: it suffices to emphasize Islam's suitability to every time and place, and hence, Muslims need only hold steadfast to their religion, for they do not need anything else with it or instead of it for their lives to improve and their problems to be resolved. If this argument is an expression of a doctrinal truth, which serves as a premise for thought, then does this mean that the way in which Muslims comprehend their religion, formulate its ideas, and apply its provisions in the various countries and successive times is one which must be in unified form that is fixed and stable, devoid of any variation, diversity, and renewal?

Change is a fact of the universe, just as time does not stop. The passage of time is an essential factor in the change of things, people, and ideas. With time, human beings grow and learn new experiences, whereby they increase in knowledge, develop in experience and practice, and in the process, remember things and forget others. Hence, we cannot envisage a meaning for stagnation in human thought. There is much talk of the need for renewal and revival, and the need to bring the condition of stagnation to an end. Talk of openness or exclusion comes up in every occasion where Islamic thought is discussed. How do we understand this contradiction between the impossibility of stagnation in human thought and the pleas to end stagnation in Islamic thought and move towards renewal and revival?

The Muslim prays to the Creator: "Lord, increase me in knowledge," and repeats: "Allah shall not bless me on the day where the sun arises and I do not increase in knowledge." Increase in knowledge is a virtue, and the knowledgeable remains knowledgeable as long as she or he continues to seek knowledge. If one thinks one knows it all, then they are in fact ignorant. Those who are in the midst of ignorance disown it, and even those who do not possess knowledge claim it.

In Islamic history, sciences developed and knowledge flourished, and the Muslim society did not feel at any time in history that the need for Qur'anic exegesis has been completely met. Scholars continued to write in exegesis, jurisprudence, and creed sciences, and effectuate reason in

Mapping Intellectual Building

scrutinizing the narration of Prophetic Hadith, authenticating some Hadiths to be correct and others weak. It has not been proven that the door of *ijtihad* was ever closed, even though some have made this claim.

Renewal is a fact of knowledge in Islam. In every era, God sends to this Ummah a person to renew for it its religion. Regarding the concept of renewal (*tajdīd*), all intellectual currents lay claim to it and boast about their contributions to it. Renewal is one of the holistic concepts in the Islamic thought system and is one of its desired objectives. It is an invaluable requirement to ensure that the Muslim society remains present and standing in the vast arena of human thought.

There are many manifestations of renewal. There is new *ijtihad* in understanding the text, or in applying text to context. *Ijtihad* also plays a role in transitioning Islamic thought from addressing the partial matters of the lives of individuals and society to holistic causes and the general affairs of the Ummah and humanity. *Ijtihad* is seen in the utilization of tools and means that emerge in the reality of human society in propagating and spreading knowledge of religion, preaching it, and defending it. Further manifestations include the development of concepts and organization of thoughts within methodological controls that limit intellectual chaos, and provide a frame of reference for free movement within this framework, also without losing any of the fundamentals and constants of this religion, or its intents and objectives in realizing the interests of the Ummah.

We understand the Hadith about the “strangeness of religion”¹¹⁰ from the perspective of renewal. Islam began alien, unknown, and unfamiliar to those who witnessed its first ‘strangeness.’ Therefore, most people rejected the religion and denied what it espoused, even if their inner souls believed in it. The Hadith suggests that people will witness times where Islam will return similarly strange as when it began, a matter that necessitates renewal of *da‘wah* to the religion, propagation of the faith, and revival of what has disappeared of its sciences. Perhaps this was the objective of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī in authoring his book *Ihyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* (Revival of Religious Sciences.)

Stagnation may distort the general view that people form about religion, knowledge, or thought. It may also afflict scholars in a particular period of time, a certain category of people and not others, or a single individual and not others. Such is also the case with renewal; it may influence people’s image of religion, knowledge, or thought, it may manifest in scholars, or in a certain category of scholars and not in others, or in a single individual and not in others.

If stagnation is adherence to frameworks that no longer demonstrate the

relation of thought with life, or reform life, such framework loses its value and people become forced to look for another. In such case, renewal is not necessarily searching for new systems in belief, thought, methodology, and frames of reference, nor discarding of the old original ones; rather, it is the right balance between holding steadfast to the foundations, principles, and constants of religion and to the rules of thought and methodologies on the one hand, and on the other, effectuating renewal in developing understanding in light of new knowledge, re-organizing thinking in light of new methodologies, re-organizing thought in light of new issues, and using new means and methods that are more effective on the hearts and minds of people, culminating in establishing the direct link with the new developments and challenges of the current reality.

The modes of renewal and openness in thought are commendable and desired, and people tend to claim them, even if they do not possess them. Speaking about renewal and openness is not difficult, and is in fact easier than discussing the examples of stagnation, exclusivity, and parochialism that people tend to disparage and renounce, even though they may be in the midst of it. When two sides debate or argue about a particular issue, the modes of stagnation may appear in either or both of them. It is stagnation, for example, for a person not to think and contemplate the position of the other person in the argument, or when one side does not see that there could be another way of understanding the issue aside from his or her own understanding, and that perhaps this other way of understanding may be acceptable and it may just be another side of the same coin in the argument. Perhaps one side's mistrust of the other is unwarranted. Stagnation or persistence on one's position may be a result of a lack of self-confidence and fear of the consequences of changing one's opinion or stance or admitting error, whereas renewal is an expression of the position of strength and self-confidence.

In any case, renewal is a relative matter and not an absolute characteristic. It is relative to the level required by Islam, to what is available of the capabilities for learning and renewal, or to what is available of potential for openness and renewal towards others. Holding steadfast to particular ideas and principles is a characteristic that is not in contradiction with renewal that is accompanied by adherence to holistic principles and general frames of reference. What is important is the ability to maintain balance between adherence to basic ideas, on the one hand, renewal in justifications for this adherence and the need for it, and renewing its understanding and means of expressing and applying it, on the other hand.

What concern us in this regard are two things. First, stagnation and

Mapping Intellectual Building

renewal in intellectual building is a condition prevalent in an individual, in a category of people, or society as a whole. This condition is not constant or perpetual; rather, it is a condition of continuous growth in the level of this building, and a state of renewed change in its quality.

Second, the initial mental view a person maintains eventually transforms into the view the person creates out of his or her own understanding of the elements of thought, its structure, and relations. Some scholars illustrate human knowledge through a particular field as a body that grows outward, whereby layers of renewed knowledge accumulate one above the other. In this form, knowledge grows with time, new discoveries, and development of experience. Other scholars consider that knowledge in a particular field is not an accumulation of layers of knowledge in the form of constructed levels, but rather a network of relations and points of contact, some of which are known and others unknown. If we learn something we did not know before, this new knowledge is placed in the location where the unknown was positioned, whereby the new holistic picture becomes substantially different to the preceding one. Growth in knowledge is change in the way of understanding and in the holistic view, which happens over consecutive periods of time, and where a general intellectual model – a paradigm – prevails during each period.

We can reflect on when the science of exegesis is expounded upon by a scholar of interpretation in the year 1435 AH/2014 AC), for example, such is an updated version of what was written by al-Ṭabari (d. 310 AH), al-Zamakhshari (d. 538 AH), al-Rāzi (d. 606 AH), al-Qurṭubi (d. 671 AH), Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH), and others who came after them. Might we imagine that the new exegesis would add substantially to what has been written in the old interpretations? Or that the new interpretation may be, to a large extent, a different version from the old interpretations, whether in deriving inspiration from the significances and intents of the texts, or in employing contemporary knowledge in natural, social, educational, and psychological sciences in understanding these significances and intents? If the new version of exegesis is a type of renewal, does that necessarily mean overriding the constant foundations and recognized principles of exegesis in the area of linguistics, narrated Prophetic Hadith in interpreting texts, the general context of the Qur'anic verse, or the Prophetic tradition related to the reasons a verse was revealed, or otherwise?

In summary, the characteristic of stagnation and intellectual exclusivity is an ill-favored trait, unacceptable for an individual, a group, or the Ummah. Holding steadfast to the foundations of belief and the requirements of belonging to the religion and the Ummah does not constitute a pretext to

those wanting to confine themselves within aspects of historical understanding that are no longer fit for the contemporary reality. The validity of Islam in every time and place opens wide the door for *ijtihad* in understanding Islam's rules, principles, provisions, and for applying text to the contemporary context, which changes with the change of time and place. *Ijtihad*, hence, means difference and diversity from within the comprehensive *Tawhīdi* monotheistic frame of reference. This difference and diversity would grow with the renewal of experiences.

Therefore, whoever hopes to acquire a particular intellectual building ought to keep the door open for growth and renewal, and should examine today what and how they were yesterday. Such individuals ought to look into their own intellectual building to recognize what has been added anew, and what has been developed as a result of what they heard, read, or experienced. Perhaps this test ought to be part of self-accountability that a believer engages in every night before going to bed and, furthermore, a part of a periodic self-assessment conducted every week, month, or year. Such a test would assess the degree and quality of new thought that has been acquired.

If the characteristic of stagnation and exclusivity in intellectual building is disparaged, and the characteristic of renewal and openness in this building is commendable in individuals, groups, or societies, then how can the growth of thought quantitatively and qualitatively become an element of regular and periodic evaluation and assessment, whether in an individual, a family, a group, employees of an organization, or members of a movement?

3. Marketing Ideas

Some who are interested in thought choose to speak of production and dissemination of ideas, similar to the concept of production and marketing of things. Marketing is a science, with its own concepts, principles, and theories. It includes academic and professional books, programs, and applications in the marketing of goods and services. The likening of the idea of dissemination of ideas to marketing of things emerged as a result of the scientific value upon which the processes of development and production can have a material yield. Hence, the idea of patents and copyrights emerged, which register the rights of the owner of the idea and the benefit one derives from them in practical applications in the market of goods or services. Likewise, the concepts of intellectual property, knowledge economy, etc., emerged.

Mapping Intellectual Building

It is important to emphasize that the value of what a person possesses of ideas is not known or relevant unless these ideas are publicized, spread, circulated, and become an important element in the culture of society, part of public opinion in politics, or a particular practice in economic consumption, etc. In any case, the term ‘marketing of ideas’ as used in the titles of some references, is not much different to what it signifies in regards to the way other terms are used, such as education, upbringing, dissemination, communications, propaganda, brainwashing, mind-programming, and intellectual invasion, among others. Nonetheless, the term ‘marketing of ideas’ emphasizes the practical value of, and desired benefit from, the ideas that are disseminated or marketed.

Thought is a characteristic of human beings, and all people think and produce ideas; hence, these ideas essentially make up the personal behavior of people, and affect the ideas, behavior, and feelings of others. The events that occur in time and place are results and manifestations of influential ideas. Yet, all human ideas are not on equal footing, but vary in their level of importance, clarity, depth, and originality, etc. There are simple ideas that come to mind, or are adopted by others, by virtue of what people are accustomed to in terms of lifestyle and, hence, people do not feel the need to talk about them or disseminate them. Furthermore, there are innovative and creative ideas, reached through sincere effort and hard work, which may be of great value if they are invested in their appropriate place.

The sciences and epistemic systems that have been recorded in books, journals, and others are basically ideas that have undergone a degree of systemization, scrutiny, and experimentation. The development of enterprises, industries, and inventions, including means of transportation and communication, are basically the practical applications of ideas, just as political, economic, and social practices are also applications of ideas. It all starts from an idea that comes to the mind of one person, who in turn transmits it to others. Such idea likely emerges through extensive exchange of ideas, debate, discussion, revision, and testing, until it matures to become a decision that is implementable.

Are not the processes of teaching and learning but processes of transferring ideas?

Are not the contents of visual, audio, and print media but attempts to spread ideas, whether true or false?

Are not the efforts of reformers and advocates for change and solving problems of prevailing reality essentially intellectual initiatives?

And are not the powers of leaders in any sector or segment of society in their ability to lead and influence the hearts and minds of people essentially

a product of their development of ideas, and their practices based on these ideas?

Then, how would you know if you have great ideas if these ideas do not speak for themselves through your behavior and practice? Or if you do not express these ideas by speaking or writing about them?

These questions lead to an indisputable fact, that is: the value of ideas – regardless of their value – is known only by the transmittance of these ideas from the originator to the receiver, and by its movement towards action and effect.

The originator of the idea is rightful to it, and it must be attributed to him or her; this is the purpose of the systems of documenting ideas and referencing its authors. Some ideas have great value in practical applications, and it is for this purpose that intellectual property rights were introduced. Intellectual property has a moral dimension related to ascribing and referencing ideas or permission to publish or use, and/or the material dimension related to the monetary value of the idea. In order to bring value to the idea the means of transmittance must be developed, for example, diction, elucidation, and its eloquence and related areas must be developed, such as, advocacy and education, which ensure that a message is delivered for a particular purpose, in an appropriate time, in an appropriate fashion, and for an intended destination and audience.

Ideas are marketed through various means, key being institutions of learning, such as schools and universities, which are means of transmitting ideas through educational curricula from teachers to students. Books contain this knowledge, which are basically ideas that have been formulated in specific scientific and epistemic systems. Publishing houses publish books and journals, which are basically mediums for the trade of the ideas contained in these books and journals. Media outlets, whether visual, audio, or print, are also key mediums for the spread of ideas. Training centers, where ideas are typically organized into training packages that include material for reading and discussion and exercises for practice, supports the trainee in becoming familiar with new ideas, whether these ideas are cognitive information, form the epistemic and intellectual bases of practical skills, or comprise behavioral trends.

It is appropriate to conclude the discussion about marketing ideas by referencing a valuable book, entitled *Sawwīq Fikrak: Taswīq al-Afkār – Jawlah bayna al-‘Ulūm* (Market your Thought: The Marketing of Ideas).¹¹¹

4. The Ummah's Need for Intellectual and Scholarly Leadership

All sciences are the product of human perception and thought, the sources of which are either Divine inspiration and Prophetic guidance, or the natural physical, social, or psychological world. The sciences are produced either through direct or indirect interaction with the texts, phenomena, and events, cognitive contemplation and thinking, or physical observation and scientific experimentation.

Therefore, all sciences are human thought; yet, this thought emerged with a degree of organization, scrutiny, modification, and testing that refined it to the appropriate level in order that it may be accepted by specialized scientific groups in each science, as these groups/scientific leaderships constitute the frame of reference in determining what becomes part of this science and what does not.

Thought in such context is the perception and understanding that stems from the human being's ability to absorb knowledge and transcend it; that is, to escape from its partial details to its comprehensive vision that enables human beings to know the limits of science, the potential of putting it to use, the purposes of putting it to use, how to apply it, and who would apply it, etc. Thought looks outside the limits of knowledge and science to consider the prospective horizons that this knowledge ought to reach. It poses new questions that may require – among other things – critiquing the prevailing knowledge, exposing its limitations, and adding to its lexicon, in an effort to answer those questions. This takes us out of the subject of science and into the realm of its methodology. If science is defined by its subject and methodology, then thought is more akin to methodology than it is to subject.

4.1 Intellectual Leadership of the Ummah

The Muslim Ummah bears the seal of the Divine message and is heir to the Prophetic leadership. The sources of this message are safeguarded; they have not been distorted or changed. God has delegated this Ummah to assume the mission of intellectual leadership of all other nations. The Ummah, by God's command, became a witness to people, presenting to them the guidance for becoming the model and example in following Divine guidance, striving in it, and in teaching it. The Ummah had carried out this

mission with more efficacy than any other Ummah of the followers of previous prophets. It established the society of guidance, goodness, and justice, and it became the hub of knowledge and progress, the destination with its institutions and colleges for seekers of knowledge who came from various parts of the world, in order to gain knowledge in various fields, learn the myriad of values and the patterns of civilizational behavior in management, administration, organization, and principles of social interaction.

4.2 Specialized Intellectual Leaderships

Specialized leadership emerged within the Muslim Ummah that was distinguished in all fields of leadership, most notably in the field of knowledge, sciences, and thought. The keenness to preserve the Prophetic heritage was evident since the early days of Islamic history, through recording Prophetic Hadith and Prophetic biography (*sīrah*), where leaders in the fields of narration, authentication, and scrutiny excelled in their fields. From these fields emerged sciences unknown to previous peoples including the science of narration (*riwāyah*) and deep comprehension of Prophetic sayings (*dirāyah*), the science of classification of Hadith, the sciences of critique and praise of Hadith (*al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*), and the science of defects of Hadith (*al-'elal*). These sciences were recorded, and their books became original sources and references for all subsequent development in the various fields.

The scholars of Hadith became an intellectual leadership of a school of thought among the various schools of Islamic thought, and major scholars excelled in this field. The second Hijri century witnessed the beginnings of official Hadith recording, and among the earliest narrators and scribes were Muḥammad ibn Muslim Al-Zuhri, then Ibn Jurayj, Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq, Mālik ibn Anas, Ḥammād ibn Zayd, Sufyān al-Thawri, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Umar al-Awzā'i. By the dawn of the third Hijri century, recording was expanded in accordance with known principles of documentation and classification, where Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal classified his *Musnad*, and Ishāq ibn Rāhwayh classified another *Musnad*, then emerged *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, and the *Sunan* of al-Tirmithi, al-Nisā'i, Ibn Mājah, and Abū Dawūd.

Similarly, other intellectual leaderships have been distinguished in authoring volumes and classifications in religious jurisprudential precepts and within specified methods. The school of jurisprudence had its share of

Mapping Intellectual Building

eminent leaderships in the sciences of *fiqh*, including the imams of the four schools of thought: Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, al-Shafī'ī, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, which are schools followed by hundreds of millions of Muslims until this day.

Similarly, the schools of exegesis (*tafsīr*), doctrine ('*aqīdah*), theology (*kalām*), and mysticism (*taṣawwuf*), and many other fields also enjoyed intellectual leaderships that have their fair share of followership from various sects and factions of the Ummah.

Intellectual leadership is not limited to the religious sciences mentioned above, rather, acclaimed leadership was known in the sciences of medicine, astronomy, optics, chemistry, agriculture and many others. Among the renowned leaders in medicine were Zaynab (the female physician of Banī Awd), Ibn Sīna (Avicenna, the renowned author of *al-Qanūn fī al-Ṭibb* or The Canon of Medicine), Abu Bakr al-Rāzī (author of the medical encyclopedia *Al-Hāwī fī al-Ṭibb*), Abu al-Qassim al-Zahrāwī (the father of surgery and author of an encyclopedia on medicine and surgery entitled The Method of Medicine *Kitāb al-Taṣrīf*), and many others. Similarly, within the other natural sciences exists a long list of names of scientific leaderships, which does not fit the scope of this discussion.

5. Institutions and Intellectual Leadership

From the onset, the mosque was the institution where the qualifications and expertise of scholars were nurtured. The functions of the mosque expanded to become similar to today's universities. The al-Zaytūnah Mosque in Tunis, for example, was considered by historians as the first university in the Islamic world. It was erected in 79 AH (716 CE) initially to be a scientific institute in addition to being a place of worship. Similarly, al-Qarawiyyīn Mosque in Fes, Morocco, was erected in 245 AH (859 CE), and is considered the first university in the world to award higher education degrees in specialized sciences. Al-Azhar Mosque in Egypt, built in 359 AH (970 CE), is considered the oldest university in the world to continue to teach sciences, uninterrupted, until today. Furthermore, the Muslim society established specialized educational institutions for training and expanding in various specialized scientific fields, including observatories, medical hospitals, hospices and medical training centers, and public libraries to store, copy, and translate books, such as the Bayt al-Ḥikmah in Baghdad and Dār al-Ḥikmah in Cairo.

6. The Intellectual Elites: The Foundation of Europe's Renaissance

Europe learned of the advancements reached by the Islamic world since the seventh century, especially through diplomatic delegations dispatched by the monarchs of Europe to the courts of Muslim caliphs, through direct contact in Andalusian Spain and Sicily, and later in the period of the Crusader campaigns. European rulers would send delegations of learned individuals to transmit back sciences, culture, and expertise. The cultural, scientific, and intellectual vanguards of Europe came to familiarize themselves with the sciences of Muslims and patterns of their civilization; they even acquainted themselves with the Muslims' commentaries of classical Greek thought. Starting in the twelfth century CE, intellectual leaderships began to form in Europe in various scientific fields. Such leadership began to form intellectual elites, schools of thought, and educational institutions full of learners eager to transform the backward conditions that were widely prevalent in all aspects of European life. This contributed to European revival and advancement. Europe began to use science and industry to build military forces that spread to discover the new world in North and South Americas, conquered the Indian sub-continent, and then colonized most of the world. With the advent of the twentieth century, Europe and its extensions in North America continued advancing in a new unprecedented civilization.

7. Individual Ingenuity is the Foundation of Intellectual Leadership

Each one of these scholars in the various fields of specialty embodied an intellectual leadership in his or her time and place. The specialists in each science constituted the elites of intellectual leadership in each specialty. The group, institution, and society as a whole, played a major role in defining the position of thought in societal leadership; yet, we cannot neglect the role of the individual in scientific and intellectual ingenuity.

Thought, according to the aforementioned analysis, is more akin to creative, renewing, and revolutionary visions, formulated first and foremost by the individual thinker,¹¹² whether that is individual initiative and diligence, or a result of debate, discussion, and research with others. Thoughts or ideas may be generated in a particular scientific field, which

Mapping Intellectual Building

start out as marginal issues in that field, but later become an integral part of the scientific framework when the specialized scientific group accepts it and adopts it as an essential element in that field. Here, the methodology of science generates thoughts, which later become part of the subject of science itself. The space is always open for growth, development, and revision in every field as each time a thinker effectuates her or his thought and generates new knowledge in their field.

The achievement of human thought is not confined to the specialized fields of knowledge known to us today (intradisciplinary). Thought may specialize in a matter that falls between two or more specialties (inter-disciplinary), and it may be a subject in a particular field expounded by a specialist from another field (cross-disciplinary). Ingenuity in a particular subject may emerge from the collaboration of two or more specialists, each in their specialty (multidisciplinary). There are also subjects that cross the traditional disciplinary boundaries and need to be united in a holistic approach and intellectual frame of reference (transdisciplinary).

In many cases, intellectual creativity is not classified into one specialized science field, but as a field of art.

While the interest of science focuses on the subject itself – delving into its elements and details, and organizing all that is available of data and detailed information – the interest of thought, on the other hand, focuses on the relationship of the subject matter with reality, and the means of dealing with the subject in order to improve this reality. While scientists or scholars provide the specialized knowledge of the issue within the particular subject matter, thinkers endeavor to envision the possible solutions to fix this reality. In their focus, they are closer to identifying the problems of reality or foreseeing the rise of these problems, and defining the necessary knowledge to address them when they occur or prevent them beforehand. Therefore, intellectual leadership is vitally important, especially in times of transition and transformation within human societies.

8. The University as Intellectual Leadership of Society

A major development had occurred across history in the concept of university and its mission in human society. The university today is one of the most important institutions of modern society. It performs three essential missions: education, scientific research, and community service. The university today is in the leadership position in all three important missions.

Academically, the university system separates and distinguishes human knowledge disciplines into departments and majors, where students choose a specific field (or one is chosen for them). Here, they learn broad knowledge in that particular field of specialty, and, upon completing the first level of university education (BSc, BA degree or license) become qualified to practice a specific profession that serves society. If they wish to pursue higher education, they would choose one of the branches of specialization from within their field, learn its fundamentals of research methods, learn how to research a particular issue pertaining to the branch of knowledge, and conclude with a research study on that issue, thereby completing the requirements of a Master's degree. Achieving this level makes them more qualified to practice their profession and identify its problems, and perhaps assume some of the responsibilities of leadership in the issues of their profession. If they wish to further their education in their specialty, they would choose more specific details within their specialization and explore what has been discovered on that issue, examine, evaluate and critique it, and identify its problems and the questions that have not been answered. They would choose a problem or a question, and then draft a research plan to answer the question or solve the problem. The results of such research are a leap to the frontiers of knowledge, and a true contribution to it. Hence, the services that these students contribute in applying specialized knowledge in a particular profession would not be confined to serving their local societies, but knowledge towards the collective and perhaps the whole of humanity. By reaching this level, students would have completed the requirements for the Ph.D. level.

In the field of education, the university assumes the leadership position in preparing their cadres to serve society in the various scientific and applied fields, and in promoting and advancing capacities and qualifications. This is the university's mission in education.

The university's mission in scientific research does not depend merely on the research studies of graduate students that aims to resolve problems and enhance performance, but extend to the research carried out by the university faculty members, who are supposed to serve the larger sphere of scientific research in the various disciplines. Academics value of these research studies is assessed, and its credibility and suitability evaluated for publication in specialized research journals.

These academics have the knowledge, authority and qualification to judge research in their fields. It is no longer acceptable today for research to be done for the sake of research; instead, the value of the research is in the potential results they may produce, their contribution to advancing

Mapping Intellectual Building

knowledge and employing it in improving people's lives in the local society or transnationally.

Furthermore, universities have specialized research centers, where researchers work and collaborate with graduate students, faculty members, and other researchers from different research institutes locally and globally. The research projects in these centers may be extensions and supplemental to the work conducted by corporations or service providers for the purpose of increasing effectiveness, enhancing their products, resolving problems they face, or conducting prospective studies to open horizons for new services and products.

Certainly, the mission of scientific research carried out by the university is leadership. Some universities want to specialize in scientific research and be renowned for this characteristic more than being renowned for their educational mission. Many countries around the world are preparing their universities to be 'research universities' that are distinguished from other educational universities, or at least want to combine both the academic and research characteristics, if they do not meet the overall requirements to be specialized scientific research universities.

Regarding community service, the university cannot afford to limit its missions to education and research – despite their importance, because the university is not separate from its surrounding environment. Teaching faculty members, who are themselves the elite of the society's elite, do not live in ivory towers separate from the reality of their society, its problems, and aspirations. If a school wants to present a model of ambition for its students to emulate, it hosts a university professor to speak to the students about ambition. If the media wants to address an economic, political, or social issue, it hosts experts from universities to discuss their perspectives on the issue. Also, professors of religious Shari'ah sciences have the opportunity to transmit their knowledge through religious, cultural, and media guidance programs, including giving Friday prayer sermons in mosques, and so forth.

University professors are also members in their families and neighborhoods, and may function as the voice of reason in dealing with others. They are also members in social and sports clubs, volunteer organizations, and political parties. They serve as experts in their fields and bridge the gaps to understanding events that occur and challenges as they arise. These are indeed leadership functions that faculty members may not choose or seek, but for which society nonetheless expects from them.

Finally, there are also those professors who use their expertise and experience in work and life in way of writing, in order to present their

understanding of particular subjects to the public. In their books and writings, they put their scientific specialty and comprehensive vision towards general matters to use where specialized knowledge, practical experience, and personal insight intersect. These writings may include intellectual reasoning and *ijtihād* that constitutes a *ta'sīl* for particular orientations in public policies, or prospective analysis of the desired outlook of these policies.

University leadership in these three functions goes beyond the traditional role of the university, or its common requirements, which fall in the category of administration and management. Instead, the university leads in opening horizons, which requires that the university and its professors have prospective visions and intellectual productivity that are vital for society.

9. Intellectual Capital

The term 'intellectual capital' emerged in fields of economics (economic development) and management (management development) in the last quarter of the twentieth century, as researchers began to distinguish this term from other more widely used terms, such as 'natural capital', which relates to natural resources; 'material capital', which relates to money and assets; 'social capital', which relates to social relations and networks, and 'human capital', which relates to people's energies, expertise, and skills. The important aspect of human capital became intellectual capital, which is represented by a distinguished group of members in an organization which possess knowledge and organizational capabilities through which they produce new ideas, or enhance old ideas in order to seize opportunities. This importance stems from the fact that knowledge, science, and reason have become the most valuable foundation in competing forces.¹¹³

Discussion around the economic situation in various countries has come to be summarized as "knowledge has become what we buy, sell, and do."¹¹⁴ Nonetheless, "the body of knowledge about intellectual capital is a half-grown, funny looking thing. What knowledge-management projects are surefire moneymakers? How reliably can intellectual capital be measured? Why is knowledge leaky and flowing in some environments, sticky and parochial in others? What are the best links between training and improved performance? What technologies are most cost-effective? The list is as endless as art is long."¹¹⁵

Although the term 'intellectual capital' is commonly used in large corporations and banks to denote the ideas carried by the management and

Mapping Intellectual Building

the development departments of these institutions, it is tempting to use this term to signify the renewing and creative ideas that distinguish any institution in any society. We use the term in this context, with discretion, to denote what any nation possesses of intellectual repertoire that distinguishes it from others, which enables it to advance among nations, and its ability to present these ideas in a manner that makes others recognize and appreciate this advancement.

If intellectual capital is what paves the way for a company, a society, or a nation to advance and excel, then it is important that this capital be a renewing and revitalizing element that provides continued progress and excellence. However, if its sources dry up, and its ability to renew and innovate is disrupted, then it will cease to provide progress or excellence. If we are to use the term to describe all that the Muslim Ummah possesses, and by which it is distinguished, we must ask whether the Muslim Ummah has enough intellectual capital to make it intellectually rich and, hence, culturally and civilizationally rich. We must ask if it has enough intellectual capital to place the Muslim Ummah in a position of progress and excellence, and guarantee its continuity in this advanced position.

Regarding the Muslim Ummah, when God wanted for it to be the best of nations to have come for humanity, and the middle Ummah that is a witness to all people, He gave the Ummah His last Book to bear, vowed to preserve it from change or neglect to the end of time on this earth, made the Qur'an the guarantee of the Ummah's guidance to goodness and righteousness, the guarantee of the excellence of those who believe in it and are guided by it, and the cause of their superiority in the values of goodness, truth, and justice. Then came the Prophetic Sunnah as sound application of these values in reality. Afterwards the various sciences that were founded in service of the Qur'an and the Sunnah came to renew the paths of guidance and righteousness across the changes in time and place. The Qur'an and the Sunnah also came to ensure its continuance as the perpetual and renewing source of sustenance in order to achieve excellence and progress.

This excellence and progress materialized for the Ummah whenever guided by the Qur'an and the Sunnah; however, it dwindled whenever the Ummah turned away from that guidance. The Ummah's renewable capital is the Qur'an, its Prophetic applications, and the rich sciences that revolved around them. But this intellectual capital is not something that went on and passed; it is rather the dominant frame of reference that stimulates the development of renewing ideas, encourages constant creativity, innovation, and discovery, and elevates the spirit of *tajdīd* and *ijtihād* in all other sciences. Such includes the natural, social, and psychological as well.

Unless this intellectual capital is in a position to actuate action and influence, any of the other forms of capital will achieve neither progress nor excellence for the Ummah.

Conclusion

This chapter addressed the intellectual building of the Muslim Ummah, which constitutes its intellectual identity, the factors that lead to either renewal or stagnation of thought, and the constant need for transmitting and disseminating thought through various means. It highlighted the role of the individual in intellectual ingenuity, and the importance of intellectual leadership in the formation of the Ummah and in its leading position among peoples. The chapter also discussed what distinguishes intellectual institutions in any society insofar as renewable creative ideas, which is what enables society or the Ummah to assume the position of leadership and advancement. Finally, it presented the term 'intellectual capital' for institutions, societies, and nations, questioned the intellectual capital of the Muslim Ummah, and asked whether it elevates the Ummah to a position of excellence sustainably.

The creative ideas upon which significant schools of thought or intellectual movements were founded, in Arab and Muslim societies, deserve to be celebrated and appreciated for their intellectual leaderships' ingenuity in intellectual building. But stagnation on these early ideas is never a positive trait, because the movement of thought, its growth and development, and its responsiveness to renewing questions and changing conditions, is what provides intellectual building with the elements of dynamism and effectiveness.

Society's ability to assume intellectual leadership is a reflection of the scientific innovations brought forth by that society's scholars and scientists from the various natural, technological, social, and human sciences. It is also a reflection of the character that these sciences absorb from the beliefs adopted by that society, which distinguishes it from other societies. It is from this premise that interest arises in institutions that foster the innovations of individuals or research groups, in universities or research centers. It is truly unfortunate that universities in Arab and Muslim countries have not proven their capabilities in scientific and intellectual achievement, neither in distinguishing themselves by a worldview and civilizational character that expresses their intellectual identity, nor in systems of management, administration, or facilitation for scientific and intellectual achievement.

4

Mapping Islamic Intellectual Building

Introduction

We know that Islamic intellectual building is an activity that seeks to construct the edifice of thought on solid foundations and organized maps. And just as material building requires drawing plans and designing maps, intellectual building also requires such planning and mapping. Such is according to which construction is implemented, through which specific phases and what means. Such building begins with employing the skills of linguistic communication, and by relaying them through the means of learning, education, training, research and study, all of which interact with the surrounding intellectual environment, thereby becoming a part of the personality through consciousness of one's identity and the nurturing of such consciousness through personal effort, by reflection, remembrance and contemplation.

This chapter discusses six kinds of intellectual building maps, which relate to sources, topics, means, measurement, history, and geography. It attempts to define the elements that form each map, the programs that are set up to derive thought from its sources and to ensure diversity and plurality of its topics. It also seeks to harness the necessary tools and means for that effort. Evaluation is an important plan in any program and accordingly this chapter discusses qualitative and quantitative assessment. Evaluation is around the extent to which intellectual building is achieved on the part of individuals and groups, in terms of what could be built through the tools and means of measurement and evaluation. This is undoubtedly not easy, for the available pertinent experiences in this task are limited, and its practice is not common.

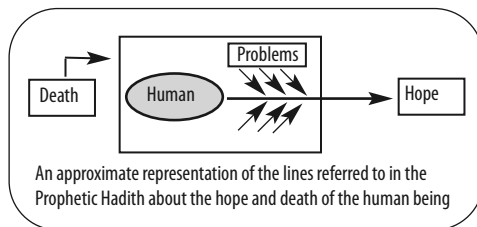
The reader will notice that this chapter is brief, and we attempted to confine the discussion to the major categories in terms of sources, topics, and means of intellectual building without much detail. It is not our concern here to lay down particular programs for intellectual building, but rather to suffice with general maps that inform the reader of these major categories.

The goal is to enable him or her to identify examples of each, such as titles of books and names of authors, considering that it is up to the targeted group in any program to determine such details. The main concern here is the need for individuals and groups to define the requisites of civilizational revival as related to the efforts of thought, knowledge, and action through such mapping and planning.

The map is an illustrative plan or a picture showing a number of elements, or concepts, and their positions and interrelationships, which summarize for the reader what they would read in the book or chapter, brought together in one place. The map is also meant to remind the reader of the totality of what he or she read so to emerge with a holistic vision of it. This should help them evoke this mental picture whenever they see or remember that map. In this context, the map is called a ‘cognitive map’ or a ‘conceptual map,’ which is the product of the person’s thought. The person acquires the map when he or she absorbs the topic and understands it well through a process of analysis and deconstruction of the constituent elements. The person would then restructure them and determine their levels, positions, and how they are interrelated, in a new formation that builds both a mental picture and a visual picture all at once. The process of drawing intellectual, mental, or conceptual maps is one of the strategies of thinking called ‘metacognition.’

One of the methods of the Prophet was to represent by allusion, symbolism, and drawing. This is exemplified by the Hadith related by al-Bukhāri on the authority of ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd: “The Prophet drew a square, and in the middle of it he drew a line that extends outside the square, and then drew a number of smaller lines attached to the central line. Then he said, ‘This is the human being, and the [encompassing square] is his inevitable death which encompasses him – or by which he is encircled. The line that is outside [the square] is the person’s hope, and the smaller lines are vicissitudes of life. If one of those misses him, another will befall him, and if that one misses him, yet another will befall him’.”¹¹⁶

Following is a conceptual map that endeavors to express the contents of the mentioned Hadith.



Mapping Intellectual Building

This chapter also addresses the history of ideas as a process of tracing and explaining historical events, which are events indicative of the will of people. The chapter further highlights elements of their cultures, particularly as relates to the environments of knowledge and culture in every age, and what it signifies regarding details of intellectual building, which were discussed in previous chapters. To elucidate this matter, and in order to reveal its facts and dimensions, it would be beneficial to explore the cultural space, and to identify the phases of intellectual building, its evolution, and levels, which the Muslim individual has continually adhered to across the ages, and has continually called for solidifying it so as to guarantee that it remains in a state of renewal and continuity.

Moreover, the chapter includes a discussion of the geography of thought, and sheds light on the effects of different geographical environments on the characteristics of the intellectual building that forms in these environments. This endeavor is not merely in terms of the effects of the physical nature of the place (geography), but also the effects of the ethnic diversity of the peoples that inhabit these natural environments, and the languages with which they express their thought and culture, their worldview, their position in the world, and their dreams and aspirations.

1. Map of the Sources of Intellectual Building

The Muslim youth who are interested in intellectual building search for the sources of information, data, and branches of knowledge that they must acquire. It may be beneficial at the outset to emphasize the importance of differentiating between various kinds of sources of information available today, such as persons, books, journals and periodicals, or websites. These include:

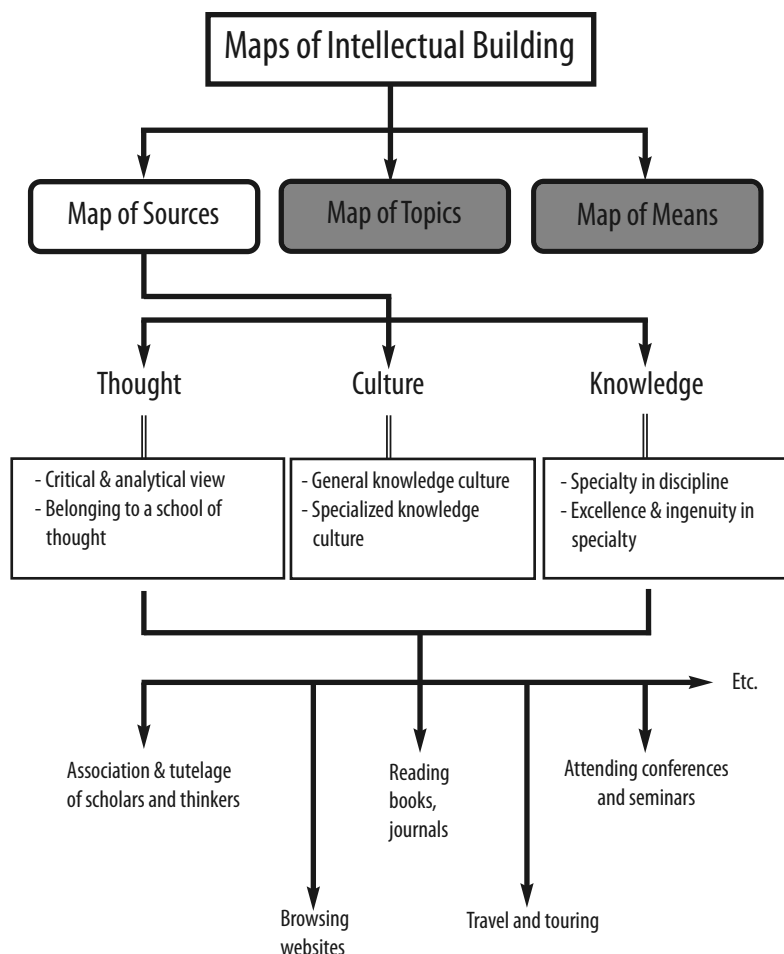
1. Sources of information of specialized knowledge (disciplines), which are sources that aid in enhancing and nurturing knowledge in the specialized discipline. It is expected for every person to continue to read and be versed in his or her area of specialization so as to stay up-to-date with what is new, and perhaps to acquire deeper knowledge and excel in the field.
2. Sources of information in the culture of the discipline, which is considered an extension of the subject of specialty, but is more akin to simplification for the non-specialist, and is closer to the fields of practical application that attracts the interest of the general public, such

as the books of medical culture, technological culture, linguistic culture, legal culture, historical culture, etc. It is important for the Muslim jurist to excel in the language of jurisprudence, to master its techniques, methods, and rules, and to converse with other jurists and specialists in the Shari‘ah sciences in a scholarly language that reveals his or her mastery of the discipline, to evoke the legal rules particular to the presented issues, and to deduce the rules particular to new issues so as to merit the title of being a jurist. However, it is also important to be adept in addressing diverse segments of people associated with various specializations, and to also be able to address the non-specialist general public. In this regard, the jurist does not need a specialized scientific language, but is rather required to simplify the discourse, in style and language, and to present illustrative examples and practical events that render his or her legal knowledge in a culture that is accessible to all people; this is what we call ‘jurisprudential culture.’

