

The Relevance of Islamic Ideology in Human Sciences

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Now, how should the influence of the culture and ideology of Islam be exercised upon the human sciences Should it be done in a revolutionary manner or in the way of a reform, or in a way different from either of these two If the question facing us is how to apply Islamic culture

and ideology to the existing social sciences, the answer is clear.

Let me ask another question. Why did we revolt Why did our Islamic nation revolt Some people say that the revolution was motivated by political and economic issues. Our experience has proved, however, that although such motives may have prevailed among some groups in our society, they played a subordinate role in the overall movement of our people.

Who are the people that are volunteering for martyrdom on the battlefields Are they any other than members of the revolutionary masses of our country Is it not true that these martyrs have left behind them messages that say: 'We have sacrificed our lives in order to defend the Quran, to revive Islam, and to establish the rule of the True Religion upon this planet.'

If any one were to make a disinterested study of our revolutionary society, he will undoubtedly conclude that the dominant motivating factor in our society is Islam. This nation revolted so that the teaching: of the Quran could be put into practice, so that Allah should reign over our lives. Such nation cannot remain indifferent to the culture of Islam and the culture dominant in the society. That is why the Islamic culture existed in the very core of the Islamic Revolution from its inception. Is Islam anything other than an ideology and a world view When we have a school of thought that is based on a particular ideology and worldview, it is vital to its existence that its world view is infused into the nation and its ideology is put into practice in all its dimensions. This is so because these are the pre conditions of its continued existence and vitality.

We said earlier that culture, also includes ideology. Since our culture is directly related to our ideology, the Islamic Revolution cannot remain indifferent towards either of them. It is essential that all those aspects of the human sciences which are compatible with our culture and religion should be affirmed, and anything that is opposed to our Islamic culture, world view and ideology must be eliminated

Presentation of Opposing Views

There is a point that has to be made clear at this juncture. In our research centers all opposing

views must be presented and debated. When we say that Eastern and Western cultures must be eliminated from our society, this does not mean that the views of this or that Western or Eastern scholar should never be presented in the universities. This is not the case. The issue is that our universities should be so well grounded in Islamic culture and ideology that they should have the capacity to face and repudiate any views opposed to Islam, through rational, reasoned, arguments. We believe in the righteousness of Islam. We believe that this religion of Truth is able to answer any opposing arguments and shall not be found wanting in any intellectual debate regarding any of its principles.

By Islamization of our culture, we mean that our universities and our centers of scholarly research should function in a way that they develop the ability in scholars and thinkers to prove the truth of the teachings of Islam and demonstrate the fallacy of the arguments of those challenging the Path of Righteousness. The educational process should be so structured that by the time a student finishes his studies, he is capable of defending his Islamic beliefs, and not so that from the start of his education non Islamic ideas should be so incorporated in his syllabus so that he is incapable of defending his ideology and beliefs. This does not mean, however, that non Islamic ideas should not be presented in the universities.

In every field of learning, when we prove a certain view, we, at the same time, disprove the view that opposes it. However, intellectual enquiry requires that the conflicting views be presented, considered, and then rejected, so that we might attain a higher level of intellectual certitude. In other words, this is the process by which the correctness of our position, and the fallacy of the opposing view, are definitely established. Opposing views, therefore, must certainly be presented. It should not be the case, however, that opposing views are fed to the students from the very beginning, and that also as if they were scientific and irrefutable facts, and the minds of the students be so filled with these non Islamic ideas that it later becomes a very difficult task to get rid of them and to show the students what is really true and what is specious.

What I have just described was precisely the method of brainwashing that was practised in our universities at the time of the taghuti regime of the Shah. The aim of the educational system of the time was to eradicate and uproot any Islamic ideas or beliefs from the minds of the students at all costs. Whenever a topic related to religious matters was discussed in a class, the professor would either ridicule it and treat it as a joke or speak of it in such a tone as to indicate that it was not a matter to be taken seriously. Even when the content of a book was not anti religious, the tone of voice that the professor chose in discussing it produced a negative impression in the mind of his students. This is a matter which is well known to scholars working in the field of educational psychology. But we clearly saw the effect it had on

the students. When a student came out of such classes his beliefs had been shaken. When these professors wanted to give a funny illustration on a topic, they always used a cleric as a subject.

The problem was compounded by the tendency to present views which were in fact hypotheses and theories as proven, irrefutable and unchanging laws. They would say: "These are absolute truths. Past are the days when any views contrary to them were taken seriously. Science has now proved the validity of these positions irrefutably." You have yourself seen that in the past ninety nine percent of our university graduates implicitly believed all the things which they read in their textbooks. This was specially true of the various fields of the "experimental" sciences. They believed that all views expressed in these books were unchallengeable, eternal and confirmed facts. This method of educating and training young minds is absolutely wrong and must change.