3. Sources of information in general culture. These sources are not ordinarily classified within a particular discipline, but include information, facts, theories, and concepts that are needed in the general cultural life, and follow up on issues that are raised by the media and public forums. These issues commonly garner a significant degree of the interest of people and public opinion, and aim to widen the horizon of an individual’s general knowledge. If it is necessary to classify these issues into epistemic fields or disciplines, we find that they belong to a diverse range of disciplines, such as history, geography, politics, economics, media, art, the autobiographies of famous people, and others. The reader of these sources does not exert a considerable effort searching for them, because they are the cumulative experiences of daily living, along with a degree of interest in discussing them with others, in addition to a keenness to collect them and benefit from them whenever they are available.
4. Sources of intellectual information, which are sources that are mostly affiliated with specific schools of thought, or which provide critical analyses of the sources particular to such schools. These sources overlap with the sources of general culture, but are more specific, factual, and in-depth. The reader earnestly seeks them, and strives to research and interact with them. It does not suffice to merely browse through them; rather, the reader exerts effort to trace their ideas and examine their factual bases and compare them with others. The reader might adopt them and become their advocate and defender, or might reject them and strive to critique or refute them. Within this category of sources are ideas

Mapping Intellectual Building

that an individual derives from a particular school of thought to which he or she belongs, which are ideas that the individual shares in common with others who belong to that school.



2. Map of the Topics of Intellectual Building

Intellectual building depends on varied sources such as the ones referred to above. Within an Islamic context, the need is dire for the books, research, and debate which cultivate intellectual building. This is to reconstruct a

holistic worldview that would enable the individual to understand the issues and topics raised in contemporary thought from within this worldview, in a manner characterized by clarity, integration, and consistency. This is particularly important in dealing with controversial topics that are subject to variance of opinion among the public, in general, and the intellectuals, in particular, and perhaps even the intellectual elites. Among these topics, are for example:

1. Topics of Building the Ummah, including language, religion, and history. These are the subjects that build the overall Islamic identity of the individual, society, and the Ummah, and define the relationship of this identity with other sub-identities and affiliations, such as nationalism, tribalism, sectarian belonging, etc.
- a) There will be a more detailed discussion of language and thought in another chapter in this book. However, it is important to emphasize the ability of individuals to think in their mother tongue and to express the thought they develop in a language that reveals their identity and belonging. Such enables them to positively influence others. Language in this context means the available methods of linguistic communication and interaction, such as speaking, dialogue, articles, books, etc. Indeed, the value of thought produced by the thinker is in its function and influence on people. As such, it may be asked: how could this function and influence be actualized without appropriate linguistic communication?
- b) We have emphasized more than once that, in this book, we speak within the framework of an Islamic religious frame of reference, and that religion, in our view, is a monotheistic (*tawhīdī*) all-embracing paradigm that entails a belief system that answers the major existential questions, a Law (Shari‘ah) that elaborates the systems of political, economic and social life, an ethical system that elaborates the standards of individual and collective purification (*tazkiyah*) and patterns of conduct and interactions. The aim of religion is the guidance of the individual to enable him and her to actualize human vicegerency on earth, and the actualization of civilizational building (*‘umrān*), thereby fulfilling the meaning of worship. This will help us to define our understanding and position vis-à-vis the continuing debate that has existed for over two centuries about the place of religion in the modern state and what relates to the types and levels of political participation.
- c) In terms of history, we mean by it human history on planet earth, embracing the human experience, and drawing lessons from it. This is

Mapping Intellectual Building

exemplified in the Qur'anic paradigm as relates to the nations and tribes and the messages of prophets, the responsibility of the Muslim Ummah in producing the remaining part of human history on earth, and bearing witness to people. This is a view of history that perhaps differs from what we have been familiar with in terms of the meaning of history, and our method of presenting it. History is the journey of humanity, its experience and heritage across the ages, and what humanity has been guided to in terms of thought, culture, and civilization. In this history, which includes the history of Muslims, there have always been ideas that are alive, others that are dead, and also some that are fatal, all of which must be differentiated and dealt with differently.

2. Topics of issues that are raised and the issues that should be raised. The contemporary media conveys to people through its effective means news and events from all over the world. It raises specific issues and problems that are renewed from one day to the next, where there is continued debate about them. The thinker must have understanding of them and perhaps take positions on them. Among these subjects, for example are:
 - a) The overall Islamic understanding of the non-Islamic other, inside the Muslim society and outside it, the rules of international relations with states and international organizations, and the liberation of the concepts of jihad, alliance, and coexistence.
 - b) Women's issues: women's rights, obligations, and work.
 - c) Issues of economics, development, and banking.
 - d) Etc.

Those are examples of issues, albeit not comprehensive. However, intellectual building should constitute in the individual and group a worldview, which is a holistic view that helps them understand such issues and topics and helps them form an Islamic position towards them. Moreover, the topics of the intellectual repertoire – which contributes to building a holistic vision and establishes a balanced intellectual building – are of various kinds, each of which contributes to a significant aspect of intellectual building.

First kind: Writings in reformist and revivalist thought. These writings address issues of thought and intellectual building, thinking and its types and levels, studies in the history of human civilizations and the conditions for the rise of civilizations and the causes of their disintegration, and what accompanies this in terms of the manifestations of intellectual conflict, or

cultural and civilizational borrowing. Among the writings that fall into this category are disciplines that branch out of the science of history, such as philosophy of history, and the history of ideas. What is important in these studies is the philosophical dimension of history and its implications in the present and future, and how it constitutes the practical foundation of prospective strategic thinking.

Second kind: Principles of social and human sciences. By principles, or introductory literature, we do not mean specialized knowledge of sociology, economics, political science, communication science, and otherwise. Rather, it suffices to be versed in the concepts, laws, theories, and practical applications of the disciplines, and the ability to recall this knowledge when thinking about the problems raised in order to understand them and to partake in proposing possible solutions to them. Perhaps, the foremost sciences that people ought to be familiar with are sociology, political science, and the science of journalism and media at the fundamental level.

Third kind: The literature and introductory principles in the sciences of change, specifically management, methodology, and psychology. Management science includes its applications in time management, self-management, and group management. The science of methodology includes its applications in thinking, research, behavior, methodological integration, and methodological schools. As for psychology, its core issues are concerned with learning, growth, and change.

We ought to observe that the methods through which intellectual building occurs are diverse, and it is important to ensure that these methods are accumulated and that their effects are mutually reinforcing. Hence, it is within the responsibility of the individual to be conscious of the instinctual interaction between the processes of nurture, adaptation, and social upbringing. It is also within his or her responsibility to employ willful and purposive education, and psychological self-purification and enrichment, to follow exemplary models, and to generate innovation and creativity. It is within the responsibility of the family, group, or organization that such consciousness is reinforced, that the employment and utilization of these skills are sufficient to actuate intellectual building, and to provide a favorable environment to bring about its desired effects and results.

Whatever the knowledge content of human thought, whether in religious, natural, or social science, the analysis of this content reveals elements of varying levels in quantitative volume and qualitative features, and there are structural and functional relations between these elements. The totality of the knowledge content's elements manifests in a pyramidal structure that has a foundation and an apex. In its foundation – in any of the sciences –

Mapping Intellectual Building

lies the facts of that science. Each fact is an expression of a particular thing, inasmuch as such a thing is a name or an attribute, and the number of such facts in any science is extremely large. It is easy to observe the congruence between the linguistic expression (name or description) of a tangible thing or a moral issue, on the one hand, and the reality of that thing or issue, on the other, in a manner that is more akin to direct material sensation or perception. This represents the principal foundation of the epistemic structure of the science.

Given that facts in any science are abundant, the human mind interconnects the large number of things that are similar in a number of characteristics, and assigns to them a mutual term: 'concept.'¹¹⁷ Hence, the human being is a concept that applies to every human being irrespective of his or her color, language and race, and fish is a concept that applies to the marine beings that inhabit the water and breathe through the gills, and sale is the concept of giving any good for a price, and so forth. Concepts are a category or another level in the pyramid of knowledge that are situated above facts; they are more general and abstract than facts. The concepts of each science, despite their abundance, are less in number than the facts of that science.

Human knowledge establishes relationships between facts; they may be correlational or causative relationships, and each relationship may be formulated as a rule, principle, law, or mathematical equation. In commercial transactions, the seller supplies the goods that the consumer demands, and between supply and demand there is a relationship that may be formulated in the form of a law, which is the 'law of supply and demand.' In each science, there are laws that correlate between the concepts of that science, whereby there are laws of chemistry, laws of economics, and laws of language, etc. Because each law encompasses many concepts in its formulation, the number of laws is much less than concepts yet more abstract. Laws come to be situated at a higher level in the pyramid, above the level of concepts.

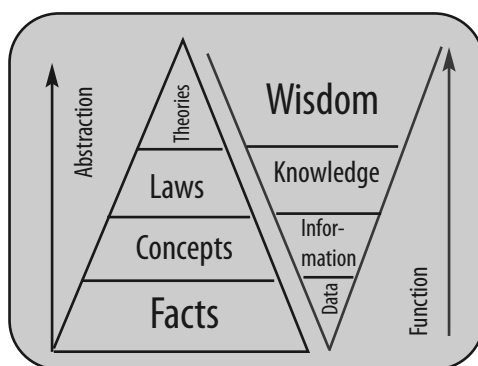
Facts, concepts, and laws are descriptive levels that express the reality of things as they are, but they do not explain the reason for the existence of these things as they actually are. What explains all of this is another level of the epistemic structure, which is the apex of the knowledge pyramid, namely, theories. Each theory consists of a set of principles that explain one of the phenomena of science. In each science, there is a set of explanatory theories, which are usually more abstract than the levels of the epistemic structure that precede it, and the number of theories in each science is few. And while the function of facts, concepts, and laws is to describe, the function of theories is to provide explanation.

While the knowledge pyramid described above has been used to clearly illustrate and express the terminology of scientific knowledge and the relations between the terms in the natural sciences, such as physics, chemistry, or biology, nonetheless, this illustrative method may apply to other types of sciences as well. Perhaps the difference lies in the distinctiveness of categories, types, and examples at each of the levels. This is because the types of natural scientific facts may be different from facts of religious and social sciences. For example, the individual facts pertaining to the things and events of the universe are different from the major existential facts relating to the origin and destiny of the universe. Moreover, the type of overlap or differentiation between the particularities of knowledge at these levels could be influenced by the expressions that language offers relating to them. Hence, the term 'fact' in English does not completely correspond with the term *Ḥaqīqah* in the Arabic language. This also applies to the titles of the other epistemic levels.

There is yet another method to express the levels of scientific knowledge in any branch of science. In this method, we express the simplest forms of knowledge by using the term 'data,' which corresponds to facts in the knowledge pyramid. The totality of the data related to a single topic constitutes what we term 'information,' which is a higher level in terms of meaning and signification. If it is possible to employ information for a particular purpose and this is actually achieved, then information becomes 'knowledge,' and this knowledge constitutes a third level, which is naturally a higher level in significance and meaning than information. The purpose of the applications of knowledge and employing them in advancing the self and society toward open horizons in the worldview, and answering the major existential questions, paves the way to a fourth level that transcends knowledge towards what may be called 'wisdom.' Instead of depicting these four levels through a pyramid that is similar to the previous knowledge pyramid, we may envision the relationship between them in terms of the extent of expansiveness of thought in significance, meaning, and value; that is, in an inverted open pyramid. In this case, data are the narrowest of levels, followed by information which is of a wider significance and of a higher value. As such, knowledge is of an even wider significance and of a higher value than information. Finally, wisdom is manifested in an open horizon toward a higher level that is limitless.

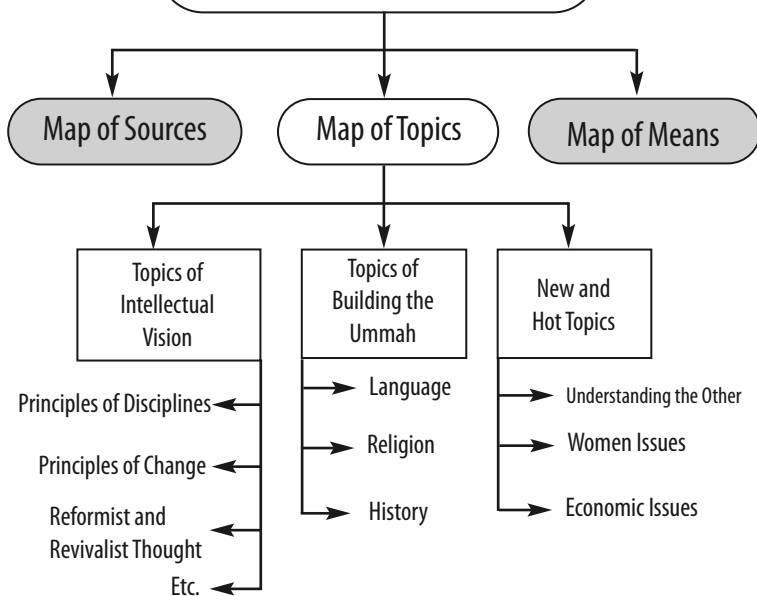
Following is an illustrative diagram that shows the four levels of knowledge in the form of a pyramid to the left of the diagram. In the form of an inverted open pyramid on the right are the four levels of the function of knowledge:

Mapping Intellectual Building



Knowledge Pyramid and
Knowledge Function

Maps of Intellectual Building



3. Map of the Tools and Means of Intellectual Building

The tools and means of intellectual building are also manifold. Most notably, there is the means of reading, which is considered the primary activity for nourishing the human mind, and the most important means for learning and for the cultural and intellectual formation of the individual. We do not mean by it reading as a hobby or for leisure, but rather meaningful, purposive, and systematic reading. Such includes in all its types and skills, careful reading, contemplative reading, thoughtful reading, recollective reading, holistic reading, and critical reading. This is the kind of reading that puts the details of the text within its referential framework, and places the referential framework of the text within the epistemological system to which it belongs, and so forth.

It is no coincidence that the first revealed word of God's final Book to humanity is the imperative verb *iqra'* (read/recite), and that the command is reiterated twice successively. It appears once to 'read' creation in the name of the Creator and again to 'read' the revelation written by a pen: "Read! In the name of your Lord and Cherisher, who created- created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: [Read!] And your Lord is Most Bountiful - He Who taught (the use of) the pen [writing] - Taught man that which he knew not" (96:1-5). It is no coincidence for the word *iqra'* to remain the Divine covenant to humanity until Judgment Day, which relates that the eras of illiteracy have ended following the revelation of these verses. What is read, therefore, is what is observed in the countless creations of God, including the creation of the human being from a clot. ("Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators" Qur'an 23:14 and other verses) – which requires contemplation, scientific pondering, and deliberate study.

Such a deliberate study is undertaken using the methods, tools, and means of research. Such includes observation, measurement, assessment, and experimentation of what is needed in order to study the various sorts, things, events, and phenomena of creation. Furthermore, what is read is also what is 'written by the pen,' which God made as a tool for knowledge, learning, and education. Such is what is written in the revealed books, was uttered by the prophets, or recorded by learned people, generation after generation, in books of all fields of knowledge.

The relationship of intellectual building with reading requires that some texts and books are read time and again. The objectives of reading a

Mapping Intellectual Building

particular text, and the benefit of reading it, may be actualized when it is read in conjunction with other texts associated with it from other sources of knowledge we mentioned before. In such process, contemplation, remembrance, balancing, comparison, and integration occur. When the reader adds an idea or a set of ideas to his or her intellectual building, and if the reader moves from reading to writing, he or she will be better able to control, organize, and fine-tune the ideas. The ideas put into writing then may be read by others.

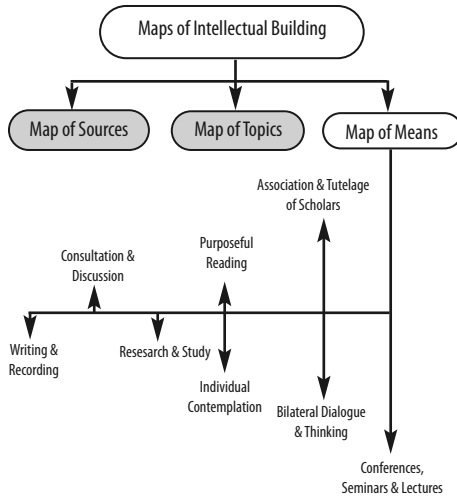
Much of creativity formulating ideas and writing them takes place after multiple readings. Throughout this process, the reader-writer discovers the errors, deficiencies, or incoherence in what is read. The reader then can present a different formulation that performs the tasks of correcting or supplementing, or refute what is read altogether and offer completely new ideas.

Broad knowledgeability through reading enables the reader to discuss the ideas that he or she reads with others, whereby these discussions become venues for intellectual interaction of *tafākūr* (engaging in thinking with others) and *tathākūr* (engaging in remembrance with others) leading to further understanding on the part of the discussants. Perhaps the discussions become a written material to be read by others. Through reading and writing, ideas crystallize and become subjects of lectures, seminars, and conferences, and may stimulate research projects, accompanied by much reading prior to writing. Accordingly, the process of intellectual production remains constant with reading and writing, as does the process of intellectual building.

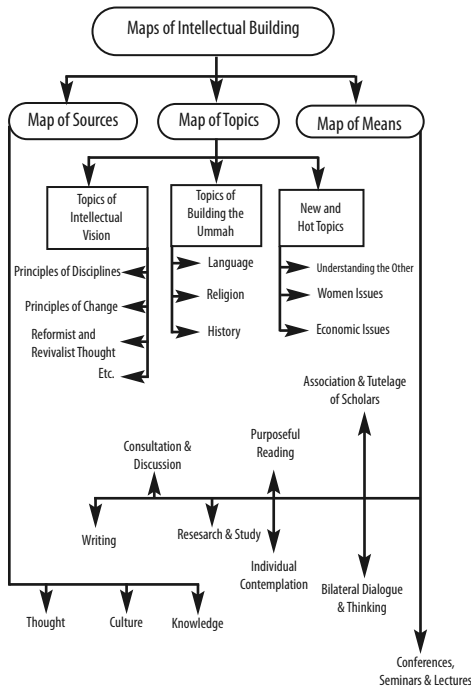
Reading is one of the means of intellectual building. It is the basis for most other means referred to briefly, such as contemplation and remembrance, and engaging in these processes with others, in addition to lectures, seminars, conferences, research, and study.

Here, and in conclusion, we must allude to an important means, namely the means of associating with scholars, thinkers, reformers and those of distinguished experiences, and to travel to meet with, listen to, and become students of them. Throughout human history, the available and most important means of acquiring knowledge and experience was to learn it from those who possess them, and then to adopt and borrow from their knowledge and experience, be guided by them, and emulate them. The prophets and apostles, over most of the past ages of human history, were the source of knowledge and guidance. They had followers who believed in what was revealed to them by God, and such knowledge has been inherited by successive generations. Such is similar to the scholars,

reformers, philosophers, and Sufi teachers who were sources of knowledge for their adherents in the schools of law and thought, and ways of conduct.



Collective Map of Intellectual Building



4. Map of Measuring Intellectual Building

If we want to assess the efficacy of a particular program in intellectual building, what is the suitable tool to use in such assessment, and when do we use it? If we want to measure what a specific segment of society possesses of intellectual building, then do we perform a test for each individual of this group, and then determine the mathematical mean of the total sum of individuals, and then find the amount possessed by each individual relative to that mean? What referential framework may be used in order to determine the desired level of quality of the intellectual building, or its amount, in an individual, a segment or society? Can we build a standardized scale to measure intellectual building? What are the qualitative and quantitative characteristics that we can utilize in this measurement? What metrics are most suitable for this purpose?

The contemporary Arab Islamic culture, in its academic educational dimension, lacks standardized measurement tools in most of its fields, and the weakest circles in the field of evaluation are the psychological and mental. Aside from the substantial quantitative development in establishing schools and universities, the educational programs and curricula utilized by such institutions were mostly intellectual and cultural imports. And although our countries may have acquired some experience in developing the elements of educational curricula in terms of objectives, content, and methods, their experience in the fourth element; i.e. evaluation and assessment, remains the weakest. Hence, we continue to import intelligence and personality tests, and apply foreign survey tools, opinion polls, and other programs of evaluation.¹¹⁸

Ideas related to evaluating the performance of educational institutions have become prevalent in the past two decades. These have come under the banner of 'quality control,' and which are imported ideas that are mostly confined to aspects of documentation and recording of the extent to which specific elements or 'things' are available at the institutions under evaluation. These do not attach importance to the qualifications of those who work at the institution utilizing these frameworks of evaluation. One may even hear of universities that prepared for a visit by higher education accreditation institutions by borrowing some things from other places, and set some figures, ratios, and budgets to conform with the accreditation standards. Once the visit concludes, and the committee takes the needed information, the borrowed things are swiftly returned to their original places. Consequently, the false figures, ratios, and budgets are no longer needed.

In light of the grim reality around the level of experience in developing measurement and evaluation tools, it is not surprising that we find severe weakness in developing suitable tools for measuring the intellectual building of individuals, groups, institutions, or societies. When we do find some tools of intellectual measurement that were imported and developed to be adapted to the local environment, we find that they are mostly specific to those with physical disabilities or special educational needs. For example, we observe that the term ‘intellectual education,’ and the tools of evaluation particular to it, are utilized to deal with these specific categories.

In this context, and relative to the foregoing, namely that intellectual building is a discussion about the process and skills of building and the content and subjects of thought, we emphasize here the dire need for two types of evaluation:

- Evaluation of thought processes, or the degree to which one exercises mental processes or skills as an individual or a group. Such relates to the quantity and quality possessed by the individual or group insofar as capacity to perform specific intellectual processes.
- Evaluation of a particular content of intellectual building according to the intellectual map where the elements of this content are distributed, or according to the relative values of the degree required for possessing those elements.

Means of evaluation of intellectual performance include the tests used in measuring skills of scientific thinking, logical thinking, creative or critical thinking, the skills of thinking ‘outside the box’, or the capacity for problem solving.

It is true that the quantitative and qualitative frames of reference for most of these tests developed out of psychology and the educational sciences, rooted in Western sources. Great effort has been invested in this field in order to adapt these tests to be applied in the fields of academic and educational performance in our countries. However, most of these applications have been in the fields of languages, mathematics, and natural sciences, and very few have been used in the fields of social sciences. Even fewer examples have been used in the fields of Islamic sciences and Islamic thought.

How can we explain this phenomenon? Is the Muslim mind less able than other minds to develop the tools of measurement, evaluation, and best practice? Is the matter related to intentional or unintentional negligence among scholars of Islamic science and Islamic thought, compared to

Mapping Intellectual Building

scholars of other subjects? Or is the matter related to the availability of these products in their places of origin (Western societies) and, hence, have simply been imported?

The Muslim mind had pioneered a great deal in fields of methodological thought, in developing models of thought, and tools of evaluation.. Thus, the sciences of Hadith, such as *'elal*, *al-riwāyah wa al-dirāyah*, *rijāl*, and *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*, introduced and innovated critical methods and the science *uṣūl al-fiqh* was a methodological science par excellence. Further, the methodology of scientific thinking, which relies on empirical observation, inductive reasoning, and experimentation, grew and developed in Muslim societies before they were known in any other society. Ibn Khaldūn, for example, was distinguished for testing historical narrative in light of the psychological. All of the foregoing confirms that the Muslim mind is not less capable than other minds in developing methodologies of thought, models of thinking, and evaluation.

Needless to say, the Qur'an and the Sunnah are rich sources for developing the tools for methodology of thought, deducing and formulating ideas, and presenting and implementing them. Furthermore, Islamic civilization has known the systems of licensing and evaluation, in both theoretical and applied sciences. Here the leaders in these fields (*shaykh al-kār*) would design practical systems and situations to test the trainees (in apprenticeships) prior to licensing them to practice their professions.

Hence, it is essential to consider some examples of methodological determinants that need be taken into account to exercise Islamic thinking.

One of these determinants relates to the methodology of understanding the Qur'an and how we can utilize multiple approaches according to the multifaceted topics and themes of Qur'anic discourse. Diversity and differentiation among the topics of Qur'anic discourse requires developing the suitable methodology for dealing with each type of these topics.

- a) One topic related to the Qur'anic includes issues around detailed jurisprudential provisions (*aḥkām*) that define for human society constant and stable rules. These include the *aḥkām* of prayer, zakat (alms), fasting, the Hajj pilgrimage, and the rules of personal status affairs such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. These topics are related to human nature and the innate instinct, and, therefore, Muslims deal with them on the basis of adaptation, acceptance, and surrender.
- b) A second Qur'anic topic is related to the management of human society in accordance with developments according to time and place. In this

context, the texts of the Qur'an include general comprehensive principles that can be achieved in various ways and that respond to the current needs. They further utilize new and renewed tools, methods, and experiences based on what is most beneficial and most suited to actualize the objectives of these principles. For example, we find in the Qur'an the principle of *shūrā* (consultation), but we do not find in the Qur'an a specific method to apply it. The matter was left to the circumstances of the time and place, and in order to develop evolving methods which the experiences of society prove are more effective in achieving the objective and intent of *shūrā*.

- c) A third type, which is perhaps the most recurring in the Qur'an, is the Qur'anic narrative stories. An entire story may be concentrated in one location, such as the story of Prophet Joseph or the story of *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf*. Another style is for certain scenes from a story to be found in various locations. For another style, a particular scene may recur but is narrated in different ways, each of which serves a particular purpose. An example is found in the events of the story of Prophets Moses or Noah. It may be that the objective in these types is the moral of the story, and to teach the reader of the Qur'an how to deduce and derive social phenomena and rules.
- d) A fourth type among Qur'anic topics analyzes human thought and nature, and highlights the diversity of human conduct in belief and unbelief, obedience and disobedience, and guidance and misguidance. Undoubtedly, addressing these subjects or themes constitutes a source of understanding human nature and the psychological phenomena governing its conduct.
- e) Finally, a fifth type of Qur'anic topic deals with natural events and phenomena, and the formations of living and inanimate matter. Some verses deal with the cycle of plant growth, the fruition of fruits, and the diversity of their colors and tastes. Other verses address the alternation of night and day and the rotation of the sun and moon, as signs of the abilities of the Creator and His superb creation. In fact, the allusions in this type of topic aim to develop the methodology of observation and contemplation of the quantitative and qualitative significance. Some form the basis for mathematics, counting, and numbers, and others are for harnessing these phenomena and how best they may be utilized.

Mapping Intellectual Building

Awareness of this methodological determinant (differentiation of the various fields of Qur'anic topics) requires training the reader of the Qur'an, in order to enable him or her to develop the intellectual capacity to differentiate between the types of Qur'anic topics, to determine the approach to understanding and dealing with them, and to know how to connect them to his or her personal and social life and to the overall human condition. The multiplicity of training situations for the individual or the group expands the horizons of the intellectual capacity. The learner's accomplishment in such learning is the real test and measure of intellectual capacity.

We can think of a number of other methodological determinants particular to the methods of thinking, research, or behavior that determine the level of intellectual building of an individual, a group, or a society. For example, among the determinants particular to methods of thinking is the individual's ability to utilize certain kinds of thinking, such as critical thinking, creative thinking, and causal thinking. When an individual listens to a particular lecture or reads a particular book, what is the intellectual state of the individual while he or she is listening or reading? Does it suffice him or her to be a recipient who strives to memorize the intellectual contents of what is said and what is read, and thereby is able to apply them to what he or she says or writes? Furthermore, will that person be able to link the elements of the contents being heard or read in a way that she or he may discover their strengths, seriousness, deficiencies or contradictions?

If the ability to think critically is one of the desired characteristics in an individual who is engaged in the program of intellectual building, then it is incumbent on us to build an evaluative tool that reveals the degree to which the individual possesses this ability. The same may be said about the need for training situations and evaluative positions in the fields of creative thinking, causal thinking, holistic thinking, and so forth.

If we are to offer some suggestions concerning the measure of intellectual ability in both its methodological and objective aspects, then this measure may consist of a number of sections:

First section: This is akin to a checklist of the types of sources that a person is expected to have read and to have acquired general knowledge of the subject of each source, whereby he or she may be able to resort back to this source when needed. It is expected that the list includes a wide variety of sources, and be integrative in covering the various domains of the targeted intellectual building, which were mentioned previously. The list may include books on Islamic sciences, intellectual projects or schools, names of intellectual figures, and political knowledge of key issues at the local, regional, and global levels.

Suggested map to formulate the sections of the measure of intellectual building

- 1. Familiarity with terms, titles, and names of categories of sources**
 - a. Books in Islamic sciences
 - b. Sources of intellectual projects or schools of thought
 - c. Names of intellectual figures
 - d. General knowledge of current events
 - e. Etc.
- 2. Identifying main contents and characteristics of above categories (within 100 words)**
 - a. Books
 - b. Prominent figures
 - c. Institutions and schools of thought
 - d. Events, conditions, and contemporary issues
- 3. Practicing thinking**
 - a. In levels of thinking: understanding, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, etc.
 - b. In types of thinking: futuristic or prospective, causal, integrative, purposive, etc.
- 4. Program of Development**
 - a. Awareness of elements of intellectual building that need further growth and development.
 - b. Identifying how to fulfill this need.
 - c. Time plan to fulfill this need.
- 5. Etc.**

Second section: Assessing the extent of overall absorption of the characteristics of the sources stated in the list of the first section. For example, if a person had examined a specific source relating to contemporary schools of thought, then it would be required as part of the chosen indicators for the person to define the most prominent features of this school, the intellectual figures that represent it, and how it differs from other schools.

Third section: Assessing the person's ability to perform types of thinking through particular testing situations. This includes the most prominent types of thinking, including the ability to understand, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate. This would also include the degree to which one possesses prospective thinking (futuristic thinking), linking causes with effects (causal thinking), linking the elements constituting the totality (integrative thinking), the ability to discern the need for the opinions of others, and the ability to think of objectives and intents (*maqāṣidi* or purposive thinking), etc.

Fourth section: Identifying the areas where the person feels the need for further devotion of attention and study. The awareness of the person of what is lacking in terms of the elements of intellectual building is considered a

significant component of intellectual building. This awareness guides the person to identify and utilize what is needed, i.e. of time and effort, to overcome this deficiency in his or her intellectual building and seek to achieve development within a particular time plan.

5. Maps of the History of Ideas

As is commonly known, history is concerned with studying events that individuals and societies experience in particular periods of time, in addition to studying social, political, economic, natural and other phenomena. This could also apply to the study of ideas, including values and beliefs. History is in itself an expression of the ideas of great individuals and their dissemination and effect on the lives of people. These ideas express themselves, in their respective times, through their crystallization in the form of events that contribute to forming the features of civilization in their respective eras.

The ideas, whose history is to be addressed in this context, are a set of opinions and general conceptualizations elaborated by human minds in response to successive events, and are an expression of a particular reality or meaning. We simultaneously observe that those ideas are rooted in the conditions of their emergence and the factors of their evolution. Therefore, we find it beneficial to consider the intellectual currents that emerged or prevailed in successive time periods, to learn of the convergence or divergence between the ideas of these currents, and their effect on the cultural and civilizational formation of the reality of the Ummah, during these eras. This is what is studied ordinarily within the framework of a particular discipline: the history of ideas.

The previous chapter included a general and brief overview of the development of the thinker and the characteristics that distinguish him or her as such, after they acquire a body of knowledge within successive stages. However, the arena to which the thinker transitions – the arena of thought – historically came about in a gradual way, which is perhaps opposite to the way the ‘thinker’ is created. This is because human thought began with a small group of distinguished thinkers, who were known as sages or philosophers, distinct from the general public in that they were characterized by a degree of encyclopedic knowledge. However, the exponential growth in knowledge necessitated that individuals specialize in certain domains of knowledge. This trend reached a point where individuals came to specialize in a particular branch of one domain or discipline. Hence, distinct specializations emerged, and the specialized scholars

multiplied, and only a few individuals remained in the domain of encyclopedic thought; namely, the arena of philosophy and wisdom.

How do we describe such intellectual development? This development is not comprised of astronomical observations that define celestial spheres. Nor is it medical material that describes how to diagnose and treat human illnesses. It is rather more akin to history; yet, it is not general history as is taught in the history of nations or countries. It is the history of thought, or the history of culture, and perhaps it is the history of science, literature, or philosophy. In fact, this specialization became distinct as the science of the 'history of ideas,' along with associated specialized academic programs in university graduate studies.

And just as each science is built from preliminary building blocks, which are the facts, concepts, laws, and theories of that science, the science of the history of ideas is also built of basic blocks or units, called intellectual units. The task of the specialist in this field is to discover those intellectual units and what accrues of correlation or separation between them, all the while noting that the intellectual units are characterized by a degree of stability that enables researchers to utilize them in the form of units of analysis, related to the rise and fall of human cultures and civilizations.¹¹⁹

The study of the history of ideas entails an assumption that elevates the value of ideas, and underscores their effects on the epochal changes witnessed by nations and peoples. These valuable ideas are the product of the mind that formulated the idea and expressed it in a persuasive and influential manner. Individuals and groups who believed in and defended them, and even sacrificed for them, positively embraced them.¹²⁰

It is important for every specialist to trace the evolution of ideas in their field of specialization. The knowledge in that specialization did not suddenly gush forth, but rather emerged through successive events across the ages, where these events were ideas embodied in the form of occurrences that history recorded. For example, political thought emerged and developed gradually, and was carried forth by leaders and nations. In fact, much conflict and wars erupted over it, and it crystallized into theories articulated by the minds of thinkers and scholars. This thought was recorded in books, which influenced peoples and nations, and perhaps this political thought continues to govern the world of today.

To illustrate this, we cite an encyclopedia of political ideas, published in France, which chronicled in detail the history of political ideas in Europe since classical Greece until the eighteenth century. In fact, contemporary political ideas are but subsequent stages of the development of these ideas.

This encyclopedia was translated into Arabic and published in three

volumes under the title *Tārīkh al-Afkār al-Siyāsiyyah* (The History of Political Ideas).¹²¹ To elucidate the extent of the coverage of political ideas in the book, we briefly mention its contents. The first volume includes the history of political ideas from Greece to the Medieval era, including a chronicling of the ideas of the polis, democracy, empire, freedom, law, Christian thought, the church, feudalism, religious reform, the beginning of the formation of the concept of 'nation,' and the roots of secularism. The second volume includes the history of political ideas from the Renaissance until the Enlightenment, discusses the ideas around which political conflicts arose in the sixteenth century, and the issues of religious reform, monarchy, absolute authority, the scientific revolution, the emergence of rationalism and individualism, the roots of feminism, the bourgeois, the concept of revolution and counter-revolution, and the philosophy of state. The third volume discusses the history of the ideas of liberalism, socialism, dialectical materialism, nationalism, imperialism, anarchism, and fundamentalism.



The book explains the difference between political schools of thought and political ideas. It considers schools of thought as intellectual systems, anchored in a theoretical analysis of reality, and which are formed of a set of religious and philosophical beliefs that guide human behavior and govern human interpretation of facts. As for political ideas, they entail repositioning schools of thought into a historical context, observing their genesis and tracing their evolution, and elucidating what they represented in the era of their emergence and development. Hence, the history of a school of thought comprises in part the history of ideas. Further, the history of ideas is inseparable from the history of institutions and societies, of economic events and schools of thought, and of philosophy, religions, literature, and technologies.¹²²

6. Maps of Geographical Thought, and the Geography of Thought

Geographical thought deals with human thinking about the place and the environment in which humans live, and how it was necessary for them to subject their environment to fulfill the needs of their livelihood. Undoubtedly, this type of thinking began at the onset of human habitation

of the earth. Yet, the term geographical thought refers to the knowledge that humans acquired about earth and which they recorded in the form of sciences. In fact, some of the “first truly geographical studies occurred more than four thousand years ago.”¹²³ The term also includes the philosophical ideas and theories that relate to the formation of the earth and the appearance of forms of life on it. However, studies in the twentieth century came to attach greater importance to human life and its requirements in the spatial environment; in fact, more than the details of the environment itself. Concepts related to the limited resources on earth emerged, the studies of poverty multiplied, and awareness of environmental degradation caused by excessive use of resources and generation of pollutants increased. Social and economic phenomena of human life, which were pre-eminently anthropocentric, and the studies of the natural environment, became a priority in geographical thought.

Environmental studies, in particular, as a significant element of geographical thought, focuses on the existing relationship between the three basic elements that make up geography: people, place, and time. Human capabilities developed in terms of their use of material nature and available resources. In their dealing with the environment of the place and its phenomena, human beings were able – with the help of technology – to move from the “stage of necessity to a stage of freedom” where they put “their imprints everywhere and created new possibilities in collaboration with nature.” According to Rana Lalita, environmental studies focus on this interactive and complementary relationship, which is viewed in three ways: determinism, possibilism, and ecological viewpoint. The relationship between human beings and the environment depends on the answer to basic questions, such as: does the environment invariably control human activities? Are human will and the apparent freedom to choose between alternative courses of action a dominant factor in determining how and where we live? And is the relationship between human beings and the environment reciprocal? These questions appeared successively across the ages, and led to the emergence of three different schools of thought: determinism, possibilism, and ecology, respectively. Determinism regards the environment as superior to humans insofar as control and possibilism endows human beings with all the powers to choose what is best for their living. The ecological viewpoint gives equal weight to both human beings and the environment, where one affects the other in a reciprocal manner.¹²⁴

Geography relates to numerous branches of science, among them issues of the reciprocal relationship between human beings and their geographical environment. This relationship led to the rise of diverse schools of thought,

and numerous concepts and terms emerged to explain this relationship, including specifically the term ‘geography of thought.’

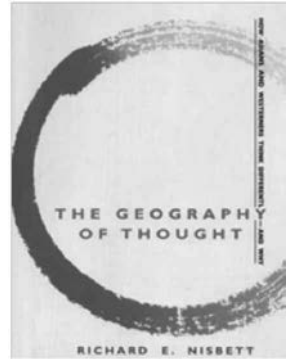
By ‘geography of thought,’ we do not mean what Ibn Khaldūn stated, when he referred to the seven zones of the earth (borrowing from the book of Geography by Ptolemy, and the Book of Roger, or *Nuzhat al-Mushtāq*, by al-Sharīf al-Idrīsī), where Ibn Khaldūn discussed the impact of the geographical location of each zone on its human inhabitants, due to its characteristics, such as hot or cold climate, plateau or mountainous, and the level of fertility of the earth or its aridity.

Based on the data set from the books of al-Idrīsī, Ibn Khaldūn judges the fourth zone of the earth to be the most moderate, resulting in the most temperate and well-proportioned civilization, while the bordering third and fifth zones are also close to temperate. He notes that the “human inhabitants of these zones are more temperate and well-proportioned in their bodies, color, character qualities, and (general) conditions...”. Regarding the inhabitants of the first, second, sixth and seventh zones, that are far from temperate, Ibn Khaldūn adds that they “are also farther removed from being temperate in all their conditions.... The reason for this is that their remoteness from being temperate produces in them a disposition and character similar to those of dumb animals, and they become correspondingly remote from humanity... The same also applies to their religious conditions.” Even in the temperate zones, the inhabitants tend to vary in view of the presence of fertility, plants, and animals; for example: “the desert people who lack grain and season body [are] better in character than the hill people who have plenty of everything. Their complexions are clearer, their bodies cleaner, their figures more perfect and better, their characters less intemperate, and their minds keener as far as knowledge and perception are concerned.”¹²⁵

Close to the position of Ibn Khaldūn or perhaps beyond it stood the French philosopher Montesquieu (1689-1755) in his book the *Spirit of the Laws*, in which he inflated the effect of the geographical environment on human civilization, and the differences between nations at the level of civilization, morals, political and social systems, laws and regulations, and differences in the inclinations of peoples towards developing democratic practices and enacting their laws.¹²⁶

We shall not dwell on this type of analysis, and instead, refer to a more modern approach and further factors that address diversity and differences in the intellectual buildings of nations and peoples in various geographical environments, and not necessarily resulting from the influence of the geography of the place, climate and topography.

An example of this is the book entitled *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently and Why*¹²⁷ published in 2002. The book discusses the difference in patterns of thinking of human groups that inhabit various geographical regions. The book is a profound study in the psychology of cultures. The author uses comparative international studies to critique commonly held beliefs about human nature (derived from assumptions about Western intelligence and mental aptitudes), where it was presumed that human beings, irrespective of their varied geographical environments, colors, or religions, utilize the same tools of thinking, perception, cognition, and recollection.



The book poses questions relating to the history of human civilizations in various regions of the world, and concerning differences between Westerners and East Asians in how they think about and view the world. The author ponders, for example, why the Chinese had excelled in algebra and arithmetic, but not in geometry, which was the forte of the Greeks; why East Asians find difficulty in disentangling an object from its surroundings; and why Western infants learn nouns faster than they do verbs, whereas it is the other way around in East Asia? The author questions whether these cognitive differences may have an influence on the course of international relations, or whether they reinforce either view of the future debated by social scientists: the one championed by political scientist Francis Fukuyama, which posits ‘the end of history’ upon the convergence of world political and economic systems (and consequently of values), “whereby capitalism and democracy win, and there would be no forces on the horizon that can generate interesting events...” and the other view, championed by political scientist Samuel Huntington, who “has pronounced the world to be on the brink of a ‘clash of civilizations,’ with major cultural groups including East Asia, Islam, and the West locked in opposition to one another due to irreconcilable differences in values and worldviews?”¹²⁸

At the outset of the era of modernity and the Enlightenment, an idea prevailed that holds that the patterns of human thought are necessarily similar, and that they must be similar among individuals in this world. Thereafter, the ideas of globalization emerged towards the end of the twentieth century, whereby the West sought to impose the patterns of thinking, culture, and values that represent the culmination of Western and American advancement, and presumed to be the ideal to which human experience advanced on other nations and societies.

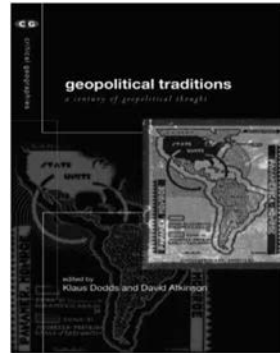
Mapping Intellectual Building

The European colonialists, who dominated vast areas of the world, also attempted to colonize the minds of nations after colonizing their lands. For this endeavor, they employed the findings of psychological and social research that scientists of Europe and America were involved in during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginnings of the twentieth century, particularly studies related to the development of human mental capabilities and measures of intelligence.

The idea of the similarity of the patterns of thinking and mental behavior among humans dominated the studies of the first laboratory for psychological research, ‘Institut für experimentelle Psychologie’ (Institute of Experimental Psychology) established by Wilhelm Wundt at the University of Leipzig in 1879. It was Wundt’s view that any difference in mental behavior is an abnormality that represents a pathological phenomenon in need of treatment. Hence, intelligence (IQ) assessments originally began for the purpose of identifying individuals with ‘weak minds’ who are in need of special training.

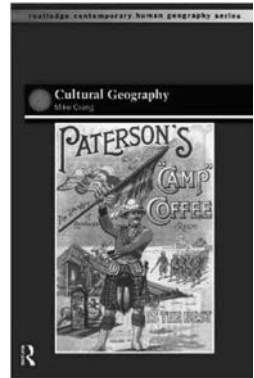
The objectives of studying human intelligence, and the findings of such studies, were influenced by myriad factors that are essentially unrelated to science, the scientific method, or objectivity, particularly factors of racial biases, political interests, religious considerations, and philosophical inclinations. The study said that “no area in the sciences has been as filled with emotional and confusing mixtures of science, politics, and philosophy as the field of mental testing.”¹²⁹

The topics of the geography of thought are spread across various branches of human geography, such as geopolitics, political geography, and cultural geography. Political geography, for example, relates to studying the influence of geography (geographical environment) on political ideas and practices. The history of such disciplines chronicles that a Dr. Karl Haus-hofer, a German professor who was also a Major General in the military in the first half of the twentieth century, founded the Geopolitical Institute in Munich, which was clandestine in nature, with over a thousand scientists, technicians and spies. The Institute’s “ideas, their charts, maps, statistics, information and plans have dictated Hitler’s moves from the very beginning.” Perhaps the Institute’s ideas even dominated Hitler and Nazi Germany’s foreign policy. Hence:



Geographers have an ever-greater responsibility to reflect upon the consequences of geopolitical knowledges past and present. Recent scholarship on the connections between geography, the state and the military only emphasize this point. These connections provided a powerful incentive for the establishment of academic geography in the late nineteenth century.” Geographers, naturally, welcomed state patronage, and in turn, sought to “reinforce their embryonic discipline by demonstrating the practical utility of their ‘science’ to the nation.”¹³⁰

As to cultural geography, it addresses the significance of geography in explaining human phenomena. There are specialized books and studies on this topic, and it suffices here to refer to the book authored by Mike Crang entitled *Cultural Geography*, where the author notes that the initial assumption about the discipline of cultural geography is that it studies how different cultures live in different parts of the globe. Different groups, he says, are marked out “not only by different clothes, ornaments, lifestyles but are also guided by different ‘world-views’, different priorities, different belief systems, different ways of making sense of the world.” In defining the discipline, Crang says that cultural geography “looks both at the forms of difference, the material culture, of groups but also at the ideas that hold them together, that make them coherent.” Hence, this book looks at “how cultures are spread over space, but also at how cultures make sense of space. [It tracks] the ideas, practices, and objects that together form cultures – and how these cultures form different identities through which people recognize themselves and others.”¹³¹



It is important to highlight, in this context, a central concept in philosophical, media, and religious studies, namely the concept of ‘world-view,’ and how worldviews are as diverse as there is diversity in cultural environments, civilizational levels, and patterns of thinking that prevail in society, particularly patterns of religious thinking.

What is intended by the term worldview is the overall mental view, or comprehensive idea, which individuals form for themselves, about themselves, and the world around them, individually, in accordance with the intellectual position (their angle or viewpoint) through which they attempt to view the surrounding natural, psychological, and social environment, and the intellectual system from which they think insofar as its linguistic components and referential frameworks, and so forth. This

Mapping Intellectual Building

comprehensive view is what introduces us to the human being, when we perceive him or her from the outside, and which makes each individual develop self awareness and awareness of the things around them.

As such, worldview (or *Weltanschauung* in German) characterizes the human individual, and represents a state of consciousness for the individual of him or herself and the environment in which he or she lives. It also describes the state of the consciousness of a group of individuals who share a common view of the world, and may more broadly describe the state of the Ummah, or any nation, as where most of its members and groups share a common worldview. Many have viewed human history since its early beginnings as an interaction, or conflict, between diverse modes of consciousness, and as a clash between people over the principles they believe in and the basic ideas they embrace; for ideas have particular outcomes. Nonetheless, there is a profound level of consciousness of reality that must be taken into consideration when we try to understand the intellectual differences that lie at the heart of the saga of human beings. In regards to religious consciousness, for example, the clash between worldviews occupies a significant place in the subtle spiritual battle between truth and falsehood, and between obedience to God and obedience to Satan, which is a battle that goes on in the minds and hearts of people and, therefore, in their lives and destiny. This has been since the inception of human existence.

In this respect, nothing is more important than the way in which a human being thinks about his or her Creator, the universe they inhabit, and their position in it.

Thus, the subject of worldview is a chapter in the history of ideas, and in the manifold ideological orientations, such as monotheism (*tawḥīd*), paganism, naturalism, pantheism, and the unity of existence.

The underlying meanings behind the term worldview are intertwined with philosophical and religious beliefs. Religious terms such as faith, creed, and comprehensive vision express a set of ideas, concepts, and beliefs that answer the major existential questions which the term worldview attempts to address. It is perhaps the case that the major sources that deal with the subject of worldview mostly stem from religious institutions, or were composed for purposes of religious education. One of the most significant contemporary works in this context is a book by David Naugle, who is a professor of philosophy at Dallas Baptist University in Texas, entitled *Worldview: The History of a Concept*.¹³² The book is a rich work on the concept of worldview or *Weltanschauung*, in which the author presents an exposition of the history of the concept and its evolution since the early

stages of philosophical and religious thought. He observes that the concept has come to occupy a significant position in the past three decades in expressing how Christians understand and view the world. The author's efforts are not confined to tracing the history and roots of the concept, but also encompass its development and application to the intellectual discourse of a number of modern sciences, particularly history, philosophy, and theology. Naugle argues for the need to "naturalize" the *Weltanschauung* concept into its Christian realm, after purging it from the 'conceptual baggage:' the historical connotations, and implications, borne by 'relativist' philosophical and scientific thought in the context of modernity, considering that the concept of worldview "immigrated from the realm of philosophical discourse into Christian territory."¹³³

In another book replete with the religious zest of 'Christian worldview,' Ronald Nash delineates three worldviews prevalent in the world today, particularly in the West, namely Christianity, naturalism, and the New Age Movement.¹³⁴ The author believes the Christian worldview will prevail in the United States, but will be facing contentions from the two major challengers: naturalism, which resonates with important elements of Marxism, one of the dominant expressions of naturalism in the twentieth century; and the second challenger is the New Age Movement, which in itself contradicts naturalism, but is also "antithetic to almost everything that informed, biblically sound Christians believe." The author notes that as people turn away from Marxism and naturalism, New Age beliefs "are filling up the resulting worldview vacuum." Nash calls for elevating the level of awareness of the concept of worldview, given that it is an essential part of intellectual maturity, especially as he argues that "few Americans have been taught to think in terms of worldviews. They do not know what a worldview is; they could not spell out the content of their own worldview if their lives depended on it; they are unaware of how various aspects of conflicting worldviews clash logically."¹³⁵

Although the author passionately presents his ideas and employs the vocabulary and connotations of conflict in the battlefield in his book, given that the Christian worldview is the means to triumph in the battle of the world of ideas, he nonetheless emphasizes that "By no means was I suggesting that the battle had been won or that victory was just around the next corner. Active, thinking Christians are involved in battles everyday of their lives." Yet he emphasizes, that thinking of this battle in its moral and spiritual dimensions alone is not sufficient, and that there is a need to deal with the intellectual dimension in order to win the battle, because "this is a fight we do not want to lose; hence, my concern is to provide a blueprint

for how we might do a better job to prepare ourselves to perform effectively in a world of ideas.”¹³⁶

7. Rules of Accepting Ideas

‘Thought’ is an attribute of us human beings ever since God created us, made us vicegerents on earth, supplied us with the faculty to acquire consciousness of ourselves and of the world around us, the freedom to choose the upright path or to deviate, and enabled us individually, therefore, to be answerable before Him on the Day of Judgment. It is, therefore, only natural for the human aptitude for understanding and perception to vary, and for our positions vis-à-vis obedience or transgression to also vary.

These differences are since the dawn of human life, when God accepted a sacrifice from one of the two sons of Adam, and rejected the other (Qur’an 5:27). God is the Judge of what is accepted and what is not. It is He who knows best what transpires in the hearts and minds of people, and God only accepts from those who are righteous. We may only imagine that the thoughts and ideas that crossed the heart and mind of the righteous son of Adam were eagerness to earn God’s pleasure by presenting the sacrifice with sincerity. On the other hand, the ideas occurring in the heart and mind of his brother, Adam’s other son, entailed stinginess, avarice, envy, and lack of righteousness.

In his commentary on the Qur’anic verse in relation to the story of Adam’s sons: “Allah accepts of the sacrifice of those who are righteous [*al-Muttaqūn*]” (5:27), Ibn ‘Ashur says: “The response of ‘Allah accepts of the sacrifice of those who are righteous’ is a lesson and exhortation, exposition, and a disclaimer from what merits his killing.” He says: “Acceptance is the act of God, not any other, it is He who accepts from a righteous person and not from another. The other defamed him as impious, and thus God did not accept from him [the sacrifice]. The sign for this is that he harbored the intention to kill a soul. Therefore, there is no guilt for he whom God accepted his sacrifice that warrants being killed...And perhaps what is intended by the righteous [*al-muttaqīn*] are those who are sincere in their actions; whereby non-acceptance [of sacrifice] is a sign, and on the basis, of lack of sincerity...”¹³⁷

As for rules of accepting ideas among people, the Prophet in his life with people is the legitimacy insofar as accepting the ideas related to Divine legislation in matters of *‘aqīdah* (creed) and forms of worship. However, the Prophet happened to reconsider his own opinions and accept the ideas

of his Companions in matters related to knowledge and experience of worldly matters. Indeed, Prophet Muhammad is commanded by God to consult with his Companions: “It is part of the mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them, had you been severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah’s) Forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)” (3:159). The Prophet, for example, accepted the idea of Salmān al-Fārisī to dig a trench around Madinah, and he accepted the idea of al-Ḥabbāb ibn Mundhir to choose the location in the Battle of Badr.

The criteria and rules for accepting ideas among people vary greatly. Difference in ideas has been known in both religious and worldly sects and schools of thought. Thus, the secession of the Kharijites and their rebellion against ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib was merely due to ideas and interpretations concerning a number of the issues of war that occurred between two Muslim factions. The factionalism of Shiites was also due to their difference with other Muslims concerning a political idea related to the Imamate (leadership). And the differences between Fiqh schools of thought was a difference in intellectual *ijtihād* and ideation in some of the branches of Fiqh and in principles and rules of deducing religious rulings (*aḥkām*).

Thus, adherents of a particular sect perceive that the right of affiliation to it is only given to those who agree with the rest of the adherents to the ideas of the sect, whose ideas are harmonious with their ideas, and who share in unison with other sect adherents their distinction from followers of other sects. Further, the criterion of accepting any new idea is the extent of its harmony with the ideas of the sect. This also applies to any religious group, political party, and even institutions and associations. Despite that, it remains that the principle of freedom of thought – which is considered a human right in the contemporary world – has begun to find its way into the thought of some sects, movements, and political parties. In this way, a party member for example comes with new ideas that perhaps contradict the prevailing ideas espoused by the party and which every member is expected to adopt. New ideas stir discussion, dialogue, or debate. The new ideas may be accepted and consequently effect and stimulate the evolution of the party’s thought. They may also be disregarded, but the holder of the new ideas must comply with what is agreed upon, as derived from the principles of democracy and majority opinion. However, the person may persist in pursuing his or her ideas and end up leaving the party.

In terms of Islamic thought, there are holistic principles agreed upon

and adopted by multitudes of people, from various segments of society. These overall principles constitute a frame of reference for accepting or rejecting ideas. The majority of the Muslim Ummah, for example, subscribes to the pillars of Islam and the pillars of *īmān* (belief). Yet, we find differences in the exegesis of some Qur'anic texts, whereby the speculative indication (*zannīyyat al-dalālah*) in the meaning of many verses allows for the variance in interpretations and reasoning into the meaning of the sacerdotal texts. Moreover, we find differences in the ideas derived from some Prophetic Hadiths, even as relates to the sound and authentic Hadiths. Such results from differences in understanding reality, the method of applying text to context in this reality, or differences in perspective of whether there is mandatory applicability of the Sunnah, especially in cases of practical application.

We will find that some people do not accept a good idea when it comes from a certain individual or entity. This may be because such individual is not known to be consistent in soundness of thought and soundness of conduct, or because that entity is in the habit of taking stances that are inconsistent with what is acceptable to those people. A particular thinker who presents ideas about Islam, while being known to be affiliated with a non-Islamic intellectual trend, or for not adhering to Islamic forms of conduct in matters of what is illicit (*ḥarām*) and licit (*ḥalāl*), may be grounds for his or her ideas to be rejected. This may be the case even if the ideas are good, and whereby the slogan “a word of truth ill-intended” becomes one of the slogans employed in such cases.

When speaking about the rules and parameters of accepting ideas, the subject of freedom of thought, its limitations and parameters emerges. This subject has seen prolonged debate. There are stipulations in international conventions that regard intellectual freedom as a human right, but these international conventions also stipulate that there are restrictions and parameters that are rendered as boundaries to that freedom. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (formerly Organization of Islamic Conference) articulated particular interpretations as an expression of the position of Islamic states towards this matter. Furthermore, studies and declarations issued by conferences or contained in books and studies discuss the issue of intellectual freedom from an Islamic perspective. They also compare what they perceive as an Islamic viewpoint with what is defined by international conventions.

There is no absolute freedom that is limitless, neither at the theoretical philosophical level, the legal legislative level, nor the practical applied level either.

Yet the subject of freedom of thought is closely entwined with other types of freedoms, including freedom of belief, and freedom of expression.

Thus, in the Islamic perspective, freedom of thought is considered a duty, is a prescribed form of worship, and is not merely a legal or social right. Thought and contemplation upon the pillars of belief in Islam, as relates to monotheism, prophethood, and the afterlife, are considered a basis for accepting belief. Some doubt may develop as a result of such contemplation. There is no fault in that and there are methods for dealing with it. It is also acceptable even to express such doubts and to communicate them to ones who could help find solutions, as had happened with the Companions of the Prophet. The Companions, in such example, would express their doubts to the Prophet, who in turn would not reprimand them, but would rather offer remedial guidance.

However, this right exceeds its natural and legislative boundaries when doubt and specious ideas becomes pathological. Many cases of unbelief are a reflection not of incapacity to think to reach truth, but rather an act of insolent volitional unbelief, after the truth and clear proof became manifest. This is evidenced in the Qur'anic verse: "And we granted them Clear Signs in affairs (of Religion): it was only after knowledge had been granted to them that they fell into schisms, through insolent envy among themselves. Verily your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Judgement as to those matters in which they set up differences" (45:17). The life of such people is full of confusion and doubt, as the Qur'anic verse states, "But they deny the Truth when it comes to them: so they are in a confused state" (50:5).

Freedom of thought could perhaps lead to unbelief in Islam, and the choosing of another religion. In fact, the debate regarding the rule of apostasy in various cases remains active, where if an apostate does not declare his or her apostasy, does any, other than God, have right to judge and prescribe action against the person? And was anybody entrusted with uncovering the hearts of people to determine what they believe?

As for one who declares apostasy, would this be considered freedom of thought leading to freedom of belief? And, is there a difference in the ruling between one who declares apostasy but remains a peaceful member of society, an apostate who actively calls to apostasy in a manner that perhaps leads to strife, and an apostate who joins the camp of the enemy to fight Muslims?

And while the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) subjected freedom of expression to necessary restrictions, including respecting the rights and reputation of others, protecting national security,

Mapping Intellectual Building

public order, public health, public morals, or the rights and freedoms of others, could we then subject freedom of expression of belief insofar as declaring apostasy to these restrictions?

We do not wish in this context to delve into the details of responding to such questions, but it suffices to note that the subject of intellectual freedoms is associated with numerous details and opinions, which reveal that there are various schools of thought that differ from what we have known in Islamic jurisprudence and were a product of thinking that are particular to a time and a place. In fact, many of the issues raised today have their own evolving particularities. It remains that the principle and ultimate determinant of dealing with the questions of intellectual freedom is not ancillary jurisprudential precepts and rules that emerge through religious fatwas. Rather, they constitute what is required to achieve the overall intents (*maqāṣid*) of Islamic Shari‘ah concerning the right of the individual, the Ummah, and humanity.¹³⁸

Conclusion

After addressing the concept of thought and its evolution, the levels of intellectual building, and the intellectual building of the society and the Ummah in the first three chapters, this chapter discussed the method of intellectual building. We found it suitable to address this method by seeking to answer seven questions, namely:

- Where shall we endeavor to achieve intellectual building (the sources)?
- What are the materials and topics of intellectual building (contents)?
- How do we undertake the process of intellectual building (tools and means)?
- How do we ascertain that we have achieved our goals in intellectual building (evaluation and measurement)?
- Where does the history of ideas lie in our understanding of the contemporary world of ideas?
- How are the intellectual levels distributed across space as relates to natural and human geography?
- What are the parameters and rules for accepting ideas?

The response to each of the questions requires observing multiplicity and diversity in each of sources, topics, means and tools, time, and place. This multiplicity and diversity offers an opportunity for integration and

balance, and the building of a monotheistic vision by which we are keen that the desired Islamic personality be characterized. Moreover, the response necessitates observing the differences in the levels, positions, and relations between these elements. This has led us to present the idea of intellectual maps, where we briefly explained the idea of the intellectual map and its benefits in terms of gathering the essential elements of the sources of the intellectual building, its topics, means and tools, tests, and its time and place.

We distinguished in previous chapters between knowledge, culture, and thought, and in this chapter, we emphasize the necessity of differentiating between the sources of each of the three concepts, as to enable the individual who strives to establish his or her intellectual building on sound foundations to acquire what one needs from suitable sources. In the context of topics, we distinguish between the topics of building the Ummah, which form the elements of identity and belonging; the topics of building the vision necessary for change and civilizational revival; and the topics of building the capacity to deal with evolving and renewing issues. As to the means and tools, we emphasize the importance of utilizing what is available in modern means that convey the thought of the thinker to others, whereby his or her thought would make a positive impact. Examples include accompanying and associating with scholars, thinkers, and reformers and acquiring their knowledge.

Perhaps the map for building a standard for evaluating intellectual building is the clearest element of intellectual building, despite being the most difficult to accomplish and apply. It requires utilizing the subjects of academic specialization, namely measurement and evaluation, that are applied widely in psychological and educational assessment. Yet, they are rarely utilized in establishing the tools of evaluating intellectual building according to a religious Islamic frame of reference. This is an arena that ought to not remain devoid of experiences and qualified people. Moreover, the need is urgent for mobilizing the capabilities necessary for organizing seminars and training courses specialized in developing tests and measures characterized by credibility, stability, and objectivity, in the field of measuring intellectual building and its elements.

The chapter also highlighted the importance of history and geography in the formation of ideas, for they are, as many researchers testify, among the oldest of sciences. Geography, for example, was founded with the earliest manifestations of human life, where human beings sought to learn the nature of the place they inhabit, and the nature of the phenomena they observe. Subsequently, they embarked on searching for explanations and interpretations of these phenomena, where the initial explanations were

Mapping Intellectual Building

primitive, and after which people resorted to using other methods, until they developed what is known as the scientific empirical method, and the outcome was the beginnings of what may be called 'scientific ideas.' Subsequently, geography became an independent science that connects natural and social sciences.

It is on these grounds that some scientists regard geography and history to be among the foremost sciences that contributed to solidifying the relationship between the types of other sciences, with all their patterns and forms. The history of thought or the history of culture were among these sciences whose foundations were laid down by the events of history and the influence of the geographical environment across time and place. This is because the science of the history of ideas is built from basic units, called intellectual units, that are characterized by a degree of stability, to an extent where researchers are able to use them in the form of units of analysis concerning the rise and fall of human cultures and civilizations.

It becomes evident from this chapter that geographical thought is concerned with human thinking about the place and the surrounding environment which humans inhabit and, and that thinking commenced since the inception of human life on earth. The subjects of the geography of thought are distributed across various branches of human geography, such as political geography and geopolitics, which focus on the study of the effect of geography on political practices, and cultural geography, which studies the significance of geography in explaining cultural varieties between, and among, different societies.

5

Thought and Language

Introduction

The writer of this book is writing it after he *thought* of the importance of including ideas about the relationship between thought and language in his research. He also *thought* of limiting the size of the written material on this topic to about one-tenth of the whole study. He also *thought* of the literature of psychology as a main source of discussion in this relationship. When he wrote the elements of this book, he *thought* about the importance of a sequential structure: a suitable introduction, the main body of the study that includes a number of subtopics, and a suitable conclusion. He perhaps *remembered* a topic he heard on the radio while driving, perhaps *read* a book on the subject from his library, *discussed* with one of his colleagues the importance of the subject, and *browsed* some specialized websites to read what they may contain on the relationship between thought and language. Here he is now *writing* what he was able to collect and organize of thoughts and ideas on the subject.

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four language skills. Thus, can we imagine that a writer would write something about ‘thought’ without thinking about it, and without his or her thought utilizing one or more of the four skills of language?

Linguists arrange these four skills in the order referred to above, in terms of the individual’s ability to develop these skills in building his or her language and intellectual systems. There is no dispute that listening and reading are two methods of developing the intellectual foundation of an individual. But we do not know of the existence of this foundation until the individual speaks or writes. Yet it is listening, or hearing, as Ibn Khaldūn emphasizes that such “begets the linguistic habit” (*abū al-malakāt al-lisāniyyah*).¹³⁹ Hence, listening (hearing) precedes seeing (vision) in the majority of Qur’anic verses that address both faculties.

Language is the mold that thought is poured into, and thought is the content inside that linguistic mold. The content takes the form of the mold

and is determined by its boundaries in terms of its clarity and good quality, or its obscurity and poor quality. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that the relationship between language and thought is reciprocal and integrative. It is reciprocal in that one affects the other, and it is integrative in that each one needs the other; whereby the richness of one would enrich the other, and each one contributes to enhancing the other. Language serves thought when an individual needs to express his or her thought and bring it out into the linguistic realm, where the idea becomes a subject of communication. At the same time, thought serves language in helping choose the most accurate articulation and terminology that best expresses meaning. It enriches language with the meanings and signification that require new words and terminologies, whereby thought creates language, and is created by it, reciprocally.

We mentioned before that thought is a verb (action), and so is building. Similarly, language is also an action, and the subject that carries out this action is the tongue, which varies in each people and formulates language according to the terminology of its people. Ibn Khaldūn expresses this in emphasizing that “[i]t should be known that language, as the term is customarily used, is the expression by a speaker of his intention. Such expression is an act of the tongue which originates in an intention to convey the meaning of speech. Therefore, (language) must become an established habit (located) in the part of the body that produces it, namely, the tongue. In every nation, the (formation of language takes place) according to their own terminology.”¹⁴⁰

This chapter presents a brief overview of the history of the relationship between thought and language, the theories that developed about this relationship, the reciprocal and integrative nature of this relationship, the topic of *al-Bayān* (eloquence in elucidation and diction), of thought and inner speech, of bilingualism and diglossia, and their effects on thought, culture, and identity. We do not intend to detail the relationships in these topics from their multiple dimensions, but rather aim to illustrate that intellectual building is inextricably entwined with linguistic development and language skills. This strong association has been a subject of research and consideration since ancient times and in fact remains so. It is related to the culture and identity that distinguishes each society.

1. The Relationship between Thought and Language: The Historical Dimension

Interest in the relationship between thought and language dates back to time

immemorial in the history of humankind. In terms of religious sources, it suffices here to contemplate the Qur'anic verses that directly indicate this relationship, as in *Surah al-Baqarah* "And He taught Adam the names of all things" (2:31). God mentions the fact of the creation of human beings, followed immediately by the fact that He taught them *bayān* (the ability of eloquence and elucidation) in consecutive order: "(Allah) Most Gracious! It is He Who has taught the Qur'an. He has created man: [And] taught him eloquence [*bayān*]" (55:1-4). God also associated between the tongue, as a linguistic faculty, and *bayān*, in the same verse "We sent not a messenger except (to teach) in the language of his (own) people, in order to make (things) clear to them [*li yubayyina lahum*]" (14:4).

As for the records of human history on the topic, important texts date back to the era of Socrates and Aristotle and succeeding Greek and Roman philosophers. It suffices to note that the dialogues and debates that took place between Greek philosophers addressed issues that remained unresolved across the history of sciences, and continue to be a topic of discussion and controversy until today. Such issues include the three traditional questions: the origin of language (whether natural or conventional), the regularity of language, and the structure of language. Even the term 'logos,' which was prevalent in the history of Western thought, was used as a single organizational structure that simultaneously accounts for language, rationality, and thought.¹⁴¹

The debates between theories of linguistic thought have a long history, examples of which are among the works of Greek philosophers. We also witnessed such examples in the disputes and rivalry between the grammarians of al-Basra and those of al-Kūfa. Examples of current debates include those between modernist Arab linguists, who seem to apply modern Western methodologies on Arab, and Arabic, linguistic thought.¹⁴² Similarly, sharp debates continued among Western linguists from various philosophical and psychological schools of thought, such as the significant debate between Jean Piaget and Noam Chomsky in 1975.¹⁴³

Islamic heritage includes several works that discuss the origin of human language and its relation to modes of thinking, understanding, and perception. Many also tend to investigate in detail the structure of the Arabic language, the development of its sciences, and its role in conveying the contents of the Qur'an. There are references to early efforts attributed to Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī (d. 69 AH), who is claimed to be the first to attempt to invent Arabic grammar, and who put the dots on the words of the Qur'an, in addition to references to Abū 'Abd Allah ibn Abī Ishāq al-Ḥaḍramī (d. 117 AH) and 'Issā ibn 'Umar (d. 149 AH), although the books of these three

did not reach us. There are also the works of al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī (d. 175 AH) and his student Sibāwayh (d. 180 AH).

Some believe that the efforts put forth afterwards remained within the framework of the method developed by Sibāwayh.¹⁴⁴ However, the following discussion presents examples from a number of later scholars in Arab Islamic heritage in the field of language and thought. These may be representative of intellectual contributions to this field.

On the issue of the origin of human language, and whether it was established via conventional agreement or Divine inspiration, Ibn Jinnī (d. 392 AH) states: “This is a subject that requires a lot of consideration; the majority of speculative philosophers agree that the origin of language is mutual agreement and convention [*tawādu ‘ wa iṣṭilāḥ*] rather than Divine revelation and inspiration [*waḥy wa tawqīf*]. However, Abū ‘Alī [al-Farīsī]-may God have mercy on him - said to me one day: ‘It comes from God,’ evidencing his argument in God’s verse: ‘And He taught Adam the names of all things.’ But this [verse] does address the subject of the controversy, because it may be interpreted as: He enabled Adam to establish a convention of [names]. It is possible that this is the meaning intended by God’s words, and if this is a plausible and undeniable interpretation, then the evidence of the implication of this verse [that it is *tawqīf*] is void. Abū ‘Alī...himself used to say this in some of his discussions, and it is also the opinion of Abū al-Ḥasan, who did not deny the argument that [establishing language] was a conventional agreement by Adam.”¹⁴⁵

Ibn Jinnī adds, “Some people believe that the origin of all languages lies in the sounds that are heard, such as the howling of the wind, the roar of thunder, and the gurgle of water...after which languages were born from that. For me, this is a valid perspective and an acceptable belief.”¹⁴⁶

He further explains:

Know furthermore that, over the course of time, I am constantly investigating and researching this subject. I find myself to be strongly attracted by the motives and inner sentiments, which overwhelm my thought in different ways, that is because if I reflect on the state of this noble, precious, and graceful language, I find in it such wisdom, exactness, subtlety, and elegance that it veritably enthalls my thought, to a point of being transfixed by its fascination. Such [a state] was noted by our colleagues, May God have mercy on them, and I have followed suit...Adding to that the transmitted Prophetic traditions related to [language] having come from God Almighty. I have a strong conviction that it is a revelation and Divine inspiration from God. But conversely, I would also say, that as has occurred to my colleagues and to myself, to which our attention was drawn, that in contemplating this

magnificent and brilliant wisdom, we do not exclude the possibility that God Almighty has created before us – although it is beyond our grasp – creations that had more gracious minds, quicker wits, and braver hearts. So I stand wearily between these two positions as scales of a balance, but when I weigh them, I turn away in defeat [of my inability to decide]. Yet if some idea comes to mind afterwards which may tip the scale in favor of one position over the other, I shall adopt it.¹⁴⁷

Hence, Ibn Jinnī does not take a conclusive position on whether language is revelation and Divine inspiration from God, or a product of human acquisition and convention. Perhaps it was a middle position in which he sought to respect the opinion of his Mu‘tazilite teacher, Abū ‘Alī al-Fārisī, and other Mu‘tazilites who argued that language came about as a product of human agreement and convention. The vacillation between these two theories of the origin of language seems to have accompanied linguistic studies across history. However, most contemporary linguistic studies lean towards the opinion of the existence of an innate ability that enables one to acquire language within the objective conditions of one’s life. This is because language is a shared characteristic of the human species, and a distinctive trait that distinguishes humans from all other creations. Considering the differences in the conditions of human societies, it is only natural that languages would vary, and that they would change with time.

The issue of the relationship between language and thought is clearly explained in the books of Arab linguists. In this context, Ibn Jinnī notes that the Arabs mastered the inherent patterns and properties of their language and refined them, where the detailed care for articulation of words is considered a service rendered by the speakers to the intended meanings. He adds that “we find noble exalted meanings that are undermined and disfigured by poor choice of words, and poor expression of them.”¹⁴⁸ He also argues that “Most of the people of Shari‘ah who stray from fulfilling its intents, and deviate from the optimal path to it, have been overtaken by their weakness in this noble dignified language.”¹⁴⁹

Furthermore, Al-Jāhiz (d. 255 AH) relates that Bishr ibn al-Mu‘tamir wrote that “Whoever wants to [produce] a clear meaning should express it through clear words; for clear meaning rightly deserves clear words... Meaning is not dignified by being an exclusive meaning, and likewise, meaning is not debased by being a common meaning, rather the axis of nobleness is that of correctness, achieving benefit, and being suited and relevant to the instance it is being used... A speaker ought to know the level of meanings, and to balance between them and the level of listeners and the level of the occasion at hand. [The speaker] ought to present speech that is

appropriate to each level, and to each occasion, to make the level of words commensurate with the level of meaning, and the level of meaning commensurate with the level of the occasion at hand, and the level of the audience commensurate with the level of such occasions.”¹⁵⁰

For his part, Al-Jurjāni (d. 474 AH) says: “It should be known that it is inconceivable that thought can function on the meanings of words, individually, devoid of the meanings of grammatical relations; for it cannot be imagined or reasoned by the mind that a person would think of the meaning of a ‘verb’ without intending to relate it to a ‘noun,’ or to think of a meaning of a ‘noun’ without intending to relate it to a ‘verb,’ by making it as its subject or object, or intending to form another grammatical rule between them, as in to make it a subject, a predicate, an adjective, a circumstantial construction, or the likes of that.”¹⁵¹

Ibn Khaldūn considers languages as industrial habits (skills), that is, they are built and learnt by acquisition.¹⁵² Habits are established when human beings repeat an action until the habit becomes a firm characteristic and skill. He says: “It should be known that all languages are habits similar to crafts (techniques). They are habits (located) in the tongue and serve the purpose of expressing [meanings]. The good or inadequate (character of such expression) depends on the perfection or deficiency of the habit... Habits result only from repeated action. An action is done first (once). Thus, it contributes an attribute to the essence. With repetition it becomes a condition, which is an attribute that is not firmly established. After more repetition, it becomes a habit, that is, firmly established attribute.”¹⁵³

It appears that it is ‘habit’ which endows the speaker and listener of a language with the ability to distinguish between linguistic correctness and error, based on the collective convention and agreement of the speakers of the language, without any need for grammar and syntax. In this context, Ibn Khaldūn says:

After that, there comes the study of the meaning of words. This is because one depends upon knowledge of the conventional meanings of single or composite utterances, for deriving ideas in general from word combinations in general. The philological norms needed in this connection are found in the sciences of grammar, inflection, and syntax and style. Now, when speech was a habit of those who used it, these (linguistic matters) were neither sciences nor norms. At that time, jurists did not need them, because linguistic matters were familiar to them by natural habit. But when the habit of the Arabic language was lost, the experts who made it their specialty determined it once and for all with the help of a sound tradition and of sound rules of analogy they evolved. (Linguistic matters) [t]hus, became sciences the jurists

had to know, in order to know the divine laws. Then, there is certain other, special information to be derived from word combinations. One must derive what constitutes law, among the various ideas, from special indications in word combinations that have a bearing upon law. This is jurisprudence. Knowledge of the conventional meanings in general is not sufficient for that. A knowledge of certain other things on which that special information depends, is needed. The laws can be derived from (those things) in accordance with the principles evolved by expert scholars in the religious disciplines, who established those things as norms for the purpose....All of them are basic in this discipline, but since they are semantic problems, they have to do with philology.¹⁵⁴

In elucidating the existential relationship between thought, knowledge, and language, numerous Muslim scholars have made efforts to distinguish between individual, rational, and linguistic existence. Among them was Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, who says:

In explaining the definition and essential reality of the name [or word], we say that things have existence as individuals, in speech, or in minds. Existence as individuals is the fundamental real existence, while existence in the mind is cognitional, formal existence; and existence in speech is verbal and indicative. So heaven, for example, has existence in itself as an individual reality; then existence in our minds and souls, because the form of heaven is impressed in our eyes and then in our imagination, so that even if heaven were to disappear, for example, while we survived, the representation of heaven would still be present in our imagination. This representation, moreover, is what is expressed in knowledge, for it is the likeness of the object known since it is similar to it and corresponds to it, much as the image reflected in a mirror is similar to the external form facing it. As for what exists in speech, it is the word composed of three [sic] segmented sounds: the first of which is expressed by [the letter] *sīn*, and second by *mīm* and the third by *alif*, as when we say ‘*samā*’ [‘heaven’]. Our saying indicates what is in the mind, and what is in the mind is a representation of that which exists, which corresponds to it. For if there were no existence in individuals, there would be no form impressed on the mind, and if there were no form impressed on the mind and no man conscious of it, it would not be expressed in speech. So the word, the knowledge, and the object known are three distinct things, though they mutually conform and correspond; and are sometimes confused by the dull-witted, and one of them may fail to be distinguished from the other.¹⁵⁵

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah believes that the Arabic language is not only associated with thought and reason, but also with religion and

character. He says: “It should be known that competency in language strongly and clearly affects the mind, character, and religion, it also influences the likeness to the dawn of this Ummah insofar as the companions of the Prophet and their successors; for similarity to them improves the mind, religion, and character. Furthermore, the Arabic language itself is from the religion, and knowledge of it is a religious obligation; for surely understanding of the Qur’an and the Sunnah is an obligation, and they cannot be understood except with understanding of the Arabic language, considering that whatever is required to fulfill an obligation is itself an obligation.”¹⁵⁶ He also states on a different page that “The Arabic tongue is the symbol of Islam and its people, for languages are among the greatest symbols with which nations are distinguished.”¹⁵⁷

2. *Bayān* between Thought and Language

The term *bayān* is a favored and distinguished word in the Qur’an. It appears with other derivatives of the root verb ‘*bāna*’ about 257 times in various noun and verb forms in numerous Qur’anic verses to denote clearness, explanation, and distinctness, as a means by which one makes things manifest and perspicuous through language. *Bayān* is used to describe the Qur’an itself in *Surah Āl-‘Imrān*: “Here [the Qur’an] is a plain statement [*bayān*] to [all people], a guidance and instruction to those who fear Allah!” (3:138), the Qur’an is also described as *tibyān* “and We have sent down to you the Book explaining [*tibyān*] all things” (16:89), and as *mubīn* “There has come to you from Allah a (new) light and a perspicuous [*mubīn*] Book” (5:15). Furthermore, the Qur’an was revealed “In the perspicuous Arabic tongue” (26:195), and its verses as well are clear: “We sent down Clear Signs” (22:16). The Qur’anic verses describe that the Prophet to whom the Qur’an was revealed was himself clear “he is but a perspicuous warner” (7:184), and that every messenger sent by God spoke the language of his people in order to clarify and explain to them: “We sent not a messenger except (to teach) in the language of his (own) people, in order to make (things) clear [*liyubayyina*] to them” (14:4), and so forth.

Contemplating the meanings and indications of the verses in which the word *bayān* appears in the Qur’an is a truly pleasant journey. This is because what has been revealed from God is not enigmas and tales with hidden or unknown meanings and significations, but are rather manifest and clearly understood verses, revealed in a language the people of which understand its meanings. Nonetheless, the verses have also been revealed in varying

degrees of eloquence amounting to the level of miraculous quality and inimitability. The Qur'anic text is more profoundly influential on the listener or reciter than any other means of elucidation that attempts to explain the significance of the text in any language other than its original language.

Imam al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204 AH) was among the first to delve into the subject of Qur'anic *bayān*. In his exceptionally *uṣūlī* book, *al-Risālah* (The Message), he begins by explaining that “*al-bayān* is a collective term for a variety of meanings that have common roots, but diverging offshoots.”¹⁵⁸ He then elaborates on *bayān* of the totality of provisions in the Qur'an, dividing them into five categories, some of which are clearer than others.

Scholars of the Arabic language developed a science broad in focus, naming it ‘the science of *bayān*,’ in which they detailed its themes, objectives, and foundations. Numerous books, both classical and modern, were written in this field, including the book *Asrār al-Balāghah* (The Secrets of Eloquence) by al-Jurjānī. The book begins with illuminating the virtue of *bayān*, in reference to the introductory verses of *Surah al-Raḥmān*. He says:

It should be known that speech is what gives sciences their status, manifests their positions, unveils their forms, reaps their diverse fruits, attests to their secrets, and uncovers their innermost hidden meanings. It is with [speech] that God Almighty distinguishes the human being from all other animals, and emphasizes the greatness of gratitude. [God] says: “(Allah) Most Gracious! It is He Who has taught the Qur'an. He has created man: He has taught him speech (and intelligence) [*bayān*]” (5:1-4). For if it weren't for speech, the peculiarities of science would not be known beyond the person who knows it, and the rational being would not be able to uncover the blossoms of the mind, and where the forces of thoughts would be suspended from rendering their meanings, and thus the whole issue would come to rest in its existence and its perish...¹⁵⁹

Another prominent book in this field is Al-Jāḥiẓ's *Al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*, in which the author renders *bayān* as an indication of meaning, and *tabyīn* as further clarification, and includes in it outstanding examples of both *bayān* and *tabyīn* from “similar illustrations in the prefaces of sayings. He further includes examples from the best of speeches, most favorable paragraphs, selected excerpts, preferred pieces, and some of what is suited in this context among the evoked poetry verses and the chosen responses.”¹⁶⁰

In explaining the meaning of *bayān* and its relation to meanings and words, Al-Jāḥiẓ says:

Mapping Intellectual Building

Some of the polymaths of words and critics of meanings say that the meanings (ideas) which arise in people's hearts and are imagined in their minds, which flutter in their inner selves connected to their thoughts, which come about in their covered and hidden ideas, distant and wild, veiled and obscured...what brings those meanings to life is people's remembrance of them, their telling of them, and their usage of them. These traits are what bring the meanings closer to being understood, and elucidate them to the mind...The revelation of meaning [*ma' nā*] is dependent on the level of clarity with which it is signified, and the correctness with which it is indicated, the appropriateness with which it is epitomized, and the preciseness with which it is introduced. When the signifier is clearer and more eloquent, and the indicator more explanatory and illuminating, then the [revelation of meaning] would be more useful and effective. The signifier which manifests the hidden meaning is the *bayān* that we hear praised by God Almighty, and that for which He calls and encourages. It is with [*bayān*] that the Qur'an is articulated, and of it the Arabs boasted, and through which the various non-Arab peoples vied to distinguish themselves.¹⁶¹

In detailing this meaning and connecting it to the methods of linguistic signification of it, Al-Jāhīz classifies the signifier (*dalālah*) in five methods. He says:

Al-Bayān is a collective name for everything that uncovers the concealing mask off the meaning, and exposes open the veil that hides the inner meaning, in order to divulge to the hearer its truth, and reaps what comes out of it, regardless of what type of *bayān* it is, or what kind of sign [*dalīl*] of it. This is because the regard of the matter and the aim to which the speaker and the hearer seek is: understanding and being understood. Therefore, anything through which understanding is achieved, and meaning is clarified, that is *bayān* in that regard...All of the verbal and non-verbal modes of signifiers of meaning fall into five types, which cannot be reduced or expanded: The first is utterance [*al-laḥẓ*], then gesture [*al-ishārah*], then finger-counting [*al-'aḳd*],¹⁶² then writing [*al-khaṭ*], then the state which is called *al-niṣbah*.¹⁶³

In this description, al-Jāhīz illustrates the correlating relationship of thought and meaning with the methods of human expression in language, that is: the uttered-heard, the perceived through vision, the calculated, and the written.

In his explanation of the method of *al-khaṭ*, al-Jāhīz means by it writing with the pen. He cites Qur'anic verses, and says: "as for *al-khaṭ*, it is as God Almighty mentions in His Book about the virtues of writing and the benefaction of the benefits of the book, His saying to His messenger: 'Read'

[in *Surah al-'Alaq* 96:1], and where He vows by it in His Book revealed to His messenger, in the verse “*Nūn*. By the Pen and the (Record) which (men) write” [*Surah al-Qalam* 68:1]. For this reason, they say: the pen is one of the two tongues...They also say: the pen’s trace is longer lasting, and the tongue is more verbose (chattier).”¹⁶⁴

For his part, al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī expounds on the linguistic meaning of writing, and the numerous Qur’anic significations of writing. He says: “*al-Katb* (writing)...it is combining letters to each other by inscription...it is reflective of affirmation, appreciation, enjoining, obligation, and determination, in writing. The way of this is that a thing is wanted, then is said, then is written; for the will is the preliminary principle, and writing is the finale. If what is wanted, which is the principle, is wished to be emphasized, it is expressed by writing, which is the culmination.”¹⁶⁵

Derivative words of the root of the Arabic word for writing, *k-t-b*, appear in the Qur’an hundreds of times in various forms and types of nouns and verbs. In a single verse related to debt in *Surah al-Baqarah*, derivative words relating to writing are mentioned nine times: *fa’uktubūh*, *wa liyaktub*, *kātib*, *yaktub*, *falyaktub*, *taktubūh*, and *taktubūhā*. The context of the verse is to write down matters related to debt, and to emphasize the necessity of such writing regardless of the value of the debt: “Disdain not to reduce to writing (your contract) for a future period, whether it be small or big,” whereby the wisdom of such writing is that “it is juster in the sight of Allah, More suitable as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves” (2:282).

Aside from the differences among scholars regarding the issue of recording debts in writing mentioned in this verse, whether the imperative aspect is required (*mawjūb*) or desired (*mandūb*), nonetheless, the issue at hand is concerned with the provisions of interaction and transactions between people, and the significance of the legal formulation of this interaction, not only in the matter of recording dealings in writing, but also in having two witnesses to witness the writing. The purpose of all this is to safeguard the rights of parties involved in it. On the issue of writing in particular, we observe that the verse contains several directives. There is a directive of the necessity that a ‘writer’ is present, a directive to the writer to accept undertaking the task of writing, a directive that delineates who dictates the text to be written, a directive of how to deal transactions in certain cases, a directive of the need to have witnesses, a directive for witnesses to undertake the task of witnessing, to safeguard the writer and the witness from any harm against them, and a directive not to be negligent in writing down debts no matter how small or large. There is furthermore a

clarification of the wisdom behind writing and having witnesses, and an emphasis that these directives are teachings from God Almighty to people, and hence, they ought to learn, and so forth.

Al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463 AH) cites the Hadith of the Prophet “Shackle [or record] knowledge by writing,” mentioning it in six narrations of similar wording, including the narration of ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Amrū, that the Prophet said: “Record knowledge. I said: O messenger, how do we record it? He said: by writing [*al-kitāb*].” Al-Baghdādī comments on the mention of the two Hadiths at length, and concludes by saying:

I have related from among the famous traditions [*Mashhūr* Hadiths], and what has been preserved of the Hadiths and *akhbār*, related from the Prophet of God Almighty and the pious predecessors (RAA), on the permissibility of writing and recording knowledge [Hadith], and embellishing it and improving its writing, so that if there is a forceful doubt, with the Will of God, writing would lift it, or if a suspicion opposes it, it would suppress and remove it. And I convey from the sayings of scholars of literature about the virtue of acquisition of books, their undertaking, encouraging collecting them, prolonged study of them, preserving the best of their contents and the poets’ description of them, so that this book of mine would serve as a compilation of the meaning related to shackling and recording knowledge and safeguarding it, and encourages individuals to direct their care to reading and studying it...¹⁶⁶

Writing enjoys a distinguished status in the arts of linguistic *bayān*. Ibn Khaldūn elevates the importance of writing, dedicating a section in his *al-Muqadimmah* to what he calls “the mothers of crafts” in which he classifies writing among the noble crafts. Crafts, for Ibn Khaldūn, are the professions and trades carried out by the human race on the basis of specialization, which leads to integration in human civilizational development (*‘umrān*). There are crafts that are essential for civilizational building, such as agriculture, architecture, weaving and tailoring, and carpentry. Others are among the noble crafts, such as writing and book production. Ibn Khaldūn says: “The art of writing, and book production, which depends on it, preserve the things that are of concern to man and keep them from being forgotten. It enables the innermost thoughts of the soul to reach those who are far and absent. it perpetuates in books the results of thinking and scholarship. It [elevates the] orders of existence (as it constitutes a special order of existence) for ideas...”¹⁶⁷

Ibn Khaldūn expands on this explanation in another section entitled “The crafts, especially writing and calculation, give intelligence to the person

who practices them,” in which he says:

Therefore it is necessary that each kind of learning and speculation should provide (the rational soul) with additional intelligence... All these (factors) are norms (of how to do things) which, properly arranged, constitute scientific disciplines. Thus, an increase in intelligence results from them. In this respect, writing is the most useful craft because, in contrast to the (other) crafts, it deals with matters of theoretical, scientific interest. This is explained through (the circumstance) that writing involves a transition from the forms of the written letters to the verbal expressions in the imagination, and from the verbal expressions in the imagination to the concepts (underlying them), which are in the soul. The writer, thus, always goes from one indication to another, as long as he is wrapped up in writing, and the soul becomes used to the constant (repetition of the process). Thus, it acquires the habit of going over from the indications to the things meant by them. This is what is meant by intellectual speculation, by means of which the knowledge of (hitherto) unknown sciences is provided. As a result of being accustomed to the process of going (over from the indications to the things indicated by them) people acquire the habit of intellection, which constitutes an increase in intelligence and provides an additional insight into affairs and a shrewd understanding of them...¹⁶⁸

Ibn Khaldūn believes that if there is weakness in linguistic experience in making that which is written indicate the spoken words, making the spoken words indicate the ideas one is seeking, and the rules of logic in arranging the ideas in their proper molds, then such experience may hinder the mind from reaching clarity of thoughts and eloquence in expressing them. That is because such weakness often causes the mind to stop at the “veils of words” and fall into the “nets of argument.” Therefore, Ibn Khaldūn advises whoever finds him or herself afflicted by such difficulties and hampered understanding to “cast them off! and discard the veils of words and the obstacles of doubt, and take refuge in the realm of the natural ability to think given to you by nature! Let your speculation roam in it and let your mind freely delve in it... Set foot in the places where the greatest thinkers before you did!” He adds that you should entrust yourself to God’s aid, and ask Him to guide you and show you your objective in thought. At that point, the person can return with that guidance to the molds and forms of the technical norm of logic and rules of language, and “bring it forth into the world of spoken utterances, firmly grit and soundly constructed!”¹⁶⁹

It may be construed from Ibn Khaldūn’s view above that when authors want to write about specific ideas that cross their minds, but find that their linguistic abilities do not serve to elucidate the idea as they wish, then they

ought not let the idea escape them. Instead, they ought to seize the moment and express the idea in any means available to them; afterwards, they may consider rephrasing them more eloquently. Some authors resort to the help of others, perhaps their own students, or hire writers to assist them (shadow writers), whereby the author would speak to the student or assistant writer, who on their part would grasp the idea and write it. Most publishers these days use editors to sharpen and refine the written language. Discussion may arise between the editor and the author to ensure that the written expression adequately conveys the intended meaning.

3. Theories on the Relationship between Thought and Language

Many writers and researchers like to adorn the introductory pages of their writing with the famous quote from ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Baysānī al-‘Asqalānī (d. 596 AH), who wrote to his friend al-‘Imād al-Isfahānī saying: “I can see that no one writes a book on a particular day, without saying in the day after: if this or that is changed it would be better, and if more was added it would be advisable, and if this was put forward it would be best, or if this was taken out it would be more beautiful. This is one of the greatest lessons, and an indication that deficiency overwhelms most human beings.”¹⁷⁰

It seems that this is a phenomenon that troubles people when they say or write something. They then compare what was in their minds, what their tongues uttered or what their pens [or keyboards] wrote. They feel that they have thoughts that go beyond what the words they uttered or wrote contain, and are left with thoughts that could not be accommodated in their books, the expanse of their time, or their effort devoted to writing. A writer may at times feel that the words that carried the written thoughts failed to convey the emotional and reactive state, saturated with imagination, in which the writer was writing. Indeed, this is but an indication that the stock of intellectual contents is broader than the capacity of linguistic expressions!

Thought is a psychological, social, and linguistic activity. Thus, it is a subject of study in the fields of psychology, sociology, and linguistics, as well as the applications of these sciences in many other disciplines, such as the media, politics, and economics, among others. The relationship between thought and language has been a topic among the themes of philosophy, since ancient times. This is because logic is a branch of philosophy and is the science of the study of thinking, and language is a tool for expressing thought, which in turn is a product of the meanings to which thinking leads.

This relationship is also a topic of sociology, as each society has its language through which its members communicate, and language is one of the most significant elements produced by society. Sociology studies this relationship under the branch of socio-linguistics.

The relationship is addressed in psychology as well. Psychological theories, in the Western world, on the development of this relationship vary across a large number of schools of thought and philosophies. Such, includes, for example, schools of psycho-analysis, socio-analysis, behaviorism, cognitive constructivism, cultural cognition, existential psychology, and cognitive informatics. Each psychological school has its own interpretation of the relationship between thought and language, and if the reader refers to a suitable reference on any of these schools, he or she would find that each school has its branches, and each branch is known after a Western scholar.¹⁷¹ The reader would also find, however, that an Islamic school in the field of psychology is absent.

Nonetheless, familiarizing oneself with the overall principles of these theories may be useful if they are incorporated into a stable intellectual foundation of the Muslim individual. This would be one who is capable of dealing with these theories from a critical and analytical perspective, in accordance with a methodology of epistemological integration derived from an Islamic worldview. This is what the renowned Muslim psychologist Malik Badri did in a number of his studies in psychology, and in his practice of psychotherapy. On the relationship between thought and language, Badri does not differ much from other psychologists in emphasizing that there is strong correlation between human thought and language, because, as he states, “language is not only a human being’s means of address and communication, but also the basic system used in thinking.”¹⁷²

The following is a brief overview of a number of theories that attempted to explain the relationship between thought and language.

Behaviorism

The Behaviorist Approach is a school of psychology and learning that emerged in the United States in the early twentieth century, with the works of John Watson (d. 1958). This approach was among the most influential schools of psychology and education until the 1960s. It views that the behavior of an individual is essentially a response to external stimuli, and is shaped through positive or negative reinforcement. Language behavior is one type of behavior. According to Behaviorism, a child is born without any linguistic abilities. In other words, the child is a blank slate (i.e. *tabula rasa*). It then begins to acquire language by imitating the sounds he or she

hears in the surrounding environment. The cognitive content depends on the type of stimuli that attracts a child's interest. Ultimately, language is learned from the environment through imitation, reinforcement, and repetition. One of the prominent psychologist of this school was B. F. Skinner (d. 1990), who wrote a book in 1957 entitled *Verbal Behavior*. Judith Greene considers that the book was "a virtuoso attempt to explain language without taking into account any 'mentalistic' events such as ideas, meanings, grammatical rules."¹⁷³

Linguistic Determinism and Linguistic Relativity

One of the most widely debated theories is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, developed by American anthropologist-linguist Edward Sapir (d. 1939) and his student Benjamin Whorf (d. 1941). The hypothesis considers that language serves two inseparable functions in society: first, it has a communicative function, whereby members of one society think and communicate using their language as a medium; and second, it serves a representational function, whereby language shapes and influences the individuals' and society's view of reality and the world. Each society has its language, and hence, its own worldview. Two versions emerged from this approach: linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity. Linguistic determinism implies that the language of a society determines and limits the way members of that society think. The thoughts adopted by a society are the contents of linguistic communication; that is, the idea that language *determines* thought. Linguistic relativity, on the other hand, is focused on the structure of the language used by a society, which affects and formulates the society's conception of the world. The structure of the linguistic system conveys a particular worldview that is distinct from the worldview conveyed by a different linguistic structure. Hence, societies speak different languages; therefore, their members think in different ways than members of other societies.

Cognitive Development and Genetic Epistemology

The Cognitive Development theory was developed by the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980), who considered knowledge to be none other than the history of ideas. Piaget's philosophy, which he called genetic epistemology, studies how biological maturation affects mental and cognitive abilities in individuals. It considers that the overall development of the individual is an attempt at assimilation, accommodation, and adaptation to the environment in which the individual lives.¹⁷⁴

Piaget asserts that cognitive development naturally occurs with progress in the early stages of a child's life. A child acquires concepts and thoughts before he or she is able to express them through language, and cannot verbally express an issue without first formulating an idea about the issue. He finds, however, that language contributes to accelerating mental and intellectual development. Piaget developed his theory on cognitive development in children through practical experiments, and took an opposing stance towards linguistic relativity. He focused on the stages of cognitive development in children regardless of the language of their social environment. Language, for Piaget, is not responsible for thought, although it does have a role in facilitating representational or symbolic thought. However, a child cannot understand language unless he or she grasps the idea behind the linguistic expression.

He believes that both language and thinking are dependent on intelligence, whereby the development of intelligence abilities in children precede language and are independent of it. It is not easy to understand this subject without linking it to biological development in children, and the stages of development that children advance through. Intelligence, very briefly, is a process of adaptation, and adaptation is a state of equilibrium between the action of the individual on the environment and vice versa. Piaget posits that every child goes through four stages of cognitive growth: sensorimotor (experiencing the world through senses and actions), preoperational (pre-conceptual or pre-linguistic), concrete operational (logically grasping concrete analogies and linguistics concepts), and formal operational (ability to think about hypothetical thoughts and abstract concepts).¹⁷⁵

Biological Endowment and Language Innateness

This theory was first developed by contemporary American linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky (b. 1928), who presented a set of profound theories related to the relationship between thought and language, including transformational generative grammar, the principles of deep structure and surface structure of language (syntactic structures), the theory of universal grammar, language innateness and biological endowment of language. He is also renowned for his ability to employ the ideas of other linguists and scientists, both predecessors and contemporaries, critiquing and exceeding them. He continuously developed of his own ideas and theories. In presenting an overview of his theories related to the relationship between thought and language, which are found in a number of his significant works, we refer to some of his more recent works, including a book published in 1993 dedicated specifically to the issue of "Language and Thought," and another

of his latest books, entitled *Language and Mind*, published in 2006, in which he republished some of his works that date back to the late 1960s. However, we shall reference here the fifth edition of the book, released in 2012, in which he adds to it a new chapter to reorganize his ideas about the issue of thought and language from the “biolinguistic approach.”

Chomsky relays that modern theorists found that human beings have “a general framework of beliefs to which we are inescapably committed,”¹⁷⁶ which he finds quite reasonable. He adds:

We have, by now, fairly substantial evidence that one of the components of the mind/brain is a language faculty, dedicated to language and its use—where by ‘language,’ now, we mean human language, not various metaphoric extensions of the term. Other components provide ‘common sense understanding’ of the world and our place in it—what is often called ‘folk psychology’ and the like, though we should be careful to observe the practice of serious ethnoscience, distinguishing parochial and culture-bound notions from the elements of ‘folk theories’ that are a common human endowment, ‘a direct gift of nature’; not an easy problem, and one that is, I think, too lightly dismissed. Other components make it possible for humans to conduct scientific and mathematical inquiry, and sometimes to achieve remarkable insight: we may call them ‘the science-forming faculty,’ to dignify ignorance with a title. These could be quite different in character from those that yield ‘common sense understanding’ in its various forms.¹⁷⁷

He finds that by now, “enough is known to indicate that the differences among languages may not be very impressive compared with the overwhelming commonality.”¹⁷⁸

Chomsky shares in common with other specialists in the field the perspective that the language faculty, i.e. linguistic capacity, is a common human attribute and is unique to the human species in essential respects. He finds that the ‘initial state’ of the faculty of language is determined by genetic endowment, and that humans pass through a series of states during their development in which experience affects and shapes the faculty of language, gradually, until it attains a relatively stable ‘steady state’ at about the age of puberty. Development and change, after this stage, is only peripheral and is not dependent on the innate language endowment (linguistic potential), but rather on the acquired linguistic stock. Chomsky distinguishes two components in each state of the language faculty: a cognitive system and performance systems. He says: “The cognitive system stores information that is accessed by the performance systems, which use it for articulation, interpretation, expression of thought, asking questions,

referring, and so on.”¹⁷⁹ He adds: “Work of the past few years has to some extent succeeded in identifying general principles of language that can be attributed to initial endowment.”¹⁸⁰

This means that language is involved, in a fundamental way, in thought, the mind, and social relations. The linguistic attribute is a common one shared among human beings of all races and colors, and reflects at the same time common basic functions in human lives, such as giving and requesting information, and their convergence in a number of mental postulates and truths. Examples include the fact that two is greater than one, that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, and the translatability of ideas from one language to another. From a religious perspective, the basic truths of religion are all one: the *tawhīd* of God, the truth of prophethood, and the truth of the Hereafter. These truths are the basis of all Divine messages, and they are none other than these truths, albeit every messenger was sent in the language of his own people, in order to make matters clear to them, as the Qur’an states in *Surah Ibrahim* (14:4).

In his discussion of modern linguistic theories, particularly those related to the traditional linguistic uniformity (or linguistic relativity) hypotheses, Chomsky stresses that the various linguistic systems of human beings, no matter how distinct they are from each other at the surface levels, are nonetheless far more similar in their deep profound levels. This leads him to wonder whether this means that the ability of various languages to describe reality in similar or convergent fashions is but a means of communication between various peoples and nations. This is despite their differences in language, a matter that casts doubt on the fundamental assumptions that difference in languages between people lead to different ways of viewing the world!

The perspective that guided Chomsky’s works from its origins since the 1950s and until today is the biolinguistic approach. He reinforced its understanding in his more recent writings in an effort to reach an understanding on language that is based on a principled explanation. The biolinguistic approach, according to Chomsky, views a person’s language “in all its aspects – sound, meaning, structure – as a state of some component of the mind.”¹⁸¹ The approach considers the issue as an element of a modernist view of science, where “the goal is ‘not to seek ultimate explanations’ but to find the best theoretical account we can of the phenomena of experience and experiment.”¹⁸² Chomsky notes that the guiding theme was formulated by neuroscientist Vernon Mountcastle, who wrote that “it is the thesis that ‘Things mental, indeed minds, are emergent properties of brains, [though] these emergences are not regarded as

irreducible but are produced by principles...we do not yet understand.”¹⁸³

Although the decision to study language as part of the natural world in this sense was, and still is, regarded as highly controversial by many linguists, nonetheless, Chomsky holds steadfast to the assumption that “crucial aspects of language can be studied as part of the natural world in the sense of the biolinguistic approach that took shape half a century ago, and has been intensively pursued since, along various different paths.”¹⁸⁴

Considering that the biological study of living organisms is principally based on the theory of evolution, and natural selection, Chomsky cites the works of a number of scientists who agree that the “invention of language” in the evolutionary record was a “sudden and emergent” event, occurring as a “great leap forward,” the result of “some genetic event that rewired the brain, allowing for the origin of human language with the rich syntax that provides a multitude of modes of expression of thought.”¹⁸⁵

Chomsky believes that there are three factors that enter into the growth of language in the individual: 1) Genetic factors, that is genetic endowment that is near uniform for every individual of the human species and determines the general course of the development of the language faculty to the languages attained; 2) Experience, which leads to variation among individuals, although it is a variation that remains within a fairly narrow range that does not compete with the first factor; and 3) Principles not specific to the faculty of language, including principles of structural architecture that restrict outcomes, and which include principles of efficient computation that determine the general character of attainable languages. Chomsky notes that interest in this third factor is traced to the intuitions of earlier modern naturalist scientists, who viewed that “nature is perfect,” and that nature must be “very simple,” and that it has a “drive for the beautiful.”¹⁸⁶

In recent years, Chomsky has worked to shift the burden of explanation in understanding language design from the first factor, the genetic endowment, to the third factor, language-independent principles of structural architecture and computational efficiency, thereby “providing some answers to the fundamental questions of biology of language, its nature, and use, and perhaps its evolution.” He adds that the expressions generated by language must satisfy two interface conditions: “those imposed by the sensorimotor system and by the conceptual-intentional system that enters into the human intellectual capacity and the variety of speech acts.”¹⁸⁷

Chomsky concludes the chapter on “Biolinguistics and the Human Capacity” by asserting:

The quest for principled explanation faces daunting tasks. We can formulate the goals with reasonable clarity. We cannot, of course, know in advance how well they can be attained – that is, to what extent the states of the language faculty are attributable to general principles, possibly even holding for organisms generally. With each step toward this goal, we gain a clearer grasp of the core properties that are specific to the language faculty, still leaving quite unresolved problems that have been raised for hundreds of years. Among these are the question how properties ‘termed mental’ relate to ‘the organical structure of the brain,’ problems far from resolution even for insects, and with unique and deeply mysterious aspects when we consider the human capacity and its evolutionary origins.¹⁸⁸

It seems that the various theories and debates around understanding the relationship between language and thought throughout history will continue. It is not expected that any one theory would conclusively decide it, considering that the scientists who study this topic come from different backgrounds belonging to varied disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, and psychology. Furthermore, the theoretical analysis and practical experimentation on the subject is not without reliance on useful elements in understanding it. Yet – at the same time – they are not sufficient enough, for every theory merely explains an aspect of the subject, and not the whole thing. It appears that the issue will remain open for intellectual efforts, debate, and dialogue. Is this not but the nature of human knowledge?!

In understanding the relationship between thought and language in the religious perspective, many Muslim scholars paused to contemplate the Qur’anic verse “And He taught Adam the names of all things; then He placed them before the angels, and said: ‘Tell me the names of these if you are right’”(2:31). They were nonetheless divided in understanding the nature of the relationship, and provided different interpretations (as we mentioned before in the discussion of Ibn Jinnī); is language acquisition and learning a product of Divine inspiration and revelation, in which God directly inspired language and its utterance in Adam, referring to the names of things and then to their meanings? Or, did God endow Adam with the ability to learn language, and hence he learned it at instance? Or gradually, with time? And why did such learning occur after the creation of the human being, rather than being created along with it? In this relationship between thought and language, language is the uttered, written, drawn, and animated symbols, which constitute the basis of what a human being possesses of thought, knowledge, and culture, and hence language is the mother of all cultural symbols.¹⁸⁹

Mapping Intellectual Building

Sociologists and natural scientists will continue in their research on the relationship between thought and language, whether from a purely biological, natural, and social philosophical approach irrespective of the issue of Divine guidance, inspiration and revelation, or from an approach that takes such Divine guidance into consideration, seeking to learn more of the science of it in light of this guidance. Nevertheless, and in concluding the discussion on the relationship between thought and language, we can trust that there is a set of principles that remain relatively uncontroversial. They include:

- The difficulty to envisage human thought without a linguistic expression of it; it is not easy to rule out the effect of thought in the enrichment of language. The relationship between thought and language is a mutually reciprocal and integrative one.
- The belief that God created the first human, Adam, the father of humanity, and then endowed him with a linguistic faculty, which has a particular modality that is difficult for us to identify and understand with a degree of certainty.
- The linguistic faculty (or habit) as part of the Divinely created innate, genetic “design” of the human entity. It is associated with the tools of hearing, vision, and speech, all of which are equipped for roles related to language and thought; as the Qur’anic verse states in *Surah al-Tīn*: “We have indeed created man in the best of moulds” (95:4).
- The belief that human language, at its genesis, was one language. As people dispersed throughout different remote geographical locations, dialects grew, and then evolved into distinct languages.
- A belief that human beings, across time, learned languages and used them to express their understanding of their surroundings, through what they hear in the linguistic environment in which they grow and live.

Summary of Select Theories on the Relationship between Thought and Language

Assumptions	Died	Founders	Theory	
Language is a type of behavior, acquired through imitation, reinforcement, and repetition.	1958/ 1990	Watson/ Skinner	Behaviorism	1
Language is history of ideas, it develops with biological development. Thought emerges before language.	1980	Piaget	Genetic Epistemology (Cognitive Development)	2
Function of language is communication and representation. Language determines thinking, language structure effects worldview	1939/ 1941	Sapir-Whorf	Linguistic Determinism and Linguistic Relativity	3
Languages have deep structure and surface structure. Language is an innate biological/genetic endowment universal to all humans	-	Chomsky	Biological Endowment/ Universal Grammar	4

4. Thought and Enhancing Language Skills

For those interested in thought, the Arabic language is not a subject of specialty, but a means of communication, expression, and thinking. A person would have the flexibility in formulating his or her ideas and express them clearly, convincingly, and effectively to the extent to which he or she possesses the language's vocabulary, structures, and arranged texts such as poetry and prose. Interest in the Arabic language is manifested through

proper use of grammar and syntax, particularly philological rules that many – even linguists – undermine. These include the rules of word formation through morphological compounding/abbreviation (*naḥt*) or morphological derivation from a common root (*Ishtiqāq*). Some new ideas require coinage of a new term through ‘chiseling,’ combining, or deriving a new one from a common root, and this new term or expression sometimes becomes associated with and distinguishes the person who coined it. Some ideas and meanings settle comfortably in the mind of the reader or listener when they are formulated in a balanced manner that makes them easy to be remembered and memorized as a text, such as when they are formulated into a verse or two of poetry.

Individuals acquire many of the elements of the linguistic faculty, or habit, from the rich social environment in which they grow up. Their consciousness of the need for growth and enhancement in acquiring these elements further increases their ability to benefit from that environment, and encourages them to use various methods to achieve this progress. It is important to stress here that learning the Qur’an, through recitation and memorization, is one of the best ways and means to correct speech, fine-tune expression, enrich thoughts, and elevate the meanings and words of written material.

Ibn al-Athīr (d. 637 AH) explains the effect of the Qur’an in the development of the linguistic habit. In one of his most illuminating excerpts on the topic, he says that an individual can enhance his or her language by “knowing the locations of rhetoric and the secrets of eloquent discourse that are embedded in the composition of the Holy Qur’an, and [considering] it a sea from which to extract pearls and gems, to embed into the folds of his own speech, as I have done in composing my writings, and suffice with the Holy Qur’an alone as a mechanism and tool in the use of the various arts of discourse.”¹⁹⁰ On the value of memorizing the Qur’an to linguistic enrichment, he states: “If a writer wishes to elevate himself to the level of Ijtihad in writing, he would need many things, which I have mentioned in the introduction of this book. Nonetheless, the head, backbone, and apex of the matter are three things: memorizing the Holy Qur’an, extensive memorization of Prophetic Hadiths, and poetry.”¹⁹¹

Intellectual interaction between people requires the use of various means. Each mean performs a special role that cannot be performed by other means. It is insufficient, for example, to limit such interaction to oral communication or public speaking, or instead to writing and exchange of written texts. Orality and literacy are two integrative means, because each one plays a different role than the other. Studies in applied linguistics and

socio-linguistics suggest that the origin of all languages is oral speech. Despite the fact that human races developed thousands of languages, only a few remained, because the languages that went extinct are the ones that were never written. Such studies emphasize that: "The basic orality of language is permanent...Writing, commitment of the word to space, enlarges the potentiality of language almost beyond measure, restructures thought, and in the process converts a certain few dialects into 'grapholects' (Haugen 1966; Hirsh 1977, pp. 43–8). A grapholect is a transdialectal language formed by deep commitment to writing. Writing gives a grapholect a power far exceeding that of any purely oral dialect."¹⁹²

Oral language plays a different role than written language. Oral language enables the speaker to pull the listener out to become one of the group or audience, stirring in them shared ideas and shared sentiments, whereby oral discourse and speech becomes one of the factors that unify their awareness and comprehension of the subject being discussed, which is a matter that thinkers are keen to accomplish. Written language, on the other hand, necessitates that the individual reads the written material alone. Here reading is an internal activity that enables the readers to examine the clarity of the idea being read. Thus, the reader engages in an internal dialogue between the content of what is being read and other related intellectual contents recalled from her or his previous memory or intellectual building. This is a matter that writers are keen to accomplish when writing, hoping that people might read their written thoughts.

Orality is closer to basic human nature and instinct when compared to writing, which developed later as a result of the accumulation of human experience and the invention of 'technologies' that further facilitated writing. Yet, the precedence of oral communication does not undermine the importance and value of writing, because writing, as Walter Ong states: "is utterly invaluable and indeed essential for the realization of fuller, interior, human potentials. Technologies are not mere exterior aids but also interior transformations of consciousness, and never more than when they affect the word. Such transformations can be uplifting. Writing heightens consciousness. Alienation from a natural milieu can be good for us and indeed is in many ways essential for full human life. To live and to understand fully, we need not only proximity but also distance. This writing provides for consciousness as nothing else does."¹⁹³

The value of writing is manifested in its continued influence throughout time. Even refutation or complete invalidation of a written material does not prevent it from continuing to have an effect. Writing, and even more so with print, Ong says, "has some of this vatic quality. Like the oracle or the

Mapping Intellectual Building

prophet, the book relays an utterance from a source, the one who really ‘said’ or wrote the book. The author might be challenged if only he or she could be reached, but the author cannot be reached in any book. There is no way directly to refute a text. After absolutely total and devastating refutation, it says exactly the same thing as before. This is one reason why ‘the book says’ is popularly tantamount to ‘it is true’. It is also one reason why books have been burnt. A text stating what the whole world knows is false will state falsehood forever, so long as the text exists. Texts are inherently contumacious.”¹⁹⁴

And, whereas philosophy is considered an advanced illustration of the achievements of human thought, it is nonetheless very distant from the oral mind, for “if philosophy is reflective about its own nature, what is it to make of the fact that philosophical thinking cannot be carried on by the unaided human mind but only by the human mind that has familiarized itself with and deeply interiorized the technology of writing?... Literacy opens possibilities to the word and to human existence unimaginable without writing.”¹⁹⁵

The technologies of orality and writing have developed and become available for listening and reading at any time, and with the possibility of being replayed over and over again. There are new technologies and tools that allow the listener or reader to even interact with the heard or read material, allowing for requesting clarification, or resorting to discussion, approval, or objection. All this has become available with the development of electronic publishing of lectures, speeches, articles, and books. These opportunities have become available for people via global networks that are accessed by millions of people at any time and from any place.

Furthermore, electronic recording has shifted methods of intellectual interaction through oral and written communication to a whole new era, where an intellectual now has the ability to communicate with large numbers of people, and can engage in listening, talking, discussing, reading, and writing. Undoubtedly, those interested in intellectual interaction – whether the cultured, the thinkers, the *dā‘iyah*-preachers, or the reformers – have to delve into these open spaces and take part in them, effecting and being affected by them.

5. Intellectual and Linguistic Abuse

It is necessary to be aware of the efforts that seek to tamper with thought and language, especially given that the contents of language are meanings

that vary in worth, and also vary in credibility. This variance may depend on the user of the language, and his or her objective for its use. A phrase may be sincere, or it may be false, and falsehood may be a result of ignorance, or it may be intentional. The speaker chooses the words of the language in a manner that expresses a noble purpose, or a malicious one. These words may be clear and forthright at the surface, or may have hidden ulterior intents at their core. You may also find people who interpret words in a manner that distorts them from their context, as the Qur'anic verse in *Surah al-Nisā'* states "...there are those who displace words from their (right) places, and say: 'We hear and we disobey'; and 'Hear what is not Heard'; and '*Ra'ina*'; with a twist of their tongues and a slander to Faith. If only they had said: 'We hear and we obey'; and 'Do hear'; and 'Do look at us'; it would have been better for them, and more proper; but Allah has cursed them for their Unbelief; and but few of them will believe" (4:46). Moreover, the controversy surrounding the 1967 withdrawal from '*the* occupied territories,' or alternatively, withdrawal from 'occupied territories' is perhaps well known to the generation to which the author belongs, reflecting a clear case of intellectual and linguistic manipulation.¹⁹⁶

Furthermore, the term *raj'īyyah* (backwardness) was used in Arab countries in the 1950s and 1960s as a description that ingrains its negative aspect, used by some politicians to counteract conservative trends in general, and Islamic ones in particular. More recently, particularly since the early years of the twenty-first century, the term *irhāb* (terrorism) came to be used as a label for anyone who opposes certain local or international policies, even if their opposition is towards words that are spoken or written, or expressed through them. Counter-terrorism legislations in a number of Arab countries were devised in a manner that facilitates for law enforcement the interpretation of an uttered word, or even a symbol, as hostility towards the regime, or incitement to opposition and hostility.

Whereas language is a tool for expression, and a means to convey a particular idea between a speaker and a recipient, it is also a means to bring about a particular effect on the recipient. Such effect may remain confined to the thought of the recipient, or may extend to affect his or her behavior. Hence, it is not only important that the thoughts intended by the words match the direct connotations and meaning of these words, but it is also essential to consider the effect of these words on the recipient. It is from this angle that specialists in advertising, propaganda, media, politicians, and preachers pay close attention to choosing the words that are suited to the desired effect they wish to generate in the hearts and minds of listeners or readers.

Mapping Intellectual Building

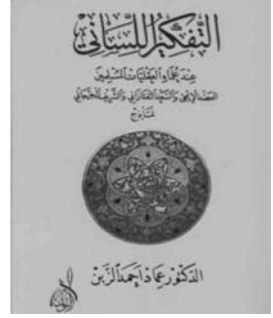
It is known that the human being can think and express what is on her or his mind without using the natural language used by the humans in expressing the contents of thought. Artists, for example, express through drawing, painting, and color the ideas that revolve in their minds, and a geographical map is a description that uses shapes, lines, and colors to express types, sizes, and features such as hills, mountains, rivers, and seas, without the need to utter or write a single word. It is commonly said that a picture can express significant meanings better than a thousand words. While there are such various means of expressing thought, the linguistic system nonetheless remains the most capable of expressing human thought, for thought is characterized by a high degree of complexity that needs a method of expression commensurate to it.

The gravity of linguistic abuse and tampering with language has increased nowadays, especially with traditional and modern media outlets becoming more readily available, bolstered by regimes, organizations, and trends each of which has its eye on the target: the minds and hearts of people. They use a variety of types of influence and effects, reaching in their ability at times a degree of mind programming, brain washing, and subversion of the hearts! Yet this, as a matter of fact, does not mean that all people in any society will easily relinquish what is entrenched in their convictions and traditions to the processes of linguistic influence on the hearts and minds; it is expected that a lot of people will have a degree of awareness so as to realize the intents and purposes of the linguistic discourse, and thereby reject and resist what is not in line with their inner convictions.

6. Inner Speech as *Kalām Nafsī*

Among the issues raised in the relationship between thought and language is the distinction that Muslim theologians made between sensate human speech (the written or spoken language discernable by the senses, *al-kalām al-ḥissī*), and inner speech (*al-kalām al-naḥsī*). The latter is derived from the description of the Qur'an as 'God's speech' and the affirmation of the difference between God's speech and human speech, for "there is nothing whatever like unto [God]" (42:11). Ash'arites, in particular, advocated the concept of inner speech, meaning by it the ineffable speech that subsists in God's essence, which is eternal and without commencement, a speech that is of a pre-eternal (*qadīm*) attribute that is not adapted in the form of an utterance or in writing.

However, the concept of inner speech was then reflected on human speech, in which theologians believed that the substance of sensate human speech (*kalām ḥissī*) stems from the presence of inner psychological and spiritual substance. They addressed the intrinsic nature, essence, and characteristics of *kalām naḥsī* and expounded on its relation to *kalām ḥissī*. Imad al-Zabn discusses in detail the arguments put forth by three Muslim theologians on this topic, they are ‘Aḍad al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756 AH), Sa’d al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792 AH), and al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816 AH).¹⁹⁷ Al-Zabn concludes that these three scholars were attentive to the system of psychological and mental foundations upon which the concept of sensate speech (*kalām ḥissī*) is founded. He says:



Their research is considered an early insight into profound strategies for the production of human thought, which associate the substance of sensate speech with profound psychological and mental interactions. These strategies are a reflection of what their insight reached insofar as the epistemic ability to look beyond the manifestations of language, and their attempt to seek the sources of the substance of speech in meta-sensate spaces. It is possible to consider these linguistic insights¹⁹⁸ as an overture to the hypothesis that there truly is a psychological reality to the systems of human speech, and to the rules of this speech.¹⁹⁹

This inner speech is related to the external environment, surroundings, and phenomena observed by the senses. Al-Zabn adds:

When palpable external phenomena occur, and are observable by the human psyche, they generate within the psyche the need to express, and this leads to reactions in psychological speech, which represent the outpouring of inner speech, which in turn generate the outpouring of sensate speech. It is from this premise that these scholars connected the contents of inner speech [*al-khabar al-naḥsī*] with external factors, and made these external factors the measure of the soundness of speech... Then comes the internal phenomena, and these are central factors as well, and is meant by them the attributes of knowledge, thought, instinctual drives, and the physical and psychological needs, for all of these stimuli generate and activate the inner psychological speech, and drives the psyche to express its renewing calls.²⁰⁰

Notwithstanding the dispute between the Mu‘tazilites and Ash‘arites, and between the theologians and the Salafist, regarding the permissibility,

or impermissibility, of describing God's speech as *kalām nafsī*, what concerns us in this context is human speech. There is a form of speech (*kalām*) that is uttered by the tongue, and there is inner or self-talk (*ḥadīth al-nafs*) that is not uttered, which some call *kalām nafsī*, while others reject the term and prefer to call it *ḥadīth al-nafs*. There is also a controversy over what can be termed speech (*kalām*). Is saying (*qawl*) something speech or not? Nevertheless, the concept of inner speech or self-talk and its difference from uttered speech (*kalām lafẓī*) is known without controversy. The individual talks to himself or herself with what they do not say, and God knows what is manifested in speech and what remains hidden in the self. Those who discuss the concepts of inner speech or self-talk cite Qur'anic verses, prophetic Hadiths, and Arabic sayings on the issue, including:

- Qur'anic verses: in *Surah al-Baqarah*: "Whether ye show what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah Calls you to account for it" (2:284), and in *Surah al-Mujādilah*: "And when they come to you, they salute you, not as Allah salutes you, (but in crooked ways): And they say to themselves, 'Why does not Allah punish us for our words?'" (58:8), and in *Surah al-Naḥl*: "Any one who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters Unbelief,- except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in Faith - but such as open their breast to Unbelief, on them is Wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a dreadful Penalty" (16:106).
- A Prophetic Hadith narrated by Ibn 'Abbās (RAA) states that the Prophet relays from God Almighty: "Verily God has recorded the good deeds and the bad deeds; He then made them clear: Whoever intends to do a good deed but does not do it, God records it with Himself as a complete good deed; but if the person intends to do it and does it, God records it with Himself as ten good deeds, up to seven hundred times as much, or even more. But whoever intends to do a bad deed and does not do it, God records it with Himself as a complete good deed; but if he intends it and does it, then God records it as one single bad deed."²⁰¹ In another Hadith narrated by Abū Hurayrah, the Prophet says: "God has forgiven my Ummah for whatever they think of to themselves, so long as they do not act upon it or speak of it."²⁰²
- From the sayings of the Arabs are the words of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who said: "I had prepared a speech that I liked, and intended to present it [but Abū Bakr spoke first]...By God, [Abu Bakr] never misses a word that I liked in my own prepared speech, except he says the like of it or better than it spontaneously until he finishes."²⁰³

- Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938) says in the first stanza of his poem entitled *Shikwah* (Complaint), written in Urdu in 1909, in the context of inner thoughts and speech:

The power of my speech emboldens me, [making my tongue more eloquent] to speak what is in my heart.

It is noted that the renowned Jurist Abū Bakr al-Bāqillanī was among the most notable scholars to address in detail the topic of *ḥadīth al-naḥs* and *kalām naḥsī*.²⁰⁴

Furthermore, Imam Muslim narrated on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that a group of people from among the companions came to the Prophet and said to him: “We find in ourselves that which every one of us considers too grave to speak about. The Prophet asked them: ‘Do you really experience that?’ They said: Yes. He said: ‘That is a clear sign of faith.’”²⁰⁵

7. Bilingualism, Diglossia, and Their Effect in Thought, Culture, and Identity

The opinions of Arab researchers varied regarding the implication and direct meaning of the terms ‘bilingualism’ and ‘diglossia’, due to their dependence on the translation of the foreign terms used to describe these two concepts. It is observed that there is no systemic and defined way in which the two terms are used in the European languages that Arab researchers refer to in order to translate the terms.²⁰⁶ It appears that the closest trend towards a direct meaning of diglossia is that it means the presence of two linguistic levels of a single language; such as *fuṣḥā* (classical/standard) and *‘āmiyyah* (colloquial) in the Arabic language. It is also an attribute of the society in general, that becomes ingrained over a period of time of no less than three generations. Bilingualism, on the other hand, is the presence of two different languages, a national one and another. The other language may be a foreign language that is used by individuals when needed or in specific fields. It may also be a second language that is used widely in society, or among those who acquired two languages by growing up in a bilingual environment or through learning.²⁰⁷

In some instances, the foreign language may be used in parallel with the national language, and at times the use of both languages overlaps to an extent that many members of society are unable to express what they want to say using only one language. This is particularly when the use of the

foreign accent is predominant enough to effect conceptualizations and formulation of mental images in the foreign, rather than the mother, language.

Numerous studies have been done on the topics of bilingualism and diglossia, well-known to specialists in the fields of psychology, linguistics, and education. Such studies have varied insofar as their philosophical, social, and political frames of reference, and in their theoretical, field surveying, and experimental methods. They also vary in their results that reveal positive or negative effects on an individual's learning, personality, and belonging, and also on society as a whole, on its cohesion, and stability of its identity, and so forth.

What concerns us here is the effect of these phenomena on the process of thinking, the level of exactness, and clarity in expressing ideas in a manner that facilitates their understanding and representation. In the field of diglossia, there are concrete studies that find that the "colloquial dialect is inadequate in fulfilling the expression of cultural, intellectual, and philosophical matters, and so the speaker of these topics needs to resort to the classical/standard level [*fuṣḥā*] if they wish to express what they say with some exactness."²⁰⁸

In any case, the space between the colloquial (vernacular) and classical forms of a language tends to gradually narrow with the spread of education and increased awareness and cultural knowledge of it. Political decisions tend to contribute in resolving the bulk of the problems related to vernacular or colloquial dialects. We recall here that the French language currently used in education, media, and cultural interactions was adopted, then became prevalent, due to a revolutionary policy. It thus became an expression of French culture since the French revolution, and the Parisian French was adopted and favored from among other varieties and dialects.

Diglossia may not be as equally grave compared to bilingualism, where many studies conducted in various countries found that bilingualism contributes to different linguistic, psychological, and social problems, resulting from the interference and overlap in the linguistic system of the two languages. One of the issues that garnered much attention is the phenomenon of language attrition, which results from bilingualism. The issue is discussed widely in specialized books and scientific journals, particularly in the field of applied linguistics.²⁰⁹

In addition, linguistic and educational research studies show that learning through the mother tongue ingrains what the learners acquire by it and facilitates for them such acquisition. Furthermore, achievement in a second language leads to disturbances in achieving knowledge and then in

using such knowledge. Human Development reports by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) of countries that top the development list, and countries with potential to move towards the forefront of the list, note that use of national language in education, and in various events and activities in societies, enables a society to progress. However, these findings do not imply not teaching foreign languages as one of the materials of educational curricula, for the latter plays a role in widening the scope of benefiting from sources of contemporary knowledge and culture.²¹⁰

At the general social level, language in any society is considered the most important element of that society's culture. In terms of our Arab societies, the Arabic language is strongly associated with the religion of Islam, not only in the formation of the Islamic Arab culture of Arab societies, but also in the intertwining of Islam and the Arabic language that Islam introduced into the cultures of non-Arab Muslim peoples. In expounding on the relationship of language with the societal culture, Mahmoud Dhaouadi uses the term 'human cultural symbols,' which he considers "the decisive elements that distinguish the human being" from all other creations. He emphasizes that there is "agreement among sociologists and anthropologists – who were more interested in the study of the world of human cultural symbols than others – that language, in both its uttered and written forms, is the utmost important cultural symbol, without which we cannot speak of any other symbols, or of human being's sovereignty on earth or in space. If language is the backbone in the phenomenon of the world of cultural symbols, then it will – in our view – become the paramount cultural symbol most likely to not only carry within it the metaphysical imprints, but also become the main source empowering other cultural symbols to be affected by metaphysical flashes."²¹¹

From this premise, Dhaouadi considers cultural dependency and subordination to be more dangerous than political, economic or any other type of dependency, because terms such as cultural invasion, cultural theft, cultural imperialism, and others, in reality reflect the prevalence of the symbols of the culture of the other. He says:

Cultural dependency on the other means the dependency of the symbolic cultural spirit of the individual and the group to this other, which perhaps may be the enemy. The dependency of the symbolic cultural spirit to the other represents a violation of the most important element in the formation of the identity of the individual and the group... The widespread use of the English (American) language or the French language in African and Asian societies, instead of the use of national and local languages of these peoples, not only represents an impoverishment of these languages and dialects...

Mapping Intellectual Building

but also entails that striving to gain linguistic and cultural independence will not be an easy matter, which in turn means that ultimately, the lifespan of linguistic cultural dependency – when the cultural symbols of the other take root in the dependent society – will not be short.²¹²

But bilingualism and diglossia remind us of what is even more grave; that is, discrepancy in language reflected in discrepancy in thought. Individuals in our contemporary societies live in a cultural surrounding, formed with the contributions of various social institutions, particularly media and modern communications outlets. This culture profoundly contributes to the individual's way of thinking. While the individual in our societies grows up and is nurtured within a traditional religious identity and belonging, that speaks of the ideal that we ought to seek to achieve, the contemporary culture nonetheless ingrains an alternative reality far from this ideal, one that is overpowered by the influence of materialism, money, and politics. This discrepancy amounts to an 'intellectual diglossia.'

In this regard, Malik Bennabi discusses at length the devastating effects of bilingualism and diglossia in his book *The Problem of Ideas in the Muslim World*. He speaks of the betrayal of ideas, the revenge of ideas, and the death of ideas. For Bennabi, when ideas die, minds become empty, language surrenders to powerlessness, and society is reduced to an infantile state, expressing the lack of ideas in childish ways through gesture or sound, for "when there are no ideas, there are no words...and as the great critic of the seventeenth century, Boileau, said in his *L'Art Poétique*: Whatever is well conceived is clearly said, and the words to say it flow with ease."²¹³

Bennabi dedicates a chapter in his book to the topic of "Ideas and Bilingualism." By bilingualism, Bennabi means the presence of a foreign language used by society alongside the national language, which he considers one of the implants of the colonial era, and which has sown "among many other phenomena related to economic, social, and administrative structures of the colonized countries a particular phenomenon – bilingualism – which is concerned with their cultural and mental structures, and their ideas...The sociological consequences are not all the same; in one case, bilingualism becomes a denominator (detonator) that restores and puts the cultural universe in motion...[In other countries], bilingualism is not a simple detonator, but rather a dynamite that is tossed into the cultural universe. It may not destroy everything, but its explosion produces the most singular cleavages." He gives the example of Algeria. To him, the split caused by bilingualism deeply affected both "the summit and the base," where the country had not only "two elites but two superimposed

communities, one representing the country in its historical traditional form, and the other wants to remake its history from Zero. The ideas imprinted for the first elite, and the ideas expressed [put forth] for the other, could not coexist in the same cultural universe. The two societies spoke two different languages.” Moreover, Bennabi gives numerous examples of the effects of bilingualism in distorting terms, changing their meanings and connotations, and disabling creative abilities. He concludes the chapter by saying: “The least we can say here is that bilingualism can engender effects that are most incompatible with the national culture.”²¹⁴

We reiterate here that we do not mean by this discussion doing away with learning foreign languages, for such learning is important and vastly useful in broadening the cultural knowledge of a thinker, or those who deal with thought, as Saḡī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī says in a couple of pleasant verses of poetry:

The person’s efficacy is increased to the extent of his languages,
Which are his recourse when dire need occurs
So strive diligently to learn languages,
For each tongue is in fact a human being in itself

Yet it remains important to emphasize that the frequent use of foreign terms, particularly when speaking, is not commendable, but rather signifies the person’s inability to express – in Arabic, or any other mother tongue – his or her thought. Hence, such frequent recourse to a foreign expression is rendered an unbecoming inadequacy and a shortcoming.

Conclusion

This chapter addressed the relationship between thought and language through seven sub-headings: the relationship in its historical dimension, *bayān* (clarity and elucidation) as a topic of this relationship, theories that attempted to explain this relationship, the reciprocal and integrative relationship between thought and language, intellectual and linguistic abuse, thought between uttered language and inner speech, and bilingualism and diglossia. It is evident that each one of these topics includes descriptive observations, scientific expertise, explanatory theories, and varied perspectives. It has become clear to us that the issue of the relationship between language and thought was, and remains, a subject of study and consideration since ancient times, and that it had enjoyed substantial interest in Islamic heritage.

Mapping Intellectual Building

The individual speaks with himself or herself with ideas before they speak to others about them; hence, we favored the perspective that there is a strong correlative and reciprocal relationship that is manifested in forms of effect and affect between thought and language. If we want to achieve intellectual building in an individual or a society, then we must consider the role played by language in this building. Moreover, the degree of clarity in concepts and the crystallization of ideas enriches language and enhances its skills. Finally, it became evident to us that the issue of bilingualism, or language duality, is multifaceted. It may lead to intellectual duality and, as such, has psychological and social dimensions that merit being addressed.

It is clear, nonetheless, that the substance of this chapter does not fulfill the whole matter of the relationship between thought and language, for it is a broad subject, with numerous books, studies, and references that address it. The study of this subject has multiple aspects and approaches, and each approach can present the subject in a different way from another approach. There is a significant relationship between thought and language from the philosophical, historical, psychological, social, political aspects, and many other aspects. What this chapter addressed is merely a brief overview of the seven sub-topics of this relationship.

6

Think Tanks and Intellectual Building Labs

Introduction

Contemporary societies have established institutions for research and studies that specialize in the production, development, and formulation of ideas. These institutions carry different names, such as centers, institutes, forums, associations, etc. The term ‘think tanks’ is used in English, and it is translated into different languages in many ways. Some refer to the connotation and meaning of their work, such as ‘thought reservoirs,’ ‘idea repositories,’ or ‘brain-making laboratories.’ Other labels tend to give a negative connotation, such as ‘brains of the war of ideas’ or ‘factories of weapons of thought.’ Most think tanks confine their title to practical meaning of their work, such as through ‘research center,’ or ‘center for studies.’

Obviously, these institutions do not produce ideas for the sake of merely storing them, to become documents that validate the achievements of the institutions or add to their repertoire. Instead, they produce ideas to enable specific decision makers to utilize these ideas in making appropriate decisions. These decision makers need think tanks to carry out the task for which they were established, and thus, they fund the think tanks and provide them with the freedom and facilitations to organize the activities necessary for this task. Such includes holding meetings, conferences, and publications, with the participation of researchers and experts from within or from outside the think tank, and from around the world as well.

Think tanks have programs, projects, and phased plans that are set according to specific priorities that are dictated by general circumstances and conditions, according to the needs of the target or funding party, to help solve existing or anticipated problems, to map out future paths according to what is possible, probable, or what ought to be so.

Mapping Intellectual Building

These institutions vary in their interests, which may be domestic policy issues, international relations, or issues related to the economy, marketing, development, the environment, education, or family and children's issues, etc. The scope of focus also varies, with some think tanks having a narrow local focus, while others have a specific regional focus, or a public or international one.

This chapter presents a brief overview of the history of think tanks, the main ideas behind their practices, and the tasks they perform. It discusses various models of think tanks around the world, and presents a brief review of the status of think tanks in the Arab world.

1. Development of Ideas: Between Individual Creativity and Institutional Work

Human beings are civil by nature in that they cannot provide the necessities of life individually. Therefore, they live with others in groups, where members of each group form social relations based on mutual cooperation, interdependence, and collective production of most of life's necessities. Nonetheless, the history of human thought reveals that thinking and thought production, in most periods of history, have been to a large extent individual internal processes. Yet some aspects of social life require collective thinking, whether in terms of thinking about a particular subject among a group of individuals to reach a shared idea that becomes common to members of the group, or in terms of thinking about an idea proposed by one individual, to reach a common conviction among members of the group. Either one of these types of collective thinking may be achieved spontaneously without much planning, or may be done by prior agreement on a plan that defines the roles of the participants in the thinking process and the steps needed to reach specific results. This is the manner in which specialized institutions and think tanks conduct scientific research.

Exercise: The history of ideas has witnessed many examples of spontaneous collective thinking, and other examples of planned consultation and deliberation.

- Engage with others in recalling and contemplating three or so examples of spontaneous collective thinking in Islamic history.
- Engage with others in recalling and contemplating three or so examples of organized, planned collective thinking in Islamic history.

Various ‘think tank’ models throughout history worked to nurture the individual’s ability to develop and formulate ideas, whether they were educational institutions, or circles of discussion, dialogue, debate, and argumentation, as was in the example of the Platonic dialogues and Aristotelian discussions at Lyceum in ancient Greek times.

Some periods of history witnessed types of collective thinking, research, and scientific consultation. For example, Imam Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nu‘mān used to discuss with his students a particular matter, where students would provide their own opinions and debate them, until the matter of discussion was understood, and “after they had examined the matter from all sides, he would indicate the opinion arrived at by this study and its distillation and all would affirm it and be pleased with it.”²¹⁵ Abū Ḥanīfah’s method in teaching was more akin to collective studying rather than it being simply a shaykh giving lessons and lectures to students. It is known that it was the companions and students of Abū Ḥanīfah who recorded his Fiqh and collected and documented the results of his lessons. The most notable of his students to record his Fiqh was Imam Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, who used to write down what he memorized of the results of the debates and collective studying, or what he heard from his colleague Abū Yusuf. He would then present what he wrote to Abū Yusuf. Thus, it may be said that the recording and transmittance of the Fiqh of Abū Ḥanīfah was a form of collective Fiqh.

In another form of thought production, Ikhwān al-Ṣafa chose to express their perspectives and opinions in a manner that concealed the identity of the individuals who formed this group.

Another example is the London-based Royal Institute of International Affairs, which in 1926 established the ‘Chatham House Rule’ to be applied during meetings and discussions. The rule provides anonymity to speakers and encourages openness and exchange of information and opinions, where participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speakers and participants may be revealed. If discussions reach a particular conclusion or result, it thus becomes the position of the Institute. The Chatham House Rule was named after the name of the building acquired by the Institute to hold their meetings, which was previously home to a number of prominent British political personalities.²¹⁶

While contemporary societies tend to elevate the status of collective thinking, team work, and institutional work in the development of ideas and in decision-making, most of what has been recorded in human history, both in Islamic civilization and others, was recorded in the names of individual thinkers, as if the genius of thought production was done by individuals

who retreated themselves to thinking and writing in solitude. The idea of scientific research institutions, as they are known today, was neither prevalent in the Muslim world nor in Western Europe. These institutions, labeled ‘think tanks’ or ‘thought production labs,’ are modern establishments that emerged out of necessity and out of accumulation of experience, just as necessity and accumulation of experience led to the establishment of various types of specialized institutions in other fields of life.

2. The Importance of Specialization, Focused Dedication, and Teamwork

Working in profession-specific think tanks requires full-time commitment to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to master this work, as is the case with other specialized professions. While many other professions specialize in the production of things, think tanks specialize in the production of ideas and deep understanding of the ins and outs of this field. The value of this profession is commensurate to the value of the ideas that think tanks seek to produce, and the value of the discipline that the scholar or the student studies. This value and honor may be elevated to the greatest possible level in God’s path when considering the importance of this work to individuals, society, the Ummah, and the overall humanity.

God says in *Surah al-Tawbah*: “Nor should the Believers all go forth together: if a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies in religion, and admonish the people when they return to them, - that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil)” (9:122). The spirit that is stirred up in the soul by this verse is that devotion to knowledge, learning, and seeking profound understanding is of no less importance than devotion (going forth) to the highest possible level. Further, the efforts needed to build knowledge, culture, and civilization are needed at all times, and not confined to circumstances or emergent situations where problems require solutions, and solutions need to be adopted to effectuate change and reform. The need for a group from the Ummah or society to devote themselves to developing prospective forward-looking ideas and strategic visions is not reactionary to events or necessity. They are rather needed in order to be creators of events and direct the movement of life towards progress and development. With this type of thinking, society can take the lead in building and implementing projects on the basis of science, knowledge, insight, and wisdom, free from restrictive funding,

administrative negligence, counter-productive bureaucracy, and lethal corruption.

There is no doubt that the way to effectuate this progress and development is by mobilizing committed scientists to research specific scientific projects, according to insightful forward-looking and futures visions, and coherent and well-thought-out administrative systems. This, in essence, is the work of think tanks and research centers.

In his commentary on the part of the above Qur'anic verse "if a contingent from every expedition remained behind," Ibn 'Ashur says:

It is among the purposes of Islam to spread its sciences and ethics among the Ummah, and to form groups dedicated to the science of religion and to educate the minds of Muslims, in order for the policy of the Ummah to be in line with what the religion intends from it. For this reason, the incitement to jihad [in the Qur'anic verse] is followed with an elucidation that it is not in the public's interest that [all] Muslims go forth Furthermore, it elucidates that the reward of those who take up the task of education is no less than the reward of those who fight for the sake of Allah; insofar as both of them carry out work in support of religion. ...The expansiveness of conquests and the bravery of the Ummah are insufficient to maintain its power if the Ummah is devoid of a sound group of scholars, politicians, and opinion- and decision-makers who would best administer this power.²¹⁷

He then adds:

...Therefore, this verse in essence is about the necessity of seeking knowledge that must be undertaken by a massive group of Muslims as a communal [*kifāyah*] obligation; that is, the amount sufficient to achieve the purpose of this obligation. The negation of the necessity that all Muslims ought to mobilize, and the emphasis on the obligation that a 'contingent from every expedition' remains behind, indicates that those who should mobilize are not more in number than those who should remain behind to study religion [*tafaqquh*] and admonish people, and that neither case is of greater priority than the other...*Tafaqquh* is to undertake *fiqāhah* [deep understanding]... *Fiqh* is more precise than knowledge, that is why we find in the Qur'an that [the term] *fiqh* is used to denote matters the knowledge of which is unknown, as in the verse: "And yet you understand not how they declare His glory!" [17:44]...²¹⁸

Hence, working in think tanks is not a means to securing a job opportunity for those who do not find work elsewhere. Such rather entails

a selection of competencies capable of deeply understanding what is unknown and misunderstood. This is because this type of work requires a 'heavy' industry; that is, building opinions and producing thought in matters of great importance, presented to decision-makers in society to constitute a solid basis for making wise, rational, and well-balanced decisions.

The idea of building institutions that organize and practice ideas is not new. We find such examples in early Islamic history, which may have begun as simple institutions that evolved into more sophisticated ones, or small ones that developed into larger or spontaneous ones that grew into more systemized ones. Examples of such institutions that grew and developed over time include the mosque, the market, schools, courts, and the institution of *al-ḥisba* (market accountability against infringements).

Yet some areas lacked growth and development in terms of mechanisms to judge the value of ideas and methods of applying them. Examples of such fields that lacked institutionalized structure, despite embodying a set of basic principles in Islamic thought, are the fields of *ijmā'* (consensus), *ijtihād* (intellectual reasoning), and *shūrā* (consultation). These institutions govern the work of the political authority (in the case of consultation), and the work of the scientific and religious authority (in the case of intellectual reasoning and consensus). This lack of development occurred even though there are a number of early examples of nascent organization, systemization, and codification in these fields since the Prophetic era. One example of this is the concept of *nuqabā'* (representative leaders). Ibn Hishām narrates from Ibn Ishāq from Ka'b ibn Mālik the story of *Bay'at al-'Aqabah* (the 'Aqaba pledge of allegiance), in which the Prophet reportedly said: "Bring forth to me twelve leaders that may take charge of their people's affairs." They produced twelve leaders, nine from al-Khazraj tribe, and three from al-'Aws tribe.²¹⁹

We find other early examples in the era of the Rashidun Caliphate, especially in the efforts of Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyyah relays about Abū Bakr and 'Umar's method of consultation that if a matter came across Abū Bakr that needed a ruling, and he did not find evidence to the ruling in the Qur'an or in the Sunnah of the Prophet to judge by, he would gather the 'heads' or 'chiefs' (*ru'asā'*) of people and consult them. If their opinions came to an agreement upon the matter, then Abū Bakr would rule by it. Ibn al-Qayyim adds that 'Umar would do the same thing, and if he could not find evidence from the Qur'an or the Sunnah first, he would inquire whether Abū Bakr made any judgement on the matter. If Abū Bakr did, 'Umar would judge by it; otherwise, he would gather the most knowledgeable scholars [*'ulamā'*] among people and consult them. If their

opinions came to an agreement upon the matter, then 'Umar, like his predecessor, would rule by what was agreed upon.²²⁰

What are the practical differences, and what are the differences in the semantic evolution of the use of the terms: *nuqabā'* (representative leaders), *ru'asā'* (heads of chiefs), and *'ulamā'* (scholars), or any other terms used in this context in early Islamic history?

Moreover, just as governments, corporations, and political parties in various countries establish specialized research centers and provide these centers with the scientific capabilities and financial resources to perform their tasks, reform movements that seek to change the social and political reality also need such centers to provide them with knowledge and visions based on scientific research and analysis. They also require that they enable them to take initiative in their positions and activities, and to contribute to shaping public opinion that is consistent with their objectives. Otherwise, without such basis, the efforts and positions of these movements would remain nothing more than uncalculated reactions, in which the movements merely follow the events rather than create them, and chase after information and ideas that are monopolized by the competition rather than produce them.

List the names of research centers established by reform movements in the Muslim world, be they Islamic or nationalist or otherwise, which had a tangible effect in the development of scientific and intellectual productivity. Then explain the work of such centers and their role.

What is the importance of research teams and collective intellectual work?

In answering this question, we recall the saying: 'the great idea is a great idea in itself, not because it emanates from a great thinker.' A great idea may come from an ordinary person, and while this is true in its entirety, the way in which an idea is built is as important as the idea itself. If the aim of think tanks is to produce thought that is characterized as serving – to a certain degree – as a frame of reference, more than being characterized by thought produced by a single person, regardless how esteemed that person is, then it follows that collective intellectual reasoning practiced by a team in order to build a particular idea, or achieve a particular intellectual building, is considered a methodology that acquires a degree of authoritative reference, and an approach characterized by a degree of organization and credibility.

Mapping Intellectual Building

This does not undermine or diminish the value of individual creativity. The opinion reached by the collective intellectualization of a team at a think tank may end up being the same opinion of one person in the first place. However, through deliberations, consultations, and discussions, the team would find that such an opinion is based on strong arguments, reached after lengthy contemplation, integration of experiences, and multiplicity of viewpoints. In such a case, and especially as members of the team are not able to find a better opinion, this opinion becomes the opinion of the team, and the intellectual effort is a collective one.

There are instances in which the totality of research centers in a certain country are judged by the collective effort of an institution, or a group of institutions, that is a judgement perhaps based on the personal observation of one person. For example, research centers in Jordan were judged to be “all individual-led institutions.” This characterization appeared in a document produced by a group of research institutes as a collective effort. Yet, in returning to the original source, it becomes evident that such a judgement was not mentioned in the document as a result of scientific research that led to this conclusion. Rather, it was based on a mere reference to the source of this conclusion, which is an article published in a daily newspaper. In reviewing the article, it appears that the said result is not even based on any research or studies.

- The judgement may be true, and may actually describe the reality, but what is the difference between issuing a personal judgement and reaching this conclusion through actual scientific research?
- Search for other examples of general judgements and conclusions issued by research centers that are not the result of actual research.

It is ill-advised to limit the efforts of a ‘team’ to one member, even if he or she exceeds all others in capabilities and experience, and is the most distinguished in building, testing, and critiquing ideas, and particularly if the other members of the team are of more modest abilities and experiences, and who would be happy to rely on the opinion of that distinguished member.²²¹ In the best case, they would yield to the soundness of the distinguished member’s opinion, even though the matter would ultimately erase the true meaning and value of a ‘team.’ A good team is one in which every member is distinguished by attributes not available in the other members, thinks in a manner unlike the others, and envisages and reaches prospective conclusions that are not reached by the others. It is in such a team that collective intellectual reasoning and diligence is wiser, more informed, and more rational. Therefore, research teams in think tanks tend to consist of a number of members from diverse expertise and backgrounds,

who complement each other in fulfilling the needs of researching a particular topic, rather than being redundant copies of specialization, experience, or competence.

An example of contemporary 'think tanks' that practice teamwork and collective Ijtihad is Islamic Fiqh Councils. The issues that are posed to these councils are often emerging political, economic, social, or medical issues, among other matters of the prevailing social reality. The experience needed to reach a judgement or a Fatwa on an issue is not limited to knowledge of the 'Fiqh texts,' related to the *Uṣūl* of Islamic Shari'ah, which are the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the Ijtihad of predecessors as analogy or consensus, or so forth. It also necessarily requires experience in the 'Fiqh of reality' in which the issue emerges. For example, if an issue is of an economic nature, then there must be made available for the council expertise not only in general economics, but in the specific economic field to which that issue is related. This should be in addition to the presence of the stakeholders whose legitimate interests would be affected by the Fatwa that the council is asked to reach, whether these stakeholders are individuals, groups, or institutions.

In another example, the scientific and research efforts required to actualize projects of Islamization of knowledge in a particular discipline, such as psychology or sociology, requires research teams that muster the various expertise needed to achieve the desired goal in each team. A researcher specialized in the Qur'an, for instance, is able to apply the method of objective exegesis to reach what guidance the Qur'an offers in the field of human psychology, or in a particular issue related to the human psyche. Yet, this Qur'anic expert's results may not answer the questions posed by modern and contemporary psychological theories, most of which were developed in the West, according to a perspective devoid of religious guidance or consideration. Such questions may even deny such guidance all together. Therefore, the participation of expert specialists in psychology, who are well-informed of the issue under question, is undoubtedly one of the necessities of collective research and ijtihad needed in Islamization of knowledge projects in the field of psychology.

We assume, of course, that the members of a team working in a Fiqh council or a research center would have diverse experiences, but they all seek one goal. The aim is to engage, collectively, in an intellectual building that reflects the desired truth, embodied in a religious ruling to be applied in a financial or psychological issue, an Islamic perspective to be adopted in teaching a particular subject in a school or university, or in a practical solution to a particular social problem, one that is guided by the intents and purposes of Shari'ah in actualizing the interests of the people and the Ummah as a whole.

Mapping Intellectual Building

Armed with a spirit of positive cooperation and sincerity in seeking the truth desired by all members of the team, there remains several procedural issues related to the methods of forming the team, administering its meetings, making available the necessities of collective thinking, and approaches to dealing with sharp differences in opinion and decision-making procedures, etc. Various books and references on these aspects provide useful suggestions and practical experiences that are worth knowing.

- Team spirit, teamwork, consultation, etc., are concepts with overlapping connotations. List other concepts that can fall into this category of concepts.
- What distinguishes teamwork in producing ideas compared to teamwork in producing things?
- What are the elements of teamwork in think tanks?
- Make a drawing or a chart that reflects teamwork in think tanks.

3. The Evolution of Think Tanks and Their Trends

We previously referred to schools of thought in philosophy, economics, or politics, many of which were formed initially out of ‘intellectual arenas’ and forums that brought together a number of people interested in a particular subject, and ones who distinguished themselves by formulating an ‘intellectual project,’ over which the scholarly group or the intellectual circle would meet and debate. Most schools of thought that emerged in Islamic history and in the Western experience started this way.

Sources on the history of ideas differ on the origins of think tanks in the modern world. Lawrence Reid believes that the year 1787 saw the founding of “what might be described as the world’s first think tank,” when Thomas Clarkson brought together a group of 12 men in London and founded the “Society for the Abolition of the African Slave Trade.” The society struggled for this goal, with “noble ideas and unassailable facts [as] its weapons” in confronting the forms of suffering, repression, torture, and the desecration of human dignity to which slaves from Africa were subjected.²²²

Meanwhile, according to Salman Shaikh, Director of the Brookings Doha Center, think tanks got their start when the London-based Royal United Services Institution (RUSI) was founded to study military science in 1831.²²³ Other sources consider the Socialist-leaning Fabian Society, founded in London in 1884, to be among the first think tanks.²²⁴ This was followed by a wave of think tanks that emerged in the twentieth century, such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, founded in 1910

and headquartered in Washington DC. Yet most references indicate that the first research center with the standards of 'think tank' known today, is the Washington DC-based Brookings Institution, founded in the USA in 1916.

The emergence of nation-states in the West and the conflicts of interest among them entailed that governments exert great efforts to take apt decisions whether on the local, regional, or international levels. Government officials usually do not have the specialty or the time to think about each issue from among the numerous issues presented to them. Governments come and go through elections, and their chances of persuading voters is wagered on the decisions they take to resolve problems and prevent other problems from arising. This commits the government to endorse decisions that are based on prevalent epistemological foundations. In developing these foundations, the government is aided by a team of creative researchers whose technical specializations, practical experiences, and strategic visions integrate to resolve the problem at hand. This is the task of research centers and think tanks.

Think tanks associated with the government or with particular state agencies have become an essential phenomenon in most countries. Some of these centers are units within the official structure of state agencies, tasked with conducting specialized research in the affairs of each agency, and are allocated funding from the overall budget of the government agency. The mission of these think tanks or units is to provide data, basic information, and periodic reports, and perhaps propose new ideas to develop and enhance the performance of a particular agency. Their work is usually organized in a traditional systematic manner. Yet there are other think tanks interested in more wide-ranging studies related to public policy, strategic visions, and more general affairs. The experience of Western countries in this context was founded on giving such think tanks ample intellectual freedom, and enabling and empowering them to be more autonomous than government institutions. Such think tanks may be affiliated with competing political parties, universities, or may be completely autonomous, receiving substantial financial support. Independence is the basis of these think tanks' freedom in research and study, but need to be granted sufficient time and financial resources to conduct such studies, without the pressures of current affairs and urgent problems.

Think tanks produce major strategic ideas in important issues such as politics, economics, international relations, environmental problems, conflicts of interest, and intellectual warfare. Moreover, there are various entities that *buy* the expertise of think tanks, seeking them to provide recommendations to decision-makers, whether it is governments, competing political parties, or large corporations.

Mapping Intellectual Building

The autonomy of think tanks from the authority of higher education institutions and from the authority of political entities, makes them more capable of combining various forms of knowledge that are related directly or indirectly to the subject matter, and in analyzing complex problems in a more integrative methodology that is free and unhampered by bureaucratic frameworks. Such independence enables think tanks to practice ‘open-ended’ thinking that envisions alternatives, solutions, possible scenarios, and the implications of each one.

The specific objectives of think tanks vary widely, depending on the diversity of their intellectual and political frames of reference, sources of funding, and the focus of their concerns. However, we observe that there are common objectives shared among most think tanks. To determine these general objectives, we referred to the websites of more than 50 think tanks from different countries. We observed that the formulation of the objectives of each institution is in line with that institution’s main focus. The focus of the think tank is often included in its name: strategic visions, public policies, economic, social, health, or educational issues. Some of them combine in their name the objectives of research and training, others carry in their names their political and intellectual positions as leaning to the conservative right, the far left, or the liberal center. Some carry in their name a geographical dimension that defines the parameters of their activities in a geographical area, or as serving that area. More often than not, think tanks declare their specific objectives along with a wide range of general objectives that are shared with other think tanks. Some think tanks specialize in formulating new objectives that come to define and distinguish these think tanks amongst others.

Nonetheless, most think tanks share three types of objectives:

1. Produce knowledge and ideas to serve target groups in the government or private sector, through research and studies conducted by researchers at the institution, or through supporting researchers from outside the institution.
2. Improve the efficiency of researchers in conducting studies and research in the areas of interest through training programs and exchange of expertise.
3. Inform and educate specific groups of society or the public at large and promote the think tank’s ideas and orientations through means of publication and media coverage.

Many think tanks, however, shifted their mission fundamentally from

providing neutral policy ideas to facilitate decision-making in political or military administrations, to becoming lobbying and pressure groups that advocate select policies towards domestic or international issues. Think tanks are connected with networks of communications and influence on decision-makers in legislative, executive, and judicial branches, in addition to the economic and media sectors. According to Kubilay Yado Arin, “policymakers and their advisers are deeply integrated in a network that in the war of ideas provides their scholars with omnipresence in op-ed articles and interviews in the media and at universities.”²²⁵ Such networks provide policymakers with the needed information and influence to support or refute particular policies. Such information is utilized in the media, which in turn spins it in various forms of the ‘war of ideas’ between rival personalities, political parties, and governments. Arin adds:

More problematic seems to be the question of financial and institutional independence of research institutes from corporate and governmental interests in the increasing polarization of political parties...the degree of interference with academic research and the financial support for selective studies raises concerns for the adherence of scientific standards...To assert their influence on American politics against the competition of unionists and environmentalists, think tanks devote much of their time and work to media presence not just for drawing attention of politicians and for distributing their ideas but their degree of popularity raises the amount of donation.²²⁶

Think tanks have also become hubs for some thinkers espousing more adventurous ideological inclinations, and whose aspirations are in line with the interests of large corporations.

The competition over interests and influence between Europe and the United States exposed many of the unseen intellectual schemes harbored by both sides. Such schemes are the product of think tanks described by two French authors as the “brains of the war of ideas.”²²⁷

But think tanks are not all of the kind referred to above. There are hundreds of think tanks in the West that seek to construct strategic ‘intellectual buildings’ to serve the world and enable it to meet the social, economic, and environmental challenges.²²⁸

If the existence of think tanks reflects the richness of the intellectual building of any said society, then it may be said that the societies of the Muslim world are to a great extent intellectually poor. The need is urgent



Mapping Intellectual Building

to establish many specialized think tanks, because such institutions do not only play an important role in generating and developing ideas through collective research projects, but also provide an epistemological basis for making appropriate decisions or providing decision-makers with the necessary validations to make the most suitable decision.

Think tanks also serve the researchers who work in them. Since those who work in think tanks are not all on equal footing in terms of experience and competence in various subjects, their work together in research teams and focus groups provides them with opportunities to share experiences and enhance their capabilities, in addition to providing training opportunities for young researchers and scholars in these institutions.

While the objectives of the think tanks vary widely, most research conducted there share in common the objective of collecting, organizing, and analyzing basic data to reach valuable information that ultimately becomes the basis for decision-making. Some think tanks specialize in a particular type of information processing, such as surveying public opinion towards political, economic, educational issues or so forth, which help decision-makers make the appropriate decision. Public opinion is sometimes measured periodically to detect the direction of change over time, or change that occurs as a result of certain events, conditions, or policies.

Some forms of political analysis shed light on the results of public opinion polls and predict specific outcomes, such as election results. This in turn influences public impressions that the expected outcome of the elections will be identical or very close to the results of the public opinion polls. However, broad media coverage of opinion polls may itself be an effective tool in influencing public opinion towards the direction desired by the media propaganda.²²⁹ This, in fact, is tantamount to manipulation of public opinion.

Manipulation is the appropriate term in this context, which implies discontent; because it practices unfair or deceptive strategies. Yet most governments practice manipulation not only with rival countries, but even with their own people:

Edward Bernays, considered the father of the public relations industry, opened his well-known study of propaganda (entitled *Propaganda*) by describing '[t]he conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses' as 'an important element of democratic society'. 'Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society', Bernays observed, 'constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country.' We are governed, our minds molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested'... The manipulation of public opinion becomes

a more pressing issue – to both the manipulated and manipulators – when it is undertaken by agencies whose primary course of action is violence. ‘The general’, writes one British veteran, ‘wants his war almost as badly as the politician wants to butch up by starting one’. The consequential death and destruction requires a degree of public support if it is to be exercised for the necessary duration. Thus, the mechanisms for achieving public support are critical to foreign policy. For the House of Commons Defence Committee, ‘the disconnect between the Armed Forces and the public’ is ‘[o]ne of the greatest strategic threats to defence’. ‘Without a proactive communications strategy...there is a serious lack of support for defence amongst the public’.²³⁰

4. Research in the Topic of Think Tanks

In recent years, various research groups have been actively studying the subject of think tanks, delving deep into the nature of think tank work, what they seek to achieve, and the questions they stir. These groups also analyze the discourse the former present to the latter to justify their policies and decisions. Research groups are especially interested in the sources of funding and support of think tanks, and the extent to which think tanks are transparent about these sources. Among these research groups are a Georgia-based global group called Transparify, the US-based Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University, and a British foundation called Who Funds You: The UK Campaign for Think Tank Transparency.

Transparify published the results of a first-of-its-kind survey of 169 think tanks in 47 countries worldwide conducted in 2014. The data shows that some major think tanks still are not as financially transparent as they ought to be. The survey stirred much controversy within think tank circles, even before the results were announced. The survey classified the 169 think tanks according to six rating ranks ranging from highly transparent to completely non-transparent, using a star rating out of five stars. The chart below shows the distribution of think tanks according to their score.



Mapping Intellectual Building

The report revealed that one out of every three think tanks showed sufficient transparency about its sources of funding. Out of the 169 think tanks rated worldwide, only 21 are currently highly transparent (five star institutions). A further 14 are broadly transparent (four stars). Meanwhile, 134 think tanks range between disclosing limited funding information to disclosing no relevant information on funding (zero stars).

The 21 institutions characterized as highly transparent are spread across 16 countries. It is noteworthy that the report found more highly transparent think tanks in Montenegro than in the US, despite the fact that the US sample in the survey is seven times as large.

The report argues that: “Think tanks can play a positive role producing independent, in-depth policy research to inform politicians, media and the public. However, our data shows that some major think tanks still are not as financially transparent as they could be. A lack of transparency can raise questions about hidden agendas and thus undermine the effectiveness of the think tank sector as a whole.”²³¹

There are numerous efforts that seek to globalize think tanks and collect detailed information about their objectives, trends, and activities around the world. For this purpose, the Think Tank and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) was established in 1989 at the University of Pennsylvania with the objective of collecting data and conducting research on think tank trends and the role think tanks play as civil society actors in the policymaking process. Since 2007, the program has been publishing an annual global index of think tanks around the world, and provides technical assistance and capacity building programs in 81 countries. In its 2013 index, published in January 2014, TTCSP stated that it is “working to create regional and global networks of think tanks in an effort to facilitate collaboration and the production of a modest yet achievable set of global public goods.” The report adds: “Our goal is to create lasting institutional and state-level partnerships by engaging and mobilizing think tanks that have demonstrated their ability to produce high quality policy research and shape popular and elite opinion and actions for public good.”²³²

The 117-page report highlights the program’s motto, “Helping to bridge the gap between knowledge and policy.” It also declares the program’s objectives and scope of work summarized in three sentences:

- Researching the trends and challenges facing think tanks, policymakers, and policy-oriented civil society groups.
- Sustaining, strengthening, and building capacity of think tanks around the world.

- Maintaining the largest, most comprehensive database of over 6,000 think tanks.

A large group of experts, over 9,000 journalists, policymakers, public and private donors, think tanks, and functional and regional area specialists contributed to the 2013 index. Their role in the survey is to both nominate and rank public policy research centers of distinction for that year. The collected data was refined and validated by Expert Panels comprised of hundreds of members from a wide variety of backgrounds and disciplines based on defined standards and a rigorous scope of the nomination and selection processes, giving the project's leadership confidence that its index is the "most authoritative list of high performance think tanks in the world."²³³

A total of 6,826 think tanks from 182 countries were invited to participate in the process; their distribution based on region is: 1,984 in North America (29.07%), 1,818 in Europe (26.63%), 1,201 in Asia (17.59%), 662 in Central and South America (9.7%), 612 in Sub-Saharan Africa (8.97%), 511 in the Middle East and North Africa (7.49%), and 38 in Oceania (0.56%). In terms of countries, the United States topped the list with 1,828 think tanks, followed by China (426), the UK (287), India (287), Germany (194), France (177), Argentina (137), Russia (122), Japan (108), and Canada (96).

The 2013 Index featured a number of new or modified categories compared to previous indices, including new categories of groups of countries, and new separate categories dealing with the top defense and national security think tanks and another related to the top foreign policy and international affairs think tanks. Other new categories include best institutional collaboration involving two or more think tanks, best think tank network, best think tank conference, best managed think tank, best new idea or paradigm developed by a think tank, and best transdisciplinary research program at a think tank.²³⁴

Despite many improvements and modifications of the index in the past years, the project management nonetheless acknowledges that the index is not error-free and has its fair share of limitations, which they continually seek to overcome.

The indexing process employed a large set of criteria. The criteria include the following: the quality and commitment of the think tank's leadership to effectively manage the mission and programs, mobilizing the financial and human resources necessary to fulfill the mission, independence and impact of the think tank, the quality and reputation of the staff, the ability to recruit

Mapping Intellectual Building

and retain elite scholars and analysts, the academic rigor of the research conducted, the number and reach of its publications, the impact of its research and programs on policymakers and other policy actors, its reputation and name recognition with policymakers and civil society actors, standards and policies for producing rigorous evidence based research and analysis, access to key institutions and ability to reach and connect with key audiences and personnel, ability to develop effective networks and partnerships with other think tanks, overall output and diversity of activities, the effective transmission and utilization of policy reports and recommendations by policymakers, usefulness of its information, ability to use electronic, print and the new media to communicate and reach key audiences, its media reputation and number of appearances, website and digital presence, the level, diversity and stability of funding and the ability to effectively fulfill the terms of donors and funders (financial stewardship), the ability to bridge the gap between the academic and policymaking communities, the ability to produce new knowledge and innovative policy proposals or alternative ideas, and the impact on society, among many others.²³⁵

The report categorizes think tanks based on top think tanks in the world (3 tables), top think tanks by region (10 tables of 10 regions), by area of research (12 tables of areas of specialization), and by special achievement (22 tables), which presents a more holistic description of the nature of work of these think tanks on the global level.

In the general ranking of the top think tanks in the world, according to overall criteria, the US-based Brookings Institution topped the list, followed by Chatham House (UK), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (US), Center for Strategic and International Studies (US), Stockholm International peace Research Institute SIPRI (Sweden), Bruegel (Belgium), Council on Foreign Relations (US), Rand Corporation (US), International Institute for Strategic Studies (UK), and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (US). Think tanks from other countries in the top list included one from Germany in 12th place, Japan in 13th, China in 20th, Brazil in 21st, Canada in 22nd, France in 25th, and in 28th place is the Carnegie Moscow Center in Russia. Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Egypt came in 48th place, the Center for Civil Society in India in 50th place, the Kenya-based African Economic Research Consortium in 62nd place, the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation TESEV in 74th place, The Indonesia-based Center for Strategic and International Studies in 77th place, the Malaysia-based Center for Public Policy Studies in 90th place, and the Saudi Arabia-based Gulf Research Center in 143rd place.

The index did not have a special category for think tanks in the Arab world, but rather included Arab countries within the category of the Middle East and North Africa region, which includes Israel, Turkey, and Iran as well. The category listed the best 50 think tanks in the region, topped by Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (Egypt), followed by Brookings Doha Center (Qatar), Center for Economic and Policy Studies EDAM (Turkey), Carnegie Middle East Center (Lebanon), Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) FNA Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies (Israel), Al Jazeera Center for Studies (Qatar), Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation TESEV (Turkey), Gulf Research Center (Saudi Arabia), Arab Thought Forum (Jordan), and Begin Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (Israel). Turkey had a share of 4 think tanks in the top list, Iran had one, and Israel had 11 think tanks. In terms of Arab countries, Egypt had nine think tanks, UAE had four, while Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, and Lebanon had three think tanks each. Morocco and Bahrain had two think tanks, while Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen each had one think tank in this category.

In terms of top think tanks by area of research, the top defense and national security think tanks included first the Center for Strategic and International (US), followed by RAND Corporation (US), International Institute for Strategic Studies (UK), Brookings Institution (US), and Chatham House (UK). Also appearing in the defense and national security list in 19th place is the Regional Center for Strategic Studies in Cairo (Egypt), and the 22nd place Al-Ahram Center for Strategic and Political Studies (Egypt), in 46th place came the Center for Arab Unity Studies (Lebanon), and in 55th place is the Center for Strategic Studies (Jordan).

In the field of Domestic Economic Policy, the Brookings Institution (US) topped the list, followed by the National Bureau of Economic Research (US), and the Adam Smith Institute (UK). The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies came in 74th place out of 80 think tanks in this sub-category.

In the field of Education Policy, the top five think tanks in this sub-category are based in the United States, topped by the Brookings Institution. Not a single Arab think tank is distinguished among the top 50 think tanks in the education policy field.

In the field of Energy and Resource Policy, the list is topped by the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies (UK), followed by five think tanks in the US, then the Center for Science of Environment, Resources, and Energy (Japan), then TERI: The Energy and Resource Institute (India), and the Energy Studies Institute (Singapore). No Arab think tanks were included in this sub-category.

Mapping Intellectual Building

In terms of research on the environment, the list is topped by the World Resources Institute (US), followed by the Stockholm Environment Institute (Sweden), and then followed by five other US-based think tanks. No Arab think tanks are included in this list of 70 think tanks.

In the field of foreign policy and international affairs research, the Brookings Institution (US) again topped the list, followed by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (US), and Chatham House (UK). Two Arab think tanks appear among the 65 others in this sub-category, including Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Egypt came in 14th place, and the Center for Strategic Studies in Jordan came in 47th place.

In the field of Health Policy, the list is topped by the Cambridge Center for Health Services Research (UK), followed by three US-based think tanks, they are: Bloomberg School of Public Health Research Centers, RAND Corporation, and Brookings Institution. No Arab think tanks are included in the list of 30 institutions.

The top science and technology think tanks in the world included Max Planck Institute (Germany) in 1st place, followed by MIT Science, Technology, and Society Program (US), Information and Technology and Innovation Foundation (US), RAND Corporation (US), and the Center for Development and Research ZEF (Germany). No Arab think tanks appeared in the list of top institutions in this field.

US think tanks again topped the list of best think tanks in the field of Social Policy, with Brookings Institution ranked 1st place, followed by the Urban Institute, and RAND Corporation. The Canada-based Fraser Institute ranked 4th in this sub-category. Arab think tanks were also absent from this list.

The best-ranked think tanks in the field of transparency and good governance are headed by Transparency International (Germany), followed by Freedom House (US), then four UK-based think tanks. No Arab think tanks were included in the list.

In the category of best new idea or paradigm developed by a think tank, the list is topped by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (US), followed by Peterson Institute for International Economics (US), then Chatham House (UK), and BRICS Policy Center in Brazil. The Egypt-based Regional Center for Strategic Studies in Cairo came in 22nd place. The two Malaysia-based think tanks, the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute, and the Center for Public Policy Studies, appeared in the list of 40 think tanks, ranking in 29th place and 37th place respectively.

For best think tanks with political party affiliation, three Germany-based think tanks topped the list, they are Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Friedrich

Ebert Foundation, and Heinrich Boll Stiftung, followed by two UK-based think tanks, Demos and the Fabian Society. Out of the list of 30 think tanks, two US-based think tanks are included, they are the Progressive Policy Institute in 11th place, and the New Democrat Network in 15th place. No Arab think tanks appear in the list.

The best think tanks ranked in terms of their affiliation with universities are topped by the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs affiliated with Harvard University (US), followed by IDEAS/Public Policy Group affiliated with the London School of Economics and Political Science (UK), and then the Center for International Studies and Research (CERI) affiliated with Sciences Po (France). Only one Arab think tank appears in the list of 40 think tanks, ranking in 40th place is Al-Mostansiriyah Center for Arab and International Studies affiliated with Al-Mostansiriyah University in Iraq.

The importance of this index lies not only in its results, but also in the implementation of a methodology characterized by a high degree of controls, criteria, and a series of defined procedures developed by a large number of researchers and experts. This type of study has an impact in raising the awareness of think tanks administrations to a variety of aspects concerning think tank work that were not previously prioritized. Stirring up questions regarding important aspects included in the sub-categories and criteria of the selection and ranking process helps re-evaluate and restructure think tank work and priorities.

Certainly, self-evaluation of the performance of any institution is an essential task. Many institutions include evaluation entities within the organizational administrative structure. Nonetheless, there remains particular significance for evaluation of institutional work from outside entities.

- A brainstorming session may be useful in this context, to discuss the importance of the two evaluation methods, the internal and external ones, and the differences that may arise in the results of the two evaluations.

Compared with other sources of knowledge, such as universities, government agencies, businesses, and the media, think tanks – in the US in particular – practice a great degree of pressure and influence on citizens and legislators in their ways of understanding the world. Such think tanks profoundly influence the government, the media, and the political role of intellectuals. During the past half century, there have not been new transformations that influenced the American political system and actual legislations as much as think tanks. Nonetheless, the analysis of this phenomenon has remained within a very narrow scope.

Mapping Intellectual Building

Recently, some specialized books have been published that reveal the extent to which think tanks in the United States have influenced American policy-making in the White House and Congress, particularly foreign policy. Among the most influential think tanks in this area are the Brookings Institution, the Heritage Foundation, and the Project for the New American Century. Some prominent think tanks have become major players in the political arena, and during the previous few decades, they became an essential element of the American political structure considering their role in providing advice to presidents and policy-makers and providing expert testimonies at congressional hearings.

Many of the reports prepared by think tanks, upon which important decisions were made, have remained controversial for years.²³⁶ Books and studies conducted on the reality of US think tanks reveal that there is lack of transparency and basic information about these think tanks, their management, and the influence they wield in Washington, including the preferential treatment they receive as tax-exempt institutions. Such studies also find that think tanks are better equipped to successfully research and analyze important issues than they can analyze their own deficiencies and shortcomings, or recognize their need to improve the quality of their work. This underscores the need for fundamental changes in think tank management patterns in a manner that directs needed research efforts to study and address the long-term implications of the policy recommendations they provide particularly in the security, defense, economic, and environmental fields. This is particularly necessary considering that think tanks often compete in providing their policy recommendations in response to urgent and vital issues.²³⁷

5. Think Tanks and the Media

Think tanks rely heavily on the media. There are common ideological trends between some think tanks and some media outlets, especially television networks watched by millions of people. These outlets regularly host think tank experts and spotlight reports and recommendations produced by these institutions. Many media outlets are directly affiliated with think tanks; for example: The Council on Foreign Relations publishes *Foreign Affairs*, a widely-circulated and influential magazine. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace published *Foreign Policy* magazine for many years before selling it to the Washington Post Company in 2008. The Middle East Institute publishes the *Middle East Journal*. Meanwhile, the United States

Institute of Peace publishes a series of Special Reports and Peace Briefs, and the Center for Defense Information produces 'Defense Monitor.'

RAND Corporation publishes the quarterly scholarly *RAND Journal of Economics*, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies published *The Washington Quarterly* up until Spring 2014. The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars publishes the *Wilson Quarterly* magazine, and *Newsweek* magazine had maintained relationships with the Democratic Leadership Council. Many journalists go on to head think tanks, as did Steve Coll, the former managing editor of the *Washington Post*, who went on to serve as the president and CEO of the New America Foundation.

Many personalities enjoy a strong presence in both think tanks and the media. William Kristol, for example, is an American neoconservative who co-founded the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), is a member of the Policy Advisory Board for the Ethics and Public Policy Center, and a director of the Foreign Policy Initiative. In the media field, he co-established the conservative newsmagazine *The Weekly Standard*, and has been a regular panelist, political commentator, and columnist for a number of US media outlets.

There are also many journalists who work in media outlets, whether newspapers, magazines, or television networks, who are also researchers at think tanks, such as Fareed Zakaria, who is affiliated with think tanks such as the Council on Foreign Relations and the New America Foundation. He has been a managing editor of *Foreign Affairs*, columnist for *Newsweek* magazine, editor *Newsweek International*, and editor-at-large of *Time* magazine, among other contributions to media outlets. He has been presenting several TV programs on international affairs, and is a columnist for the *Washington Post*.

In an article²³⁸ published by *Transparify*, the author Gin Armstrong, an analyst at a watchdog research group called the Public Accountability Initiative, discusses the nature of the relationship between the media and think tanks, and laments that the media often fails to mention ties between the defense industry and think tanks in the context of national security debates.²³⁹ The article is an illustrative example of the media coverage of prominent think tanks' reports and studies, and in this case, the topic is whether the US should intervene in the Syrian crisis.

The author notes that during the course of only one month in summer 2013, seven prominent think tanks were cited 144 times in major US media outlets in the context of ongoing debates on the anticipated US role in Syria. In reporting her findings, Armstrong states:

Mapping Intellectual Building

My colleagues and I at the Public Accountability Initiative found that the media was dominated by defense industry-backed individuals and institutions, the majority of whom either did not disclose their industry ties or, in the case of analysts from think tanks, did not disclose funding their institutions received from the industry. The Brookings Institution, Center for Strategic and International Studies, and The Institute for the Study of War were the most cited think tanks from our dataset.

Experts with The Brookings Institution were cited in 31 articles on Syria in our dataset...Brookings is an influential think tank that is presented in the media as an independent authority; yet, it receives millions in funding from the defense industry, including USD 1-2.5 million from Booz Allen Hamilton and USD 50,000-100,000 from Boeing,²⁴⁰ General Dynamics, Lockheed Martin,²⁴¹ Northrop Grumman,²⁴² and Palantir Technologies. Brookings Executive Education's Advisory Council Chair, Ronald Sanders, is a Vice President and Senior Fellow at Booz Allen Hamilton.²⁴³

The Center for Strategic and International Studies was cited in 30 articles on Syria. CSIS has ample individual connections to the defense industry through its advisors and trustees, including CSIS Senior Advisor Margaret Sidney Ashworth, who is Corporate Vice President for Government Relations at Northrop Grumman...

Analysts representing The Institute for the Study of War were cited in 22 articles on Syria in our dataset. A Wall Street Journal op-ed by former ISW Senior Research Analyst Elizabeth O'Bagy was cited by Secretary John Kerry and Senator John McCain during congressional hearings in their effort to justify intervention. ISW's "Corporate Council" represents a who's who of the defense industry...ISW's ties to these companies were not disclosed in O'Bagy's article.²⁴⁴

What is important in this example of the Armstrong's article is that the media outlets that published these articles did not disclose the think tank's extensive ties to the defense industry, not only regarding the generous funding they receive from the defense industry, but also in terms of the prominent figures who work at these think tanks and at the defense industry at the same time.

The idea of marketing ideas in the manner that material products are marketed has been heavily contested. An example of this is the media coverage of the Canada-based Fraser Institute, which employs an advanced strategy of connecting with main media outlets and social networking sites to inform the audience of information about the political choices they face. As a result, policies follow a line 'approved' by public opinion. An example of marketing ideas is that in 2011, Fraser Institute released research reports

on various fields such as economic welfare, healthcare, world energy policies, and taxes, among others, that generated 16,745 mentions in Canadian and international media.²⁴⁵

Journalists usually refer to experts and researchers at think tanks to access information to fill their news reports or columns. In return, think tank researchers find fame and reputation for themselves through media outlets, where they are hosted as ‘experts’ whose opinions and experiences are highlighted in news and talk shows on TV, radio, and in the press. Many researchers are regular contributors of articles and analysis in more than one newspaper at a time. In recent years, the presence of think tank experts has multiplied through electronic news outlets. Some think tanks present regular programs, such as the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, which presents a weekly radio and television show called ‘Dialogue,’ broadcasted over 200 stations and attracts over 200,000 listeners. Some think tanks such as Brookings and the Heritage Foundation have TV studios that broadcast weekly programs through PBS, the public broadcasting service that used to receive funding from the US government. Think tank experts can be seen on a regular basis appearing on major news networks such as CNN and others.

There have been numerous studies and books that document the bias displayed by media outlets, and how public perceptions are shaped by what people hear from politicians and political commentators. One such book, authored by Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky entitled *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, finds that:

In contrast to the standard conception of the media as cantankerous, obstinate, and ubiquitous in their search for truth and their independence of authority, we have spelled out and applied a propaganda model that indeed sees the media as serving a ‘societal purpose,’ but not that of enabling the public to assert meaningful control over the political process by providing them with the information needed for the intelligent discharge of political responsibilities. On the contrary, a propaganda model suggests that the ‘societal purpose’ of the media is to inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state. The media serve this purpose in many ways: through selection of topics, distribution of concerns, framing of issues, filtering of information, emphasis and tone, and by keeping debate within the bounds of acceptable premises.²⁴⁶

6. Think Tanks in the Arab World

Think tanks in contemporary societies have become one of the features of scientific, cultural, and civilizational progress that reflects the vitality of society and its ability to communicate, engage, and employ new developments in intellectual and practical experiences. It is the political and cultural environment of society and its civilizational development that provide for think tanks the capacity to operate effectively and have significant influence, facilitated through legislative frameworks, financial support, political and intellectual freedoms, and actual independence.

It is indeed sad to observe the poverty of Arab efforts in research and studies, particularly those that deal with documenting and analyzing statistical and evaluative data on prevailing issues in the Arab world. The available data of this kind is more or less based on individual experiences and personal impressions.²⁴⁷ A researcher who wants to find valuable information about the Arab world would need to refer to research conducted by foreign institutions. The subject of think tanks in the Arab world, in this context, is no different from other subjects, in terms of the poverty of statistical data and evaluative measures.

The data provided by studies and scientific research ought to be the basis upon which officials in Arab countries make decisions, especially in political, economic, and security issues. When data is needed, its sources will most certainly come from international organizations' reports, particularly the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and the reports produced by American and European think tanks.

It is noteworthy that international, American, and European institutions do not often conduct separate studies about the Arab world, but rather include Arab countries within the greater region they describe as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

In order to find data particular to the Arab world in foreign studies, you must make an additional effort to separate the data of Arab countries from the data of the overall MENA region. This is illustrated in the data provided by the US-based University of Pennsylvania's annual *Global Go To Think Tank Index Reports*, such as the 2013 index report mentioned previously.

Irrespective of the real intentions of the approach in addressing issues particular to the Arab world, we may consider other implications of this approach that studies Arab countries within the overall MENA region:

Is not the term 'Arab World' neglected and instead an emphasis placed on usage of the term 'Middle East'? Is there not a separation of the African wing of the Arab World by emphasizing that there is a 'North Africa' that is added to the name given to the region "Middle East and North Africa"?

What other implications may be construed from this approach to the region?

In surveying the presence of Arab think tanks in the 2013 index, we find that the number of research institutions in the Arab world that merit being labelled ‘think tanks’ totaled 387 institutions, distributed over the member states of the Arab League, with the exception of Somalia, Djibouti, and the Comoros. Arab think tanks constitute 5.7 percent of the 6,826 think tanks considered in the report. Egypt had the highest number of think tanks (55), followed by Palestine and Iraq (43 each), Jordan (40), Tunisia (39), Yemen and Morocco (30 each), Lebanon (27), UAE (14), Algeria (12), Kuwait (11), Qatar (10) and Saudi Arabia (7).

The list of the top 100 think tanks outside the United States shows only one Arab think tank, Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Egypt, ranking in 65th place. Out of the top 50 think tanks in the MENA region, 11 are based in Israel, and five in Turkey. Among the top five think tanks in the MENA region are the Brookings Doha Center in Qatar and the Carnegie Middle East Center in Lebanon, both of which are branches of US-based think tanks. Al-Ahram Center ranked first, and other Arab think tanks in the top 10 in the region include Al-Jazeera Center for Studies in Qatar, the Gulf Research Center in Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Thought Forum in Jordan, while the other top ranks are dominated by Turkish and Israeli think tanks.²⁴⁸

The ‘research poverty’ in the Arab world is evident in the modest number of Arab think tanks compared to other countries and regions in the world. But this poverty is also reflected in other aspects of no less significance than mere numbers, but rather in qualitative terms; Arab think tanks scored severely ‘modest’ ranks in terms of criteria related to the quality of work. Among the 28 suggested Nomination and Ranking Criteria in the 2013 index are ones related to the extent to which a think tank is effective in producing innovative and alternative ideas and programs, the impact of an institution in promoting positive changes in social values and improving quality of life, the ability to include new voices in the policy-making process, a demonstrated commitment to standards and policies for producing rigorous evidence-based research and analysis that are independent of personal, organizational, or financial interests, and the ability to recruit and retain elite scholars and analysts, among many others.²⁴⁹ Such criteria are essential for the quality and reputation of think tank productions, of which Arab think tanks, in general, seem to rank low.

Based on the personal experience of the author of these lines, it can be said that the quality of most of the research produced by the think tanks in Arab countries is marked by weakness in terms of research design and methodology in collecting and analyzing data. Even when good quality

Mapping Intellectual Building

research is produced, it rarely reaches decision-makers to benefit from it, and if it does reach them, it is rarely taken into consideration, since decision-makers regularly depend on other frames of reference.

There are, however, many Arabs or persons of Arab descent who work, and excel, at foreign think tanks, and many even established think tanks in the West. For example, Hisham Sharabi, of Palestinian origin, established the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University. Many Arabs and Arab-American researchers work at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, including the former Jordanian minister Marwan Muasher, who is the vice president for studies at Carnegie and oversees research in Washington and Beirut on issues related to the Middle East. For his part, James Zogby founded the Arab American Institute, and conducts public opinion polls and surveys. Radwan Masmoudi, of Tunisian origin, is president of the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy in Washington DC, and Hassan Mneimneh, of Lebanese origin, was a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and affiliated with other prominent think tanks as well.

But for Arab think tanks, it is often that the sources of information for research consist of press articles that express the impressions and inclinations of their authors, or papers presented at conferences lack accurate data and do not reflect real scientific research. More often than not, the data available in such research is not scientifically or accurately documented. For example, a news article states that “the percentage of government spending on think tanks in the Arab world, according to latest statistics, reached around 90.8%, while private sector funding to think tanks is only around 9.2%.” The citation of this data was limited to “this is what Dr... Secretary General of the National Council for Scientific Research in Lebanon confirmed.”²⁵⁰ Considering the importance of this statistical information, we find that dozens of other press articles relay this information based on this source, without any reference to actual studies that produced these statistics.

The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, based in Doha, published a study in 2013 on the role of research centers in the Arab world, their current reality, and the conditions for transitioning towards greater effectiveness.²⁵¹ The study is mainly based on articles published mostly on websites. Out of the 50 citation footnotes, 39 are online website references, two of which are referenced 12 times. The remaining footnotes include two explanatory notes, with no references, and only five citations of books or research published in professional journals. The four remaining footnotes cite papers presented at think tank conferences. The statistical information

related to Arab think tanks are referenced from the University of Pennsylvania 2011 Global Go to Think Tank Index Report, which is published on the internet as well.

When some institutions are eager to produce a guide for think tanks in Arab countries, we expect to find comprehensive statistical data, but soon find ourselves greatly disappointed. An example of this is the guide produced in 2011 by a group of research centers with a comprehensive-sounding title: "A Guide to Studies Centers and Institutes of Research, Thought, and Opinion in the Arab World." The data included in the guide about the number of think tanks in the Middle East, including Arab countries, depended on two documents: the first is the 2003 UNDP report on Arab Human Development, and the second is the University of Pennsylvania's 2011 Global Go to Think Tank Index Report. Meanwhile, the think tanks that contributed to preparing the guide were limited in number, coming only from institutions in Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine.²⁵²

Our judgment on the lack of original studies and research conducted on the topic of think tanks in the Arab world is perhaps close to reality, but this does not rule out some exceptions. A unique study was conducted by Walid Abd al-Hadi, funded by the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at the American University of Beirut, on the role of research centers in political decision-making in Jordan.²⁵³ The study collected data from primary sources and analyzed them to arrive at specific results. It found that 80% of Jordanian government institutions have budgets for research and scientific studies, yet the percentage of sources of government information – internal sources – used for decisions made by these institutions does not exceed 20%. It further found that the percentage of information gathered by these institutions from other public and private universities and research centers also does not exceed 20%. Meanwhile, half of government-funded research centers received requests from governmental institutions to conduct specific studies, whereas the other half did not receive any such requests. The study argues that government-funded research institutions, in general "provide reports to governmental institutions, but these reports are conducted mostly in the form of routine work, and are used as sources of information rather than suggestions for alternatives to decisions."²⁵⁴

The study reached conclusions on a number of topics such as the relationship between research centers and the decision-making process in Jordan, the method in which Jordanian research centers address hot topics such as the disruptive events in the southern city of Ma'an and the electoral system. It concludes that Jordanian research centers, in general, work in "a

Mapping Intellectual Building

framework of a politically, economically, and socially pressuring environment, and that the relationship between these centers and political and economic decision-making entities is nothing but an irregular relationship, which is often one-sided on the part of the centers more than there is any clear role for decision-making entities. On the other hand, it is clear that public research centers are closer to decision-makers than private research centers, but a review of what has been achieved by these public centers does not indicate that this relationship has any clear impact.”²⁵⁵

Amidst the absence of vigorous Arab statistical studies on the reality of think tanks in the Arab world, we find ourselves compelled to search for such information from press articles published on the internet. However, most such articles are reduced to complaining, lamenting, and wailing at the level of deficit, backwardness, and shortcomings of Arab think tanks, providing examples of the striking differences in the reality of these centers compared to their counterparts in other countries.

It is noteworthy, however, that think tanks have multiplied and spread widely in Arab countries in recent years. This development may be described in three aspects:

First is the establishment of branches of foreign think tanks in Arab capitals. These days, you can rarely find a reputable American think tank that does not have one or more branches in Arab countries.

Second is the establishment of local research and studies centers that conduct scholarly activities in the form of research projects, seminars, and conferences, in cooperation with – and with generous funding from – foreign think tanks.

Third is the establishment of local centers for research, consultancy, and training, which market themselves through relying on foreign expertise, particularly in the field of human development or project management training programs. The material used in these programs are mostly dependent on translated foreign material, and their certificates are accredited by foreign institutions. We rarely find an advertisement for such programs that does not highlight affiliation with a foreign institution or university, or that the expert trainer is a foreign specialist.

Below is a sample of an announcement for a course organized at a local research center in an Arab country:

“This [course] comes... as a result of the recent increase in the role played by think tanks in influencing the policy-making process. In pursuit of achieving this role, an agreement was reached with a select group of international experts and specialists from...University, headed by Professor... , who has over thirty years of experience in establishing and managing think tanks in the United States and Europe, and is the author of the largest and most extensive publications in this field. Certificates issued to participants are awarded by the University of... in addition to another certificate from the Center for Information. The Council of Ministers supports this decision...”

7. Muslim Issues in Western Think Tanks

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the interest of Western think tanks shifted from the red threat, posed by the Soviet Union, to the green threat, posed by the Muslim world. Western governments soon took to classifying these groups as terror groups, and exerted great pressure on countries of the Muslim world to confront these groups, curb their influence, and cut their sources of funding and recruitment.

The term ‘clash of civilizations’ was one of the most oft-quoted terms in the discourse on the relationship between Islam and the West during the last quarter of the twentieth century. The term is not strange to the literature of the history of ideas, but the vigorous use of the term towards the end of the Cold War perhaps began with the adoption of this term as the basis of the theory posed by American orientalist scholar Bernard Lewis to explain what he called “the roots of Muslim rage,” which was the title of a lengthy article he wrote in *The Atlantic* magazine in September 1990.²⁵⁶ The term was soon adopted and its significance was widened by the conservative think tank, the American Enterprise Institute, most notably in a lecture given by Samuel Huntington in 1992. Huntington expounded this thesis in a lengthy article published in *Foreign Affairs* magazine in 1993, entitled “The Clash of Civilizations?”²⁵⁷ Huntington further expanded on this concept to book length in 1996, under the title “The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.” Both Lewis and Huntington are experts at conservative think tanks in the United States, particularly the American Enterprise Institute,²⁵⁸ and both the aforementioned magazines have close ties with these think tanks.

Huntington’s interest and writings on Islam and Muslims intensified in the aftermath of the September 11th, 2001 attacks, and his attention focused on the challenges that face Western civilization, particularly from the Muslim and Chinese civilizations. In December 2001, Huntington wrote another widely quoted article in *Newsweek* magazine entitled “The Age of Muslim Wars,”²⁵⁹ in which he reiterated his vision. In explaining the implications of these wars, he argued that his theory has indeed materialized, and that ‘Muslim wars’ will be the hallmark of the twenty-first century.

It is rare to find an American think tank that does not have interest in the affairs of the Muslim world, especially when important political events occur in Muslim-majority countries, which occur quite often. It is therefore natural that the events of the ‘Arab Spring’ should be the focus of attention not only of political and military decision makers, but also of think tanks from across the ideological and intellectual spectrum. An article published

in *‘al-Siyāsah al-Duwalīyah’* (International Politics) magazine, a publication of Al-Ahram Foundation in Egypt, surveyed the views of three American think tanks vis-à-vis the January 25th, 2011 revolution in Egypt: the American Enterprise Institute, Brookings Institution, and the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. The article aimed to elucidate these think tanks’ approach and evaluation of the events in Egypt, including the regime’s method of dealing with protesters’ demands, political life in post-Mubarak Egypt, and the effect of such developments on US interests and its relationship with its Egyptian ally.²⁶⁰

In June 2014, *The Irish Times* published an article in its Religion and Beliefs section by Patsy McGarry entitled “Ireland closest to Islamic economic teachings” about the results of a study conducted by two professors at George Washington University in Washington DC. The article conveys the findings of the study from an interview of the BBC with Dr. Hossein Askari, who conducted the study with his colleague Dr. Scheherazde Rehman. The two researchers used what they call ‘Islamicity index’ to evaluate how compliant countries are with ideals of the Qur’an in various areas of a society’s economic achievement, governance, human and political rights, and international relations. Out of the 208 countries studied, Askari says that based on that index “Muslim countries do very badly,” and accuses them of using religion as an instrument of power. Askari had previously said that “we must emphasize that many countries that profess Islam and are called Islamic are unjust, corrupt, and underdeveloped and are in fact not ‘Islamic’ by any stretch of the imagination.”²⁶¹

The results of the study show that the top 10 countries in terms of how closely their policies and achievements reflect Islamic economic teachings are Ireland, Denmark, Luxembourg, Sweden, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Singapore, Finland, Norway, and Belgium. Malaysia ranked 33rd, Kuwait 42nd, whereas other non-Muslim countries like the United States and the Netherlands rank 15th, France 17th, and Israel 27th, outranking most Muslim-majority countries, none of which made the top 25 in terms of commitment to Qur’anic economic values. No Arab country ranks in the top 50 either, and in stark contrast, Saudi Arabia ranks 91st, and Qatar ranks 111th. Askari notes that in their ‘overall Islamicity index,’ a measure that encompasses laws and governance, human and political rights, international relations, and economic factors, the rankings were similar: “New Zealand, Luxembourg, Ireland, Iceland, Finland, Denmark, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the Netherlands; and again, only Malaysia (38) and Kuwait (48) make it in the top 50 from Muslim countries.”²⁶²

Askari concludes that:

If a country, society, or community displays characteristics such as unelected, corrupt, oppressive, and unjust rulers, inequality before the law, unequal opportunities for human development, absence of freedom of choice (including that of religion), opulence alongside poverty, force, and aggression as the instruments of conflict resolution as opposed to dialogue and reconciliation, and, above all, the prevalence of injustice of any kind, it is *prima facie* evidence that it is not an Islamic community.²⁶³

Various other studies similarly reveal that many non-Muslim countries practice the values that Islam seeks to achieve far more than is achieved for the citizens of Muslim countries, especially the values of justice, equality, rule of law, equal opportunities, economic and security interests, etc. The results reported in these studies are consistent with the general impressions of the majority of Muslim and non-Muslim readers. Yet, when looking at the manifestations of underdevelopment in Muslim countries, it is, nevertheless, difficult to judge the validity of the research design of these studies, from a scientific perspective.

We observe that the results of the study are determined by the type of questions that the research tries to answer. When the questions are focused on the political system and the quality of rulers, the results will be quite different from other results, such as when the questions are focused on the sentiments and patterns of behavior of ordinary people. When non-Muslim researchers conduct studies on the reality of adherence to Islam in the Muslim world, the issues addressed are different, and hence the results are quite different as well. For example, a world-wide survey conducted by the US-based Pew Research Center did not raise questions about the rulers or the political systems; hence, its results were reassuring in regard to Islamic sentiments. It found that most Muslims around the world are deeply committed to their faith, and want Islamic teachings to shape their personal lives, societies, and that they want Islamic law (Shari'ah) to be the official law of the land.²⁶⁴

It is worth mentioning that studies conducted in the West that address the topic of values often exceed the individual moral dimension and instead address the general social manifestations and representations of values, such as issues of freedoms, human rights, justice, equality, rule of law, equal opportunities, and their manifestations in society. As for topics of Western society's dealings with other peoples, and the manifestations of such values in the foreign policy of Western societies, these are completely different issues.

Mapping Intellectual Building

Western studies that criticize Western societies in regard to social values, foreign policy, human rights and other such values are typically more numerous and more severely critical than the criticism that we Muslims or Arabs apply to these societies. These critical studies are also more severe than the criticism that we ourselves place on the manifestations of weakness, underdevelopment, and absence of values in our own societies. The issue posed here is not a matter of comparison between us and them, for every society has its pros and cons, and such differential is based on the standard used for comparison.

Many people view research results in light of their own prevailing impressions. In the aforementioned study on the absence of Islamic values in Muslim countries, it would not be surprising that the vast majority of people would not hesitate to accept the findings of the research because they match the reality they see, and therefore have no reason to question the validity of the research design or the personal or political motives of the researchers.

Anyone who has experience in research knows that research design, however sophisticated, is susceptible to internal and external honesty and validity flaws. Rarely does a research escape such flaws, even in experimental research. The claim that the research results are questionable due to defects in the research design does not mean much in practical terms, unless the results collide with the preconceived attitudes and positions that shape the reaction of the reader.

The main determinant for results of research that have political, economic and social implications is the way in which the research questions are formulated and the choice of criteria that are used to judge phenomena. It is difficult to vindicate the formulation of questions and judgment criteria from the subjectivity that leads to desired answers. American studies that question the results of research and studies conducted by American think tanks are indeed numerous, particularly in the research fields of foreign policy, international relations, economic competition, and the environment, among others. When comparing the motivations of a researcher towards an issue related to Islam and Muslims, in terms of a researcher being a Muslim or a non-Muslim, we find that there are other determinants that determine findings. Hence, it is easy to design questions that lead to desired results.

Media promotion and commercial marketing of research results are in fact among the most serious risks facing research. The risks may occur in any of the stages of research: in the design, implementation, and in the release of results. Two phenomena may be observed in this context:

- The first phenomenon is concerned with the manner in which the media presents the results of the research, starting with the title, then mentioning specific results while neglecting or marginalizing other results, and finally in the selection of those who comment on them.
- The second phenomenon is related to the consumer and market promotion of specific research products. Most recently, while conducting research for this section of the book, I read about the scandal in medical research reported by the Chronicle of Higher Education in its July 2014 edition.²⁶⁵ The issue has been in the courts for over a year, related to medical research misconduct and errors in statistical design and analysis of data in the development of drugs used to treat hypertension high blood pressure.

8. Prominent Think Tanks Around the World

1. *The Brookings Institution*²⁶⁶

The Brookings Institution traces its beginnings to 1916. It is named after Robert S. Brookings (1850-1932), a successful American businessman and philanthropist. Along with a group of leading government reformers, they founded the Institute for Government Research, devoted to fact-based analysis of public policy issues at the US national level and seeking to bring science to the study of government. Brookings then created two sister organizations: the Institute of Economics and a graduate school in Public Policy. In 1927, the three organizations were merged to form the present-day Brookings institution.

The mission of the institute is to promote, conduct and foster research in the broad fields of economics, government administration and the political and social sciences. It quickly became, and remains, the most influential think tank in the United States and the world. Numerous US presidents and congressional leaders have praised the value of studies prepared by Brookings' experts and researchers and their influence in the making of important domestic and foreign policy decisions. Many of the legislations proposed to Congress were drafted at this think tank.

2. *Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House)*²⁶⁷

Chatham House was founded in 1920 in London, and along with its world-famous Chatham House Rule, is concerned with freedom of expression, open debate, and confidential discussion that provides anonymity to

Mapping Intellectual Building

speakers and encourages openness and sharing of information. The Institute is a leading global reference for independent and rigorous analysis and influential views on how to build a secure and prosperous world. It deals with critical global, regional and country-specific challenges and opportunities. It engages governments, the private sector, civil society and its members in open debate and confidential discussion on the most significant developments in international affairs. It presents ideas and proposals to policy-makers and stakeholders who influence the decision-making process, on how to employ these ideas from the near- to the long-term.

Its research areas include issues related to energy, the environment, resources, the global economy, international security, international law, and regional studies. Chatham House consistently ranks highly in the University of Pennsylvania's annual Global Go To Think Tank Index, ranking No. 1 think-tank outside the US for nine consecutive years, and No. 2 worldwide for six consecutive years.

*3. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)*²⁶⁸

Founded in 1977, it is the premier academic organization and comprehensive research center of the People's Republic of China in the fields of philosophy, social sciences, and policy-making. It is considered the top think tank in Asia. CASS is now made up of 31 research institutes and 45 research centers, which carry out research activities covering nearly 300 sub-disciplines. At present, CASS has more than 4,200 staff members in total, of which more than 3,200 are professional researchers. CASS's main mission is conducting broad international academic exchange for the development of social sciences and ensuring the sustainability of China's vitality through knowledge, education, and necessary efforts in global competition. The academic interests of the Academy focus on comprehensive studies that build major prospective forward-looking strategies, based on Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought, and present theoretical studies in reform, economic development, democracy, popular culture, and international issues. The academy is also focused on training and building highly qualified human resources in the fields of social sciences, the humanities, and management.

*4. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*²⁶⁹

It was founded in 1910 by Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), a Scottish-American wealthy and successful industrialist who later devoted himself as a philanthropist, founding charitable and cultural organizations. Carnegie announced the establishment of the Endowment for International Peace with

a gift of \$10 million, to be used to fund a new think tank dedicated to advancing the cause of world peace and “hasten the abolition of international war, the foulest blot upon our civilization.” The Endowment defines itself as a non-partisan non-profit organization with a mission to promote cooperation between countries and promote the active commitment of the United States on the international arena. Its work is centered on conducting research, conferences, seminars, publishing books and reports, and establishing specialized institutions and global networks focused on regional studies, relations between governments, international organizations, civil society, and stakeholders.

The Endowment has branches, programs, and projects in various countries around the world, including its Middle East Program and the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut. The program and the center aim to provide in-depth analysis based on profound regional expertise that would contribute to developing new approaches to political, economic, and social challenges in the Arab world. They collaborate with researchers and institutions in the Arab world and other countries with the aim to assist policy-makers and major stakeholders to cultivate a deeper understanding of the region and the challenges their countries face on the global level. They provide training programs for young researchers in the region to enable them to conduct research and benefit from the expertise of Carnegie programs.

In 2013, The University of Pennsylvania’s Global Go To Think Tank Index ranked the Carnegie Endowment as the third most influential think tank in the world, after Brookings Institution and Chatham House.

*5. The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIJA)*²⁷⁰

Founded in 1959, JIIA is a private, nonpartisan policy think-tank in Japan focused on foreign affairs and security issues. In addition to a wide range of research projects, the institute promotes dialogues and joint studies with other institutions and experts in Japan and abroad. It examines Japanese foreign policy and makes proposals to the government, and disseminates information on international relations to the public. The institute, together with a large network of affiliated scholars, aims to serve as an indispensable resource on international affairs in a complex world.

JIIA is modelled on the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) in the UK and other institutions, and has received strong and wide-ranging support from politicians in both ruling and opposition parties, leaders from the business community, and prominent experts from academia and media circles. Although it began as an independent institution, JIIA was

Mapping Intellectual Building

authorized as an incorporated foundation affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and certified as a public interest incorporated foundation in recognition of its contribution to this field. It works to marshal the human resources and wisdom of government, industry, and academia to address foreign policy and security issues and to inform the world of Japan's approaches and contributions. It works through its extensive networking with research institutions and experts overseas to promote growth and development into the future of both Japan and the rest of the world.

*6. Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies: Qatar*²⁷¹

Established in 2010 in Doha, Qatar, the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS) is an independent research institute for the study of the social sciences and humanities, with particular emphasis on the applied social sciences. It seeks to examine the key issues afflicting the Arab world, governments, and communities; to analyze social, economic, and cultural policies; and to provide rational political analysis on the region. Key to the Center's concerns are issues of citizenship and identity, fragmentation and unity, sovereignty and dependence, scientific and technological stagnation, community development, and cooperation among Arab countries. The ACRPS also explores the Arab world's political and economic relations with its neighbors in Asia and Africa, and the Arab world's interaction with influential US, European, and Asian policies in their economic, political, and communication aspects. It also focuses on critical analysis of social theories, political thought, and history. Such allows an exploration and questioning of how such theories and ideas have directly projected themselves into academic and political discourse and guided the current discourse and focus on the Arab world.

The Center regularly publishes books, specialized research, policy analysis, case analysis, dossiers, and translates key foreign contemporary works into Arabic. It also publishes three academic peer-reviewed periodicals.

ACRPS organizes an Annual Conference on the Social Sciences and Humanities, and another Annual Conference of Strategic and Policy Studies Research Centers in the Arab World, in addition to holding conferences, symposia, and lectures on geostrategic, geopolitical, and regional history issues and other topics related to the Arab world. In addition to administering various research projects, ACRPS publishes two quarterly peer-reviewed journals: *Tabayyun*, which is focused on thought, philosophy, and cultural and literary criticism; and *Umrān*, focused on social sciences and the humanities. It also publishes a bi-monthly journal, *Siyasāt 'Arabīyyah*, focused on political science, international relations, and public policy. In

2015, ACRPS launched its Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. It also works to train researchers to enhance Arab scientific research and elevate it to international levels, and cooperates with various academic and research institutions in the region and around the world.

*7. Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS): Egypt*²⁷²

ACPSS was established in 1968 as an independent research unit within the framework of the state-owned Al-Ahram Foundation, originally aimed to study the Palestinian issue, Zionism, and Israeli society. In 1972, its scope of work was expanded to include broad strategic, political, economic, military, and social issues related to Egypt, the Arab region, and the world. It conducts research, seminars and conferences, and publishes books, periodicals, and reports. It consists of 12 specialized units in the study of various fields, such as political systems, international relations, Arab social, economic, military, historical, and media studies, the Egyptian revolution, in addition to a programme for Arab Gulf studies.

8. National Intelligence Council

As think tanks conduct studies and prepare reports on various topics, the neutral unbiased scientific objectives of these think tanks are often highlighted within the presented data, affirming their independence and commitment to strict scientific methodologies. Yet, it is not easy to rule out the political, economic, or ideological employment by the entities that fund these think tanks, be they governments, corporations, or political parties. Not only do these entities rely heavily on think tanks' research and reports, but also form special councils to conduct a different type of studies to build upon the efforts of think tanks, adding efforts to coordinate, network, and aggregate to help map the short- and long-term future paths and strategic analysis. These prospective maps enable decision-makers to build their work strategies and plans according to clear visions of what is possible and what is conceivable.

In this context, the US National Intelligence Council (NIC)²⁷³ was established in 1979, to serve as a bridge between the intelligence and policy communities. The NIC's National Intelligence Officers are drawn from the government (political and diplomatic), academia, and the private sector. Its mission is to coordinate between the various information and intelligence agencies and government agencies and political parties in the United States, and to serve as a facilitator of Intelligence Community collaboration and outreach. Since 1996, after each presidential election, NIC has been publishing an update of its forward-looking study 'Global Trends' that is

Mapping Intellectual Building

intended to stimulate thinking about the rapid and vast geopolitical changes characterizing the world today and possible global trajectories over the next 15-20 years. The most recent report, entitled 'Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds,' was released in December 2012.²⁷⁴ In essence, this study reframes the image of future scenarios every four years, confirming or modifying what it had envisaged in previous reports.

The Council utilizes a set of well-known methods and procedures in forward-looking studies that attempt to identify the main paths of what is likely to happen and what is possible in the coming period. The Council's researchers include experts from different political, economic, and technological backgrounds and from various countries. They look into the issues from a multi-faceted approach where views intersect and integrate as a result of employing techniques such as brainstorming, the Delphi method, cross impact analysis, and simulating alternative scenarios.



The report is divided into three main sections: Megatrends, Game-Changers, and Potential Worlds. In the first section, the report identifies four main megatrends: individual empowerment, diffusion of power in a multipolar world, new demographic patterns, and growth in demand for essential resources: the food, water, energy nexus. The second section addresses six key game-changers that are most influential in determining the direction of the megatrends. These game changers are: A Crisis-prone Global economy, governance gap, potential for increased conflict, wider scope of regional instability, impact of new technologies, and the role of the United States. Finally, in the third section, and based upon the megatrends and the possible interactions between megatrends and the game-changers, the report delineates four archetypal futures that represent distinct pathways for the world out to 2030. These four potential worlds are characterized by: stalled engines (worst-case scenario: the risks of interstate conflict increase), fusion (best-case outcome: new international equilibrium with increasing collaboration between China and the US, leading to broader global cooperation), Gini-out-of-the-bottle (inequalities explode among countries, inequalities within countries increase social tensions), and the nonstate world (increased role of nonstate actors in confronting domestic and global challenges).²⁷⁵

Although military wars using drones, smart missiles, explosive barrels, and depleted uranium, etc., continue to erupt from time to time, other wars may be more lethal, with their weapons targeting the hearts and minds of people, and so achieving sweeping victories in the areas of thought, culture, politics, and the economy; it is the 'war of ideas,' in which every adversary seeks to infiltrate through 'soft power.'

Conclusion

In this chapter, we recognized that the thought production process was at its inception an individual process, and that the concept of ‘think tanks’ and intellectual institutions is a rather modern phenomenon, which emerged as a result of the need for it and the accumulation of experience in knowledge and thought. Think tanks today are among the most important institutions in advanced nations, considering what they produce of vital strategic ideas upon which nations depend in various issues ranging from political, economic, social, security, etc., and the recommendations they provide to decision-makers. The value of think tank research and reports is in the efforts made by scholars, thinkers, and specialized researchers, who conduct research through collective efforts, in accordance with foresight, forward-looking visions, and well-managed administrative systems.

Intellectual schools in philosophy, economics, politics, or religion have played, and continue to play, an important role in developing ideas and opinions that have an impact on individuals and groups. Yet, many intellectual schools began to establish their own research centers and think tanks in order to develop ideas, policies, and strategic visions through which they can influence political systems and political and economic decision-makers and stakeholders. Moreover, political systems themselves came to establish think tanks, facilitating and funding them in order that they present governments and political actors with recommendations to improve performance and make suitable decisions.

The number of think tanks has grown exponentially world-wide, their interests have varied widely, and their impact has magnified – alarmingly – in their ability to direct and influence political and economic events and developments. Hence, various research groups have been active in recent years in examining the reality of think tanks, delving deep into exposing the nature of their work, desired objectives, and the questions they stir, particularly in regard to their ‘manipulation’ of public opinion and the media, and the nature of their recommendations to politicians, businesses and mega-corporations, and justifications and validations for the latter’s decisions. It is no secret that most think tanks rely heavily on the media, especially that there are ideological trends in common between some think tanks and some media outlets.

In Arab countries, we find a remarkable level of poverty in the number of think tanks, in their quality, in the level of research production, and in their impact on public life. Important decisions in Arab countries are not based on studies, research, and opinions characterized by maturity and

Mapping Intellectual Building

foresight. Evidence of this poverty is that the information available on Arab think tanks is often provided by foreign think tanks. Further, the data Arab think tanks do publish is originally from foreign think tanks.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In reading this book about intellectual building, the reader observes that intellectual building is a building characterized by organization and cohesion, with a foundational frame of reference that gives it a specific description and distinguishes it from others. Despite its cohesion and stability, this intellectual building is not fixed to a certain state of quantity and quality, but rather continually changes in breadth and depth, and as some elements lose value, they may be replaced by new ones. The subject of this building is thought, which is a distinguishing characteristic of human beings that the Creator has endowed – and dignified – within them. It is a trust of which each human being should take utmost care, striving to fulfill it with the requisites for sound growth, development, and improvement.

By the time the reader reaches this point of the book, he or she has the right to ask: ‘what is it that I just read?’ The reader would most likely reconsider his or her view of the title of the book and review the table of contents again, to recollect the major intellectual elements and features of the map of ideas they just read. The reader may even re-read the contents of some sub-topics, to remember the features of an intellectual element of the topic. Perhaps he or she would consider discussing what they read with family members or colleagues, and would need to decide what they will say, what questions they will ask, and what observations they will voice.

But the readers will surely remember something that they did not read, and remember some of the topics they were looking for, but did not find in the material. They may reconsider the intellectual map again, to double check that these topics were not included in the material, and hence would set for themselves a new task to search for these topics in other writings.

Readers may recall other topics within the context of the overall subject that they had read before, and may reflect on the similarities and differences between this material they just read and others. In light of these similarities and differences, readers would classify and categorize this book into one of the categories of works they had read before. This book is in the category of Islamic thought, but it belongs to a specific Islamic school of thought; hence, readers may reflect on prominent names of authors and thinkers who also belong to this specific intellectual school.

These are examples of mental associations, the undertaking of the mind, the passage of ideas, and the wandering of thought, all of which are manifestations of human mental activity that reflect a state of healthy employment of human intellectual capabilities. Any weakness in exercising this activity is a result of a shortcoming in the organization of thinking processes that needs to be addressed. Fortunately, a

Mapping Intellectual Building

reader's awareness of such shortcoming or imbalance is in itself a healthy state. This intellectual awareness is the first step in treating the shortcoming, and would be a first step if it is followed by other steps.

It is hoped that readers learned something about the degree of attractiveness of intellectual positions occupied by some elite members of society, and the various levels of intellectual buildings that intellectual elites possess, and the characteristics of the vast majority of people who are difficult to categorize into a specific intellectual position. Readers will find that the natural state in society is when levels of intellectual buildings vary among individuals and groups. Such variance is a positive aspect, considering that each individual has a certain intellectual level, and each individual has his or her own role in society. These roles are integrated to fulfill the intellectual functions in society.

It is hoped that readers would question the position of their intellectual building compared to what they read here about intellectual building. They may ask themselves: 'what do I possess in terms of ideas and thought? What school of thought is closest to my thought? What are the features and main elements of the intellectual map that represents the totality of my ideas? What are the factors that affected the formation of this map? How, when, and to what extent did these factors affect my intellectual map?' Perhaps each reader would then be inclined to identify the intellectual position he and she wants to embody: a scholar, a cultured intellectual, an advocate, a reformer, a philosopher, or a thinker, etc.

Readers would also probably question the relationship between thought and behavior, and the meanings indicated by their consistency and the meanings indicated by their differences. Examples of public personalities may come to mind, representing both the case in which thought and behavior are consistent, and when they are inconsistent. It is only natural that each reader would contemplate the state they wish or choose for themselves in this regard.

Other questions that may come to mind concern the determinants of individual human personality, and the position of intellectual building within this personality as compared to the emotional and sentimental building of this personality. Are they two different buildings? How do they affect the personality of the individual? And what is the relationship of objectivity and subjectivity in each of these two buildings?

Finally, if this written material has managed to stir these questions and others like them in the readers' minds, and motivated readers to search for answers for these questions, then it has achieved some of its objectives.

All praise is due to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds.

NOTES

- ¹ Another reason that comes to mind is that, in some situations, abstraction and generalization is more conducive to representing an *idea* than mentioning particular names of individuals or institutions, particularly when the subject matter relates to the realm of ideas. We recall in this context a saying attributed to Alī bin Abī Tālib, which is considered one of the rules for the documenting of ideas: “The truth is not known by way of men, but men are known by way of the truth.” Also, Ibn Ḥazm states: “Pardon me if I merely hint, or not mention explicitly the names of people; this is because of the need for privacy, which I do not find permissible to uncover, or to protect a dear friend and a venerable man. It suffices me to name those whose naming brings no harm, and whose mention brings no disgrace upon us or them, either because concealing the name that is known will do no good, or because the person being named approves of his story to be made public and holds no reservations on reporting it.” See: Abu Muḥammad ‘Alī ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī, (d. 456 AH), *Ṭawq al-Ḥamamah fī al-Ulfati wa al-Ullāf* (The Ring of the Dove about Love and Lovers), (Amman: Dār al-Isrā’, 2005), p.13.
- ² This saying has been repeatedly attributed to al-‘Imād al-Isfahānī, perhaps the source of this misattribution is that the editor of Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī’s book *Mu‘jam al-Udabā’* attributed this saying to al-Isfahānī, and placed it on the cover of every volume of the book, and so people circulated it and many continue to circulate it on this basis. For the verification of this saying, See: Muṣṭafa ibn ‘Abd Allah Kātip Ḥājī Khalifah (d. 1067 AH), *Kashf al-Zunūn ‘an Asāmi al-Kutub wa al-Funūn* (The Removal of Doubts from the Names of Books and the Arts), (Beirut: Dār Ihya’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, n.d.), vol.1, p.18.
- ³ Muhammad al-Tahir Ibn Ashur, *Tafsīr al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr* (Editing [the Correct Meaning] and Enlightening [the New Mind in the Exegesis of the Qur’ān]), (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tūnisiyyah li al-Nashr, 1984), vol.24, p.26.
- ⁴ Ibid, vol.2, p.253.
- ⁵ Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī* known as *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr wa Maḥāṭib al-Ghayb* (The Grand Exegesis and Keys to the Unknown), 1st edn., (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), vol.10, p.201.
- ⁶ Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Shawkānī, *Faṭḥ al-Qadīr al-Jamī’ Bayn Fannay al-Riwayah wa al-Dirayah min ‘Ilm al-Tafsīr* (The Aid of the Omnipotent in Combining the Methods of Narration of Traditional Sources [Riwayah] and Analysis of the Text [Dirayah] in the Science of Exegesis), 1st edn., (Al-

Mansoura: Dār al-Wafā', 2000), vol.1, p.781.

- ⁷ Muhammad Rashid Rida, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Hakīm* (Exegesis of the Wise Holy Qur'an) known as *Tafsīr al-Manār*, 2nd edn., (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1973), vol.5, p. 287.
- ⁸ Muḥammad ibn Isma'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2002), "Book on Actions during Prayer," the Chapter on when a person thinks of something during prayer, p.295, hadith no. 1121. Al-Bukhārī renders the heading of the chapter in this form, and commences the chapter with the words of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb: "I prepare my army while I am praying." Then he relates the saying of 'Uqbah ibn al-Hārith, who said: "I performed the 'Asr prayer with the Prophet (ṢAAS) and after finishing the prayer with *taslīm* he got up quickly and went to some of his wives and then came out. He noticed the astonishment on the people's faces over his speedy action. The Prophet then said, 'I remembered while I was in my prayer that a piece of gold was in my house and I disliked that it should remain with us throughout the night, and so I have ordered it to be distributed.'"
- ⁹ In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Ḥibbān on the authority of 'Atā', he said: "... 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr asked 'Āishah to relay to them the most astonishing thing she saw from the Prophet (ṢAAS). She said: 'And then Bilal came to perform the call to prayer, and when he saw the Prophet weeping he said: O Messenger of Allah what makes you cry when Allah has forgiven you all your prior and later deeds? He said: should I not be a grateful servant of God, for this night a verse was revealed, woe unto who reads it and does not contemplate it: "Behold! In the Creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed Signs for [those of understanding], who celebrate the praises of Allah standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate..."'" (3:190-191). See: 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Balbān al-Fārisī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* (with the arrangement of Ibn Balbān, edited by Shu'ayb al-Arnaut, (Beirut: Mu'asasat al-Risālah, 1993); and *The Book of al-Riqāq*, Chapter on "al-Tawbah", vol.4, p.386, hadith no. 620. Shu'ayb al-Arnaut noted that the hadith is of sound chain of transmission (*isnād*) according to Muslim.
- ¹⁰ Al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn Hajar says in *Fath al-Bārī* (13/283): the hadith of Ibn 'Abbās is *Mawqūf* (discontinued hadith) and its chain of transmission is good. See: Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī (d. 853 AH), *Fath al-Bārī bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (The Victory of the Creator: Commentary on Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī), edited by Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz and Fuad Abd al-Baqi, 4th edn., (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2012); and *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, hadith no. 7402, vol.13, p.326.
- ¹¹ It is related by Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in his *Musnad* on the authority of Rabi'ah ibn Ka'b, that he said: "I used to serve the Messenger of Allah, and would attend to his needs throughout my day, until the Prophet would perform the final evening prayer, and I would sit at his gate when he entered his house, and would say to myself perhaps the Prophet would need

something, and I would continue to hear him say: *Subhān Allah, Subhān Allah, Subhān Allah wa Biḥamdihi*, until I would feel bored and would return, or would be overcome by sleepiness. One day he said to me upon observing my zestful service: ‘Ask me O Rabi‘ah and I would grant you your wish.’ And then I said: ‘Observe my condition O Messenger of Allah, and then I shall inform you thereof,’ and I *thought* to myself and realized that the world is transient, and that in the world there is sufficient provision for me, and I said ‘I shall ask the Prophet for my afterlife...’ and he said: ‘What did you do O Rabi‘ah?’ I said: ‘Yes O Messenger of Allah I ask you to intercede for me with your Lord that He release me from hellfire.’ He said: ‘Who ordered you such?’ I said: ‘By the Lord who sent you with truth none ordered me this, but when you said ask me and I shall give you, and given your standing with God, I *reflected* on my condition and realized that the world is transient, and that my provisions will reach me, and so I said: I shall ask the Messenger of Allah for my afterlife.’ The Prophet was silent for a while and then said to me: ‘I shall do what you wish, but you must prostrate yourself to God profusely.’” See: Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal* (Riyadh: Bayt al-Afkār al-Duwalīyyah, 1998); *Musnad al-Madannīyyin*, hadith no. 16695, p.1184; and the hadith is narrated in another version in which the Companion of the Prophet says, “But I *looked upon* my condition and found that the world is transient...” See: Ibid., hadith no. 16694.

- ¹² Al-Ḥārith ibn Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *Kitāb al-‘Aql wa Fahm al-Qur’ān* (Reason and the Understanding of the Qur’an), edited and introduced by Hussayn al-Quwwatli (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1971).
- ¹³ Ibid., p.209.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., pp.235-236.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., pp.266-268.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p.275.
- ¹⁷ Al-Ḥārith ibn Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *Al-Ri‘āyah li Huqūq Allah* (Observance of the Rights of God), edited by Abd al-Halim Mahmud (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, n.d.) pp.47, 61, 65.
- ¹⁸ Al-Ḥārith ibn Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *Risālat al-Mustarshidīn* (Treatise for the Seekers of Guidance), edited and with commentary by Abd al-Fattah Abu Ghuddah, 5th edn., (Cairo: Dār al-Salām al-Islāmiyyah, 1983), pp.97-99.
- ¹⁹ Al-Ḥārith ibn Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *Al-Waṣāyā: al-Naṣā’ih, al-Qaṣd wa al-Ruju’u ila Allah, Bid’ Man Anāba ila Allah, Fahm al-Ṣalāt, al-Tawahhum* (The Book of Spiritual Counsels), edited, commentary and an introduction by Abd al-Qadir Ahmad Ata (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1968), p.247.
- ²⁰ Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl, wa al-Mūṣil ila Dhī al-‘Izzati wa al-Jalāl* (Deliverance from Error and Attachment to the Lord of Might and Majesty), edited by Jamil Saliba and Kamil Ayyad, 7th edn., (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā’is, 1967), pp.100-101.

Notes

- ²¹ Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Revival of the Religious Sciences), (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Aşriyyah, 2004), vol.5, pp.3-34.
- ²² Ibid., pp.7-8.
- ²³ Ibid., pp.5-6.
- ²⁴ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Abu 'Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr ibn Ayyoub, *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa'ādah wa Manshūr Wilāyat al-'Ilm wa al-Irādah* (The Key to the Abode of Happiness and the Decree of the Sovereignty of Knowledge and Will), edited by Abd al-Rahman ibn Hassan ibn Qaid (Riyadh: Dār 'Ālam al-Fawā'id), p.108.
- ²⁵ Ibid., p.124.
- ²⁶ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr, *al-Fawā'id* (A Collection of Wise Sayings), 4th edn., (Cairo: Maktabat al-Jāmi'a, 1980), p.228.
- ²⁷ Ibid., p.230.
- ²⁸ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa'ādah*, pp.606-607.
- ²⁹ Ibid., p.525.
- ³⁰ Ibid., p.526.
- ³¹ Al-Muḥāsibī, *Al-'Aql wa Fahm al-Qur'ān*, p.228.
- ³² Ibid., p.234.
- ³³ Ibid., p.214.
- ³⁴ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Al-Fawā'id*, p.242.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Ibid., pp.243-244.
- ³⁷ Ibid., p.258.
- ³⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqiyyuddin Aḥmad al-Ḥarrānī (d. 728 AH), *Majmū'at Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah* (Comprehensive Collection of Ibn Taymiyyah's Fatwas), edited by Amer al-Jazzar and Anwar al-Baz, 3rd edn., (al-Mansoura: Dār al-Wafā', 2005), vol.17, p.115. The text is: "The Messenger of Allah (SAAS) came out to us and said: 'Assemble, for I am going to recite before you one-third of the Qur'an. The Prophet then recited: "*Qul Huwa Allahu Aḥad* [Say: He is Allah, One Allah, the Eternal]," and he said: 'By the One in Whose hand is my soul, it is equivalent to one-third of the Qur'an.' In this regard, a group of religious scholars said that the Qur'an, in consideration of its meanings, is of three parts: a third is *tawḥīd*, a third narration of historical stories, and a third commands and prohibitions."
- ³⁹ Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shanqīṭī, *Adwā' al-Bayān fī 'Idāḥ al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān* (Illuminations of Elucidation in Clarifying the Qur'an by the Qur'an), (Makkah: Dār 'Ālam al-Fawā'id, n.d.), vol.6, pp.529-530.
- ⁴⁰ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Abu 'Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr ibn Ayūb, *Al-Fawā'id* (A Collection of Wise Sayings), edited by Muhammad Aziz Shams (Makkah: Dār 'Ālam al-Fawā'id, 1429 AH), pp.252-253.
- ⁴¹ Abd al-Razzaq Nawfal, *Al-I'jāz al-'Adadī fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (The Numerical Inimitability in the Holy Qur'an), 5th edn., (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1987), p.56.

- ⁴² Ibn Ashur, *Tafsīr al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, vol. 21, p.131.
- ⁴³ Al-Hākim al-Naysaburi, Abū ‘Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allah, *Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Supplement for What is Missing From al-Bukhārī and Muslim’s Ṣaḥīḥ Hadith Collections), (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1998), vol. 1, *Kitāb al-‘Ilm*, hadith no. 341, p.146. Al-Hakim notes that this “Hadith is *Ṣaḥīḥ* based on the condition of the two Shaykhs (Bukhārī and Muslim), and Yazīd ibn ‘Amīrah al-Saksakī was a friend of Mu‘adh Bin Jabal...”.
- ⁴⁴ Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *al-Fawā‘id*, edited by Muhammad Aziz Shams, p.140.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., p.151.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., p.141.
- ⁴⁷ Abd al-Rahman Helali, “Iqtirān al-Īmān bi al-‘Amal al-Ṣāleḥ fī āl-Qur’ān al-Karīm wa Dalālātuh al-Ḥaḍāriyyah (The Association of Faith with Good Action in the Holy Qur’an and its Civilizational Meanings), *Majalat Jāmi‘at Dimashq li al-‘Ulūm al-Iqtisādiyyah wa al-Qānūniyyah* (University of Damascus Journal of Economics and Law), 2011, vol.27, issue 3, pp.439-463.
- ⁴⁸ Aḥmad ibn ‘Ali ibn Thābit al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463 AH), *Iqtidā‘ al-‘Ilm al-‘Amal* (Knowledge Necessitates Action), edited by Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani (Damascus: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1984).
- ⁴⁹ Abū al-Qāssim al-Hussain ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Mufaḍal Al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī (d. 502 AH), *Tafṣīl al-Nash‘atayn wa Taḥṣīl al-Sa‘adatayn* (The Explication of the Two Forms of Emergence and the Acquisition of the Two Forms of Happiness), (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, 1983), pp.85-86.
- ⁵⁰ Abū ‘Umar Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d. 463 AH), *Jame‘ Bayān al-‘ilm wa Faḍluh* (A Compendium Elucidating the Nature of Knowledge and Its Immense Merit), edited by Abū al-Ashbāl al-Zuhāirī, 1st edn., (Dammam: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1994), “Bāb Jam‘ fī Faḍl al-‘Ilm”, vol.1, hadith number 214, p.202.
- ⁵¹ Abū al-Qāssim al-Hussain ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Mufaḍal al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī, *al-Dharī‘ah ilā Makārim al-Sharī‘ah* (The Book of Means to the Noble Qualities of the Shari‘ah), annotated by Mahmud Beeju, (Damascus: Dār Iqra’, 2001), p.305.
- ⁵² Taha Abd al-Rahman, *Su‘āl al-‘Amal: Baḥṭh ‘An al-Uṣūl al-‘Amaliyyah fī al-Fikr wa al-‘Ilm* (The Question of Action: A Search for the Practical Fundamentals in Thought and Knowledge), (Casablanca and Beirut: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-‘Arabi, 2012), p.232.
- ⁵³ Ibid., p. 13.
- ⁵⁴ Al-Isfahānī, *al-Dharī‘ah ilā Makārim al-Sharī‘ah*, p.126.
- ⁵⁵ ‘Abbās ibn Firnās: An Andalusian Muslim scholar and scientist (d. 274 AH), recognized in various scientific fields: he was an engineer, astronomer, physicist, chemist, and mathematician. He monitored with precision and interest the movement of the wings of birds and performed on them mathematical calculations while taking into consideration the speed of

Notes

movement and the effect of wind. He produced wings similar to birds' wings, and he personally tried to fly. This attempt was one of the ideas that did not come to fruition at the time but materialized in a subsequent era. See: Khayr al-Din al-Zirikli, *al-A' lām* (The Notables), 5th edn., (Beirut: Dār al- 'Ilm li al-Malāyīn, 1980), vol.3, p.264.

- ⁵⁶ Since ancient times, Egyptians suffered from the annual flooding of the Nile, and this was known to al-Ḥassan ibn al-Ḥaytham (d. 430 AH), the Muslim scientist who specialized in physics, mathematics, and engineering. He thought of building a dam that would withhold the surplus quantities of water and channel them through irrigation canals around the year. He famously said, "If I were in Egypt, I would have done to the Nile what would bring benefit in all its conditions." The Fatimid ruler heard his words, summoned him and ordered him to implement the project. Ibn Al-Ḥaytham went to the location specified in Aswan, but he was awed by the task and declined to carry it out, but he feared the wrath of the ruler and claimed to be insane until the ruler died. See: Al-Zirikli, *al-A' lām*, vol.6, p.83.
- ⁵⁷ Taha Abd al-Rahman, *Su'āl al- 'Amal*, p.307.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 308.
- ⁵⁹ Al-Isfahāni, *al-Dharī'ah ilā Makārim al-Sharī'ah*, p.304.
- ⁶⁰ Clyde Wilcox and Carin Robinson, *Onward Christian Soldiers?: The Religious Right in American Politics*, 4th edn., (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2010), p.13.
- ⁶¹ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, The Book on 'ilm, chapter entitled "One whose benefit God wishes He shall make him knowledgeable in Religion," hadith no. 71, p.30, reported by Mu'āwiyah ibn Abū Sufyān.
- ⁶² Imam Abū Ḥanīfah is reported to have authored a book entitled *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*. The book discusses issues of belief such as the differences of the Companions, the meanings of *Īmān* and Islam, the actions of the servant of God, the differences between schools of thought concerning predestination, the Attributes of God Almighty, His Speech and Will and the issue of the creation of the world...etc. see: Abū Maṣṣūr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Maturīdī (d. 333 AH), *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar* (The Greater Fiqh, Explained), a commentary and annotation of the book attributed to Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150 AH), printed by Abd Allah ibn Ibrahim al-Ansari (Doha: Ministry of Religious Affairs, n.d.).
- ⁶³ It is only rightful to refer to these figures and introduce them, particularly the new generations of the Ummah. The reader may want to recall a number of intellectual personalities in his or her country, and perhaps observe that distinction in Islamic thought is not confined to the scholars and specialists in Shari'ah sciences, but includes scholars and thinkers from various disciplines. Perhaps the reader would want to perform a mental exercise comparing and contrasting between a number of thinkers belonging to the Shari'ah specialization and others from other disciplines.

- 64 Muhammad Abdullah Draz, *al-Naba' al- 'Aẓīm: Naẓarāt Jadīdah fī al-Qur'ān* (The Great News: New Visions into the Qur'an), with an introduction by Abd al-Azim al-Matani, 9th edn., (Kuwait: Dār al-Qalam, 2005), pp.148-151.
- 65 Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "...Abū Bakra wrote to his son who was in Sajistan: 'Do not judge between two persons when you are angry, for I heard the Prophet (SAAS) saying, "A judge should not judge between two persons while he is in an angry mood."'" "The Book on *Aḥkām*, Chapter on whether a judge can issue judgement or legal opinion while angry, hadith no. 7158, p.1768.
- 66 Abū Dāwūd, Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath, *Sunan Abū Dāwūd* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1991), *Kitāb al-Ṭibb*, Bāb fī al-Hawa, vol.4, no. (5130) reported by Abū al-Dardā', p.336.
- 67 Mary Lore, *Managing Thought: Think Differently. Think Powerfully. Achieve New Levels of Success* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), p.204.
- 68 Ibid., pp.200-201.
- 69 Mathew McKay, Martha Davis, and Patrick Fanning, *Thoughts and Feelings: Taking Control of Your Moods and Your Life*, 4th edn., (New Harbinger Publications, 2011).
- 70 Ibid., p.2.
- 71 Ibid., p.115.
- 72 Malik Badri, *Contemplation: An Islamic Psychospiritual Study*, Trans. Abdul-Wahid Lu'lu'a, (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2000), p.81.
- 73 Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Kitāb Bid' al-Waḥī*, Bāb Faḍl man Istabra' ila Dīnīh, hadith no. 52, p.20.
- 74 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, 2nd printing of 2nd edn., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series XLIII, 1980), vol. 2, pp.411-412.
- 75 Ibid., vol. 3, pp.295-296.
- 76 Badri, *Contemplation*, pp.21-35. We recommend the study of this small book, as it includes in depth explanation of the relationship between thought, thinking, contemplation, forethought, and remembrance. It adds to religious texts the input of Islamic heritage, contemporary psychology and the theories of learning, the relationship of thinking with language, and the relationship of contemplation with what is known about the scientific method in the research of physical and applied sciences.
- 77 Ibid., pp.30-31.
- 78 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmu'at Fatāwā*, *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah*, vol.2, p.224.
- 79 Malik Bennabi, *Shurūṭ al-Nahḍah* (The Conditions of Renaissance), (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1986), p.63.
- 80 Adnan Zarzur, *Ṭabī'at al-Taḥkīr wa al-Tajdīd fī al-Thaqāfah al-Islāmiyyah* (The Nature of Thinking and Renewal in Islamic Culture), (Amman: Dār al-A'lam, 2007), p.7.
- 81 Ibid., p.19.

Notes

- ⁸² Ibid., p.31.
- ⁸³ Ibid., p.33.
- ⁸⁴ Tawfīq al-Ṭawīl, *Ussus al-Falsafah* (Foundations of Philosophy), (Cairo: Dār al-Nahḍah al-‘arabiyyah, 1976), p. 217.
- ⁸⁵ ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Namlah, *al-Fikr bayna al-‘ilm wa al-Sulṭah: Min al-Taṣāḍum ila al-Ta‘āyush* (Thought between Knowledge and Authority: From Clash to Coexistence), (2nd edn., Riyadh: ‘Obaykān Publishing House, 2007), pp. 12-16.
- ⁸⁶ ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (Amīr al-Mu‘minīn), *Nahj al-Balāgha* (The Path of Eloquence), Selection by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, and commentary by Imam Muḥammad ‘Abduh, (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah), vol. 4, p.2 7.
- ⁸⁷ The reader may notice that we did not confine the signification of knowledge or thought within parentheses, in order to emphasize that we do not intend to provide a comprehensive and exclusive definition, as we indicated in the introduction of the book.
- ⁸⁸ Al-Namlah, *al-Fikr bayna al-‘ilm wa al-Sulṭah*, p. 76.
- ⁸⁹ Muḥammad al-Mukhtār al-Mahdi, al-Jam‘iyyah al-Shar‘iyyah...Ṣafḥah min al-‘amal al-Ahlī (The Religious Association...A Page in Civil Work, on the anniversary of the Association’s Founding on 1 Muharram 1331 AH); see the link (retrieved December 20, 2016): <http://www.startimes.com/f.aspx?t=5577732>
- ⁹⁰ ‘Issām al-Dīn al-Zaftāwi, Ḥiwarāt Ḥawla Ḥarakat al-Fikr al-Islāmi al-Mu‘āṣir khilāl al-Qarn al-‘Ishrīn – Dirāsah wa Taḥlīl, (Dialogues on the Contemporary Islamic Thought Movement in the Twentieth Century: Study and Analysis), *Majalat al-Muslim al-Mu‘āṣir* (The Journal of the Contemporary Muslim), issue no. 98, year 25, October-December 2000, pp. 139-187.
- ⁹¹ Ṭāha Jābir al-‘Alwāni, *Islāh al-Fikr al-Islāmi bayna al-Qudurāt wa al-‘Aqabāt: Waraaqt ‘Amal* (Reform of Islamic Thought between Capabilities and Obstacles: A Working Paper), Islamization of Knowledge Series No. 10, (2nd edn., Herndon, VA: IIIT, Riyadh: al-Dār al-‘Ālamiyyah li al-Kitāb al-Islāmiyyah, 1994), p. 43.
- ⁹² Ibid.
- ⁹³ Ibid., p.44.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ⁹⁵ Ṭāha Jābir al-‘Alwāni, *Islamic Thought: An Approach to Reform* (trans. Nancy Roberts), (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2006), p. 50.
- ⁹⁶ This article was published in the website of Dr. Aḥmad al-Raysūni dated 11/5/2005 within a series of articles critiquing the Islamic movement. The article was published in numerous websites and was discussed and cited by many writers. See: Fī Naqd al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmiyyah: Bayna Fikr al-Ḥarakah wa Ḥarakat al-Fikr (Critique of Islamic Movements: Between the Thought of the Movement and the Movement of Thought). Available on Al-Raysūni’s website on the link: (retrieved December 20, 2016) <http://www.widesoft.ma/raissouni/def.asp?codelangue=6&info=347>

- 97 Ibid.
- 98 Ibid.
- 99 There is substantial information and resources on the Muslim Brotherhood; however, the following relates to the movement as a school of thought: Muhammad Abd al-Rahman, *Nahj al-Islāh wa al-Taghyīr ‘inda Jamā‘at al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* (The Society of the Muslim Brotherhood’s Methodology of Reform and Change), (Cairo: Dār al-Tawzī‘ wa al-Nashr al-Islāmiyyah, 2006). Muhammad Salim al-Awwa, “Ḥassan al-Banna wa Madrasat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn al-Fikriyyah” (Hassan al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood’s School of Thought), a lecture at the Egypt Association for Culture and Dialogue, May 26, 2009. The lecture may be viewed and uploaded on the following link (retrieved December 20, 2016): <http://www.amlalommah.net/aml-6098.html>. Lorenzo Vidino, “Five myths about the Muslim Brotherhood,” *Washington Post*, (Sunday, March 4, 2011). The author is an Italian researcher focused on Islamist affairs and is a visiting researcher and advisor at a number of Western think tanks. He is often invited to give advice to decision-makers in the United States and Europe.
- 100 Hizb ut-Tahrir, *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, translated from the Arabic, (Beirut: Dār al-Ummah, 2nd edn., 2010), pp.10, 21, the English version is available on the following link (retrieved December 20, 2016): http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.info/info/files/Books-eng/12_Hizb_ut_Tahrir.pdf See also: Hizb ut-Tahrir (Taqiuddin an-Nabhāni), *Concepts of Hizb ut-Tahrir*, 6th edn., (London: Khilafah Publications, 2002), pp.14-16, available on the following link (retrieved December 20, 2016): http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.info/info/files/Books-eng/03_Concept_of_Hizb_ut_Tahrir.pdf
- 101 Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance* (Cambridge, MA.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology MIT Press, 1994).
- 102 Johan Van Overtveldt, *The Chicago School: How the University of Chicago Assembled the Thinkers Who Revolutionized Economics and Business* (Chicago: Agate B2; First Trade Paper Edition, 2009). On the failure of the model of Chicago School, see: John Cassidy, “Letter from Chicago, After the Blowup,” *The New Yorker*, January 11, 2010, p.28.
- 103 Friedrich Stadler (ed.), *The Vienna Circle and Logical Empiricism: Re-evaluation and Future Perspectives* (Vienna Circle Institute Yearbook, New York: Springer, 2003 edn.).
- 104 International Institute of Islamic Thought, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles-Action Plan-Accomplishments* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1989).
- 105 Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd al-Zunaydi, *al-Salafiyyah wa Qadāyā al-‘Aṣr* (Salafism and Contemporary Issues), (Riyadh: Markaz al-Dirāsāt wa al-‘Ilām/Dar Ishbilyā, 1998), p.49.
- 106 Muhammad Said Ramadan al-Buti, *al-Salafiyyah Marḥalah Zamaniyyah Mubārakah la Madhhab Islāmī* (Salafism: A Blessed Historic Period, Not an

Islamic Sect), 11th edn., (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, 2001).

- ¹⁰⁷ It is hoped that this text would not be considered a comprehensive and exclusive definition, but rather one of the formulations that expresses the concept of intellectual building, pertaining to the differentiation between two elements of this building, namely: belief perceptions, and reactionary perceptions.
- ¹⁰⁸ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Book of Faith (*al-Imān*), the Chapter on Gabriel asking the Prophet about *īmān*, Islam, and *ihsān*. Gabriel asked the Prophet “... ‘When will the Hour occur?’ The Prophet replied: ‘The one answering has no better knowledge than the one asking. But I will inform you about its forewarnings: When a slave gives birth to her master, and when the shepherds of black camels start boasting and competing with others in the construction of higher buildings...’”, hadith no. 50, p.23.
- ¹⁰⁹ Sayyid Qutb, *Dirāsāt Islāmiyyah* (Islamic Studies), 11th edn., (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2006), pp.225-230.
- ¹¹⁰ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, edited by Abu Suhayb al-Karmi (Riyadh: Dār al-Afkār al-Duwalīyyah, 1998), Book of Belief (*Kitāb al-Imān*), Chapter on Clarifying that Islam started strange...hadith no. 145, p.83.
“Islam began as something strange, and it would return to being strange as it began. So good tidings to the strangers.” And in a narration of Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, “The companions asked: And who are the strangers? The Prophet replied: ‘They are those who rectify and reform when the people are corrupted’.” See: Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, *Musnad al-Madanīyīn*, hadith by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Sannah, hadith no. 16810, p.1195.
- ¹¹¹ Abd Allah ibn Salim Ba-Hammam, *Sawwīq Fikrak: Taswīq al-Afkār – Jawlah bayna al-‘Ulūm* (Market your Thought: The Marketing of Ideas – A Tour of the Sciences), (Riyadh: Private and Electronic publishing, 1430 AH).
- ¹¹² It is noteworthy that awards of ingenuity and scientific discoveries are given to an individual, or a small group of individuals. The Nobel Prize in Chemistry, for example, has been granted almost annually since 1901, and in the years until year 2012, it was awarded as follows: 63 times to an individual scientist, 23 times to two scientists, 18 times to three scientists, (the prize was not awarded a total of eight times in various years). Even in the cases in which it was awarded to two or three scientists, the award was not necessarily given for a collaborative effort between them, but rather for the fact that each scientist, individually, deserved it, and therefore it is divided between them. See: All Nobel Prizes in Chemistry, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/chemistry/laureates/. Similarly, the Nobel Prize in literature was awarded 101 times to an individual Laureate and 4 times to two Laureates (the prize was not awarded a total of 7 times). See: All Nobel Prizes in Literature, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/index.html

- 113 Adel Harḥūsh al-Mafraji and Ahmad Ali Saleh, *Ra's al-Māl al-Fikri: Ṭuruq Qiyasuh wa Asālīb al-Muḥafazah 'Alayh* (Intellectual Capital: Means of Measuring and Preserving It), (Cairo: al-Munazamah al-'Arabīyah li al-Tanmīyah al-Idārīyah, 2003), pp.8-18.
- 114 Thomas A. Stewart, *The Wealth of Knowledge: Intellectual Capital and the Twenty-First Century Organization* (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2002), p.5.
- 115 Ibid., pp.328-329.
- 116 Al-Bukhāri, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri, Kitāb al-Riqāq*, Section on hope and too much of it, hadith no. 6417, p.1599.
- 117 The use of the term 'concept' differs according to the epistemic field. In logic, it is a cognitive perception. In language, it is a terminological idiomatic meaning that refers to the expression, which in turn indicates a general semantic field, see: Suad Korim, "al-Dirāsah al-Maḥūmiyyah: Muqārabah Taṣwīriyyah wa Manhajiyyah" (The Conceptual Study: A Representational and Methodological Approach), *Majalat Islāmiyyat al-Ma'rifah*, (al-Ma'had al-'Ālamī li al-Fikr al-Islāmi, no.60, Spring 1431 AH/2010 CE), p.65.
- 118 Perhaps this phenomenon of "weakness of experiences in educational evaluation and measurement" in Arab countries is suited to be a topic of research and study. It is important to examine the relationship of this weakness with the overall intellectual building of the specialized scholarly elite, the characteristics of the institutionalized structure of educational policies, or the administrative culture of those working in these institutions.
- 119 An example of an intellectual unit is the idea of biological evolution, or Darwin's theory, which began as a theory that analyzes the evolution of living creatures. The theory soon spread widely in other sciences, and migrated from its home science in biology to sociology and political science, where the theories of social Darwinism and political Darwinism emerged.
- 120 Issam Abd Allah, *ʿIlm Tārīkh al-Afkār* (The Science of the History of Ideas), (Abu Dhabi: Markaz Zāyid li al-Tansīq wa al-Mutāba'ah, 2002). See also: Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001, c1964); Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith, 12th edn., (Vintage, 1982, c1969), the original work was published in French entitled "L'archéologie du savoir"; Arthur Herman, *The Idea of Decline in Western History* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1997); Fahmi Jadan, *Usus al-Taquddum 'inda Mufakirī al-Islām*, 4th edn., (Beirut: Dār al-Shabakah al-'Arabīyyah li al-Abḥāth wa al-Nashr, 1988); and Anwar al-Zubi, *Maṣīrat al-Ma'rifah wa al-Manhaj fī al-Fikr al-'Arabī al-Islāmi* (Manifestations of Epistemology and Methodology in Arab Islamic Thought), (Amman: al-Ma'had al-'Ālamī li al-Fikr al-Islāmi, 2007).
- 121 Jean Touchard, *Tārīkh al-Afkār al-Siyāsīyyah* (The History of Political Ideas), trans. Nāji al-Darāwshah, 3 vols., (Damascus: Dār al-Takwīn, 2010). See the original in French, Jean Touchard, *Histoire des idées politiques*, 6th edn., (Des origines au XVIIIe siècle, P.U.F., Paris, 1978).

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- ¹²² Ibid., (Arabic version), vol.1, p.6.
- ¹²³ Lalita Rana, *Geographical Thought: A Systematic Record of Evolution* (New Delhi: Concept of Publishing Company, 2008), p.5.
- ¹²⁴ Ibid., pp.386-387.
- ¹²⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, vol.1, pp.167-178.
- ¹²⁶ Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, *Complete Works, Vol. 2, The Spirit of Laws* [1748], translated from French, (London: T. Evans 1777).
- ¹²⁷ Richard Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently and Why* (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2003).
- ¹²⁸ Ibid., pp. xix, 219-220.
- ¹²⁹ John Carroll and John Horn, "On the Scientific Basis of Ability Testing," *American Psychologist*, vol.36 (10), Oct 1981, p.1012. Also see more recent references on misuse of studies on mental and intelligence testing, including: Robert M. Kaplan and Dennis P. Saccuzzo, *Psychological Testing: Principles, Applications, and Issues*, 8th edn., (Cengage Learning, 2012), pp.531-567. See also: Ronald J. Samuda, *Psychological Testing of American Minorities: Issues and Consequences* (Multicultural Aspects of Counseling and Psychotherapy Series 10), 1st edn., (SAGE Publications, Inc, 1998). See particularly chapter 4 on environmental factors that affect testing results, pp.71-108, and chapter 5 on educational and social results of mental testing, pp.110-140.
- ¹³⁰ Klaus Dodds and David Atkinson (eds.), *Geopolitical Traditions: A Century of Geopolitical Thought* (Critical Geographies), (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), pp.2-5. You may find a more elaborate discussion on this relationship on the following pages.
- ¹³¹ Mike Crang, *Cultural Geography*, 1st edn., (London & New York: Routledge, 1998). p.2.
- ¹³² David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans, 2002).
- ¹³³ Ibid., pp.289-290.
- ¹³⁴ Ronald Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992). Although the author defines specific standards to prove the soundness of the Christian worldview's beliefs and refutes the premises of other worldviews, he nonetheless admits to having had difficulty reaching this goal in certain complex issues. He notes that "The toughest part here is chapter five. There I deal with two knotty challenges to the Christian faith, namely, the claims that the faith is logically contradictory because of its insistence that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man plus the additional assertion that the existence of evil in the world is logically incompatible with the nature of the Christian God." Nonetheless, he advises his readers to "not to get bogged down in this chapter... One can live a rich, full, and happy life without understanding every single point in chapter five," p.10-11.
- ¹³⁵ Ibid., p.9-10.

- ¹³⁶ Ibid., p.10.
- ¹³⁷ Ibn Ashur, *al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr* (Tunis: Dar Saḥnūn, 1997), vol.6, pp.169-170.
- ¹³⁸ Numerous studies, conferences, and seminars have been conducted on the subject of intellectual freedoms. It suffices us here to refer to one of the studies: Jamal al-Din Atiyyah, “Ḍawābiṭ al-Ḥurīyyāt al-Fikrīyyah” (The Rules of Intellectual Freedoms), *Majalat al-Muslim al-Mu‘āṣir* (Journal of the Contemporary Muslim), (issue no. 99, year 25, January-March 2001), pp.167-196.
- ¹³⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, vol.3, pp.322.
- ¹⁴⁰ Ibid., vol.3, pp.320-321.
- ¹⁴¹ Roy Harris and Talbot J. Taylor, *Landmarks in Linguistic Thought Volume I: The Western Tradition From Socrates To Saussure (History of Linguistic Thought)*, 2nd edn., (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), vol.1, pp. xiii-xv; 21-28. The book discusses the works of ancient philosophers in some detail, elucidating the role of language in human thought and society. It commences with the nature of Socratic dialogues, preserved in the works of Plato, Socrates’ prized student. It further discusses the works of Aristotle, and moves forward in time to the Bible, followed by an overview of the oeuvres of renowned scholars of linguistic thought from medieval times to the nineteenth century. Volume II of the book discusses the works in this field from the twentieth century.
- ¹⁴² Nihad Musa, “Al-Maghmūr fi Dā’irat al-Nūr” (The Submerged in the Circle of Light), Prelude in al-Zabn, Imad Ahmad, *al-Taḥkīr al-Lisānī ‘inda ‘Ulamā’ al-‘Aqlīyāt al-Muslimīn* (Muslim Theological Scholars’ Linguistic Thinking), (Amman: Dār al-Nūr al-Mubīn, 2014), pp.4-17.
- ¹⁴³ See Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini, (ed.), *Language and Learning: The Debate Between Jean Piaget and Noam Chomsky*, 3rd edn., (Harvard University Press, 1980).
- ¹⁴⁴ Khalil Ahmad Amayrah, *Fī Naḥw al-Lughah wa Tarākībihā: Manhaj wa Taṭbīq* (On the Grammar and Structure of Language: Methodology and Implementation), (Jeddah: ‘Ālam al-Ma‘rifah, 1984), pp.14-15.
- ¹⁴⁵ Abū al-Faṭḥ ‘Uthman Ibn Jinnī (d. 392 AH), *Al-Khaṣā‘iṣ* (The Distinguishing Features [of the Arabic Language]), edited by Muhammad Ali al-Najjar (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1952), vol.1, p.40.
- ¹⁴⁶ Ibid., vol.1, p.46.
- ¹⁴⁷ Ibid., vol.1, p.47.
- ¹⁴⁸ Ibid., vol.1, p.217.
- ¹⁴⁹ Ibid., vol.3, p.245.
- ¹⁵⁰ Abū ‘Uthmān ‘Amrū ibn Baḥar Al-Jāḥiẓ (d.255 AH), *Al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn* (Clarity and Clarification), edited and explained by Abd al-Salam Harun, 7th edn., Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1998), vol.1, text of whole letter pp.135-139.
- ¹⁵¹ Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d.474 AH), *Dalā’il al-I‘jāz* (Intimations of Inimitability [of the Qur’an]), edited by Mahmud Muhammad Shakir, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1984), p.410.

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- ¹⁵² In this argument, Ibn Khaldūn refutes the opinion that language is hereditary and a product of innate instinct, and that gender or race has a role in defining the nature of the language or the ability to master it.
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- ¹⁵⁴ Ibid., vol.3, pp.25-27.
- ¹⁵⁵ Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God (Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā)*, translated with notes by David B. Burrell and Nazih Daher, (Cambridge: The Islamic Text Society, reprint 2007), pp.6-7
- ¹⁵⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Iqtidā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm li Mukhālafat Aṣḥāb al-Jahīm* (The Necessity of the Straight Path in Opposing the People of Hell), edited by Nasir ibn Abd al-Karim al-Aql, (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rashīd, n.d.), vol.1, p.469.
- ¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p.462.
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- ¹⁵⁹ 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *Asrār al-Balāghah* (The Secrets of Eloquence), editing and commentary by Mahmud Muhammad Shakir (Jeddah: Dār al-Madanī, 1991), p.3.
- ¹⁶⁰ Al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*, vol.3, p.5.
- ¹⁶¹ Ibid., vol.1, p.75.
- ¹⁶² That is, dactylonomy, the act of counting along one's fingers, known as 'number reckoning by finger folding' (*ḥisāb al-yad* or *ḥisāb al-'uqūd*).
- ¹⁶³ Al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*, vol.1, p.76.
- ¹⁶⁴ Ibid., vol.1, p.79.
- ¹⁶⁵ Al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī Ḥarīb al-Qur'ān* (The Strange Terms of the Qur'an), edited by Muhammad Sayyid Kilani (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), p.423.
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- 177 Ibid., pp.34-35.
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- 189 Mahmoud Dhaouadi, “Wa ‘Allama Ādam al-Asmā’ Kulaha fi Mīzān al-Rumūz al-Thaqāfiyyah” (“And He Taught Adam All the Names” in the Scale of Cultural Symbols), *Islāmiyyat al-Ma‘rifah* (Islamization of Knowledge journal), issue 75, Year 19, Winter 1435 AH/2014 AC, pp.161-186.
- 190 Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn ibn al-Athīr (d. 637 AH), *Al-Mathal al-Sā‘ir fī Adab al-Kātib wa al-Shā‘ir* (The Current Model for the Literary Discipline of the Scribe and Poet), introduction and commentary by Ahmad al-Hufi and Badawi Tabanah, (Cairo: Dār Nahḍat Miṣr li al-Ṭab‘ wa al-Nashr, no publishing date), p.61.
- 191 Ibid., p.102.
- 192 Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World* (London & New York: Methuen & Co., 1982), pp.7.
- 193 Ibid., p.81.
- 194 Ibid., p.77-78.
- 195 Ibid., pp.169-171.
- 196 In reference to the November 22, 1967 UN Security Council Resolution 242 that called for the “Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict.” Controversy erupted over whether the drafters intended to obscure the definition of ‘the territories occupied’ by Israel during the six-day war, and by omitting ‘the’ and refusing to incorporate the word ‘all’ to the word ‘territories’ – in the English version of the Resolution – left the interpretation of the text vague in favor of Israel’s withholding of further territories than it did before the war.
- 197 Al-Zabn, *al-Taḥkīr al-Lisānī*, pp.307-325.
- 198 These insights are perhaps similar to Chomsky’s theories of the innateness and biological endowment of language and universal grammar.

- 199 Al-Zabn, *Al-Taḥkīm al-Lisānī*, p.324.
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- 201 Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Riqāq* (The Book on Making the Heart Tender), hadith no. 6491, p.1614.
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- 209 Chin and Wigglesworth, *Bilingualism*, pp.71-78. See also: Emanuel Bylund, Maturation constraints and first language attrition, *Language Learning*; 59 (3), September 2009, pp.687-715.
- 210 Abd al-Aziz Muhammad Hassan, "Al-Lughah al-'Arabīyyah fī al-Qarn al-Ḥādī wa al-'Ishrīn fī al-Mu'asasāt al-Ta'līmīyyah fī Jumhūrīyyat Miṣr al-'Arabīyyah: Al-Waqi' wa al-Taḥadīyyat wa Istishrāf al-Mustaqbal, (The Arabic Language in the Twenty-First Century in Educational Institutions in Egypt: The Reality, Challenges, and Future Prospects), *al-Mawsim al-Thaqāfi al-Thālith wa al-'Ushrūn li Majma' al-Lughah al-'Arabīyyah al-Urdunī 2005* (The 23rd Cultural Season of the Jordanian Arabic Language Academy 2005) (Amman: Manshūrāt Majma' al-Lughah al-'Arabīyyah al-Urdunī, 2005), pp.127-188.

- 211 Mahmoud Dhaouadi, *Al-Thaqafah bayna Ta'şīl al-Ru'yā al-Islāmīyyah wa Ighthirāb Manzūr al-'Ulūm al-Ijtima'īyyah* (Culture between Ta'şīl [Authenticating the Origins] of the Islamic Vision and the Western-Centricity of the Social Sciences Perspective), (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd al-Mutaḥidah, 2006), p.119. Dr. Dhaouadi is a contemporary Tunisian sociologist. His works are published in Arabic, English, and French.
- 212 Ibid., pp.135-136.
- 213 Malek Bennabi, *Le problème des idées dans le monde musulman* (Hydra-Alger: El Bay'yinate, 1990), p.48. Also available in Arabic, Malik Bennabi, *Mushkilat al-Afkār fī al-'ālam al-Islāmī*, trans. Bassam Baraka and Ahmad Shabu, introduced by Umar Masqawi (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1988), p.66.
- 214 Ibid., pp.115-122 (in French), and pp.137-144 (in Arabic).
- 215 Muammad Abu Zahra, *Imam Abu Hanīfa: His Life, Opinions, and Fiqh* (London: Maktabah Publications, n.d., originally published 1945), ch.2, p.9.
- 216 See: Chatham House Rule, *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, (retrieved February 12, 2017), <http://www.chathamhouse.org/about/chatham-house-rule>
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- 219 Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Malik Ibn Hishām (d. 183 AH), *Sīrat al-Nabī Ṣallā Allahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam* known as *Sīrat Ibn Hishām* (Ibn Hishām's Biography of the Prophet), edited by Majdi Fathi al-Sayyid, 1st edn., (Tanta: Dār al-Ṣaḥābah, 1995), vol.2, p.61.
- 220 Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyyah, *I'lām al-Muwaqī'in 'an Rab al-'Ālamīn* (Informing Those Who Sign on Behalf of the Lord of the Worlds), edited by Muhammad Muhyi al-Din Abd al-Hamid, 1st edn., (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1955), vol.1, p.62.
- 221 The team that prepared the document entitled "A Guide to Studies Centers and Institutes of Research, Thought, and Opinion in the Arab World," observed that "The dominant feature of research centers in Jordan is that they are all individual-led institutions, each associated with the name of its founder, and managed by one person...The dominance of individualism in establishing the centers make them more akin to establishing individual for-profit ventures rather than a collective initiative the main purpose of which is intellectual and scientific, in order to fill a vacuum in research and studies centers that address particular issues...This situation has led to...an absence of accountability mechanisms..." See: *Dalīl Irshādī li Marākiz al-Dirāsāt wa Mu'asasāt al-Baḥth wa al-Fikr wa al-Ra'ī fī al-'Ālam al-'arabī*, (A Guide to Studies Centers and Institutes of Research, Thought, and Opinion in the Arab World), prepared by May al-Tahir, Amman, Jordan: *Shabakat al-Dīmuqrāṭiyyīn fī al-'Ālam al-'Arabī* (Publications of the Network of Democrats in the Arab World) and *Markaz Baṣar li Dirāsāt al-Mujtama' al-Madanī* (Baṣar Center for the Civil Society Studies), 2011, p.28. Also documented in a news article in the *Jordanian al-Ghad* daily Newspaper on September 20, 2011.

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- ²²³ Salman Shaikh, "Think Tanks: A Social Good for the Global Community," *The Brookings Institution*, April 6, 2014, (retrieved February 12, 2017), <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/think-tanks-a-social-good-for-the-global-community/>
- ²²⁴ "The Fabian Society took its name...from the Roman General, Quintus Fabius Cunctator, who avoided a frontal attack on Hannibal's army in the third century B.C., but used delaying tactics. Likewise, the Fabian Society preferred not to support a revolutionary transformation, but was committed to promoting evolutionary socialism in Britain." See: Andrzej Diniejko, "The Fabian Society in Late Victorian Britain," *The Victorian Web*, (retrieved February 12, 2017), <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/fabian.html>
- ²²⁵ Kubilay Yado Arin, *Think Tanks: The Brain Trusts of US Foreign Policy* (Springer VS, 2014), p.93.
- ²²⁶ Ibid., pp.93-94.
- ²²⁷ Stephen Boucher and Martine Royo, *Les think tanks: Cerveaux de la guerre des idées*, 3rd revised augmented version, (Editions du Félin, 2012, originally published 2006).
- ²²⁸ In the US alone, there are over 1800 think tanks of this type. Nearly 400 of them are headquartered in Washington DC nearby the decision-making center, most prominent of them are: The Brookings Institution, focused on social and economic studies; RAND Corporation, which conducts policy research in various fields including defense and national security; and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, specializing in politics and foreign relations. There are also more than 1200 such think tanks in Europe, and around 425 in China.
- ²²⁹ See: Kathleen A. Frankovic, "Exit Polls and Pre-Election Polls," in *The SAGE Handbook of Public Opinion Research*, Wolfgang Donsbach and Michael W. Traugott (eds.), (London: SAGE Publications, 2008), pp.570-579.
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- ²³² James G. McGann, *2013 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report*, (Philadelphia, PA: Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, University of Pennsylvania, 2014), p.5.
- ²³³ Ibid., p.7.
- ²³⁴ Ibid., p.9.
- ²³⁵ Ibid., pp.12-14.
- ²³⁶ For further details on examples of the influence of think tanks in launching American wars around the world, see the book written by Andrew Bacevich, professor of international relations at Boston University, who himself served in the US military and took part in US conflicts from the Vietnam War to the Gulf War. See: Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- ²³⁷ Among the books that studied the world of think tanks and stirred questions about their management: Donald Abelson, *A Capitol Idea: Think Tanks and US Foreign Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006); Murray Weidenbaum, *The Competition of Ideas: The World of the Washington Think Tanks* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2011); Thomas Medvetz, *Think Tanks in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).
- ²³⁸ Gin Armstrong, War and Peace - And Numerous Conflicts of Interest, *Transparify*, March 6, 2014, (retrieved February 12, 2017), <http://www.transparify.org/blog/2014/3/2/gin-armstrong>
- ²³⁹ It is worth mentioning, however, that there are research programs specialized in exposing such close ties and analyzing their implications on domestic and foreign policies.
- ²⁴⁰ Boeing is the largest multinational corporation in the world specialized in designing and manufacturing military and civilian aircraft, rockets, and satellites.
- ²⁴¹ Lockheed Martin is an American global aerospace, defense, security and advanced technologies company, and the largest defense contractor in the world, contracting with the US military, Japanese defense force, the Australian air force, and the Brazilian air force, among others.
- ²⁴² Northrop Grumman is one of the top largest defense contractors with the US military, and producer of aerospace and naval defense systems, including aircraft carriers and nuclear-powered submarines.
- ²⁴³ Booz Allen Hamilton is an American management, strategic, and defense consulting firm, contracting with the Department of Defense, the army, and the navy, in addition to space and intelligence specialty areas.
- ²⁴⁴ Armstrong, *War and Peace*.
- ²⁴⁵ See the Fraser Institute's Annual Reports on their website (retrieved February 12, 2017), <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/about/annual-reports>

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- ²⁴⁷ We may make the exception here to data and analysis related to opposition forces in the Arab world, which government agencies and security institutions work to effectively document and exploit.
- ²⁴⁸ McGann, *2013 Global Go to Think Tank Index Report*, pp.49-50.
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- ²⁵⁰ Umaymah bint Ahmad al-Jalahmah, “Ma‘an fī Khandaq Wāhid” (Together in One Trench), Sayd al-Fawaid website, n.d., (retrieved February 12, 2017), http://www.saaid.net/daeyat/omima/260.htm?print_it=1
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- ²⁵² *Dalīl Irshādī li Marākiz al-Dirāsāt*, p.11.
- ²⁵³ Abd al-Hadi, “Dawr Marākiz al-Abḥāth fī Ṣinā‘at al-Qarār al-Siyāsī al-Urduni 1989-2010.”
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- ²⁵⁵ Ibid., p.22.
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- ²⁵⁹ Samuel Huntington, “The Age of Muslim Wars,” *Newsweek* (December 17, 2001), vol.138, issue 25, pp.140-144.
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- ²⁶² Ibid.
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- ²⁶⁶ <https://www.brookings.edu/about-us/brookings-institution-history/> (retrieved February 12, 2017)
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- ²⁷⁴ The National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*, December 2012, (retrieved February 12, 2017), https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/GlobalTrends_2030.pdf
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The subject of this work is thought, a distinguishing characteristic of human beings that the Creator has dignified humankind with.

The book attempts to provide an in-depth conceptualization of intellectual building. Man's intellect is awoken by his/her surroundings, by his need to make sense of reality, his own existence, and a desire to know. How he articulates this reality to himself, interprets, and organises information as it presents itself to his conscience, makes decisions, takes action, and draws conclusions based on whatever framework he gives value to, whether spiritual or other, is the subject of this book. The work reflects on many interesting aspects of human inner communication, including the workings of logic, and in today's information age, the control and manipulation of information by others for personal gain. What is meant by the concept of 'thought'? What place does it hold, and in what relation does it stand to the concepts of knowledge, culture, philosophy, literature, and fiqh (deep understanding, jurisprudence)? These are some of the issues addressed.

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