A Programme for Reconstruction of the Human Sciences

Another matter which I must discuss, although in brief, is the programme which has been suggested by the Qum Theological School regarding restructuring of the human sciences curricula in our universities. In few sentences I would like to explain what I believe to be the essential aspects of this plan. The fundamental belief, upon which this plan is based, is that the teaching of the human sciences during the rule of the taghut had two basic flaws. Firstly, they were governed by a policy aimed at eradication of all religious and Islamic beliefs from the students' minds. This policy was carried out and its effects were pervasive although invisible. The other flaw was that the human sciences, whether in our country or elsewhere, were taught and studied not as a one united body of interrelated fields, each of which had a bearing on the other and was essential for proper understanding of the rest and the whole. On the contrary, students of any of the various fields of the human sciences felt no need to know of the problems and issues being studied in other branches of the human studies. There was no awareness in the students of the organic relationship which exists between all the branches of the human sciences, and the fact that they are like cells of the same body.

Seclusion in Human Sciences

As far as I know, nowhere in the world has the problem of teaching the different branches of the human sciences as aspects of a one unified whole been completely solved. I have not even heard of a course being offered which clearly defines the relationship between these branches. We believe, however, that the foundation upon which all the human sciences studies are based

is composed of a series of topics that deal with man's identity and what is essentially human. These topics should be dealt with in all the various branches of the human sciences. Man should be made known. All the aspects of his being should be considered. The factors which make his life and development possible, as well as those factors which lead to his decline and annihilation must be clearly defined. The ultimate aim of his existence must be understood. As long as these things are not done, any discussion of economics, law, or any other topic would lack coherence and a firm foundation. As the Quran points out, they are like a tree that lacks firm roots:

And the parable of an evil word is as an evil tree pulled up from the earth's surface; it has no stability. (14:26)

The many fields of the human sciences will have an influence on our society and on our minds when their position in our entire intellectual scheme is well defined, and when their relationship with our ideology and world view is clearly delineated. As Muslims, we should know the kind of creature man is from the point of view of the Quran, how he develops and evolves. What path should he take in order to reach his perfection. These issues should be discussed and elaborated at least as general principles. It is only when this is done that we can say for certain what relationship exists between economics and the evolution of man towards perfection. As long as we do not know the nature and essence of man, or the nature of his ultimate perfection, we cannot clearly perceive the role that economics can play in man's development. The same thing is true of law. As long as we do not understand the relationship of man to God, we cannot establish sound foundations for our legal system, and explain the Islamic view of the nature and origin of 'rights'. Is justice something that has an independent existence in nature, or is it something based on convention. If it is something based on convention, is that convention based on consideration of facts or is it purely arbitrary. If it is based on facts what are those facts. The same is true of fields like psychology, sociology, education, and all other fields of the human sciences that are related to religious and Islamic matters. Such matters can only be taken into account, elaborated and explained in an Islamic context when they are based on Islamic conception of man and human existence.

In my opinion, even if non Islamic or anti Islamic schools of thought want to clearly explain a relationship between the various fields of the human sciences, they must first put forward a coherent conception of man as perceived through their own doctrine. For example, as long as they have not postulated a conception of what man is, they cannot enter the discussion whether economy is a part of the social infrastructure or superstructure, or whether political, social, and ethical problems of a society are caused by economic factors or not. As long as the

nature of man and his social existence upon this planet have not been determined, all such discussions would be baseless. Or, as the Quran says they would be like a tree which has no roots.

In order for a student to form sound conceptions in regard to economics, politics, history, anthropology, and other such matters, he must first know what man is, what are the dimensions of his being, what are the relationships between these dimensions, how should a man develop so that there is a harmonious evolution of his multiple dimensions and so that he may not become a "one dimensional man". If we do not have a clear idea of the various dimensions of man, how can we put forth an appropriate and well balanced programme for his growth and development

The programme which we propose for reconstruction of the human sciences and the restructuring of the human sciences curricula in Iran, is based on the fundamental idea that before everything there should develop a basic understanding of man, his essence, a knowledge of the diverse aspects of his being, and the ultimate perfection towards which he should move. Only when such an understanding of man is available, can there be a question of ideology necessary to attain those defined goals. Then the question can be posed as to what means are required for the attainment of a defined goal; for, the direction of a journey inevitably depends on the destination that has been determined. As long as we do not know where to go, we cannot decide about which way to choose; for the action that we must take inevitably depends on our ultimate objective. It is on the basis of what is that what must be done can be determined. This discussion of the ends and means must be carried out in all the human sciences. The role and function of every one of the branches of the human sciences in bringing man closer to his ultimate goal must be understood by the prospective student before he embarks on studies in that particular field. Moreover, having embarked on his studies, the student must be guided in his course by criteria based on the Holy Book and the sunnah. His studies must be so oriented that they lead to the affirmation of the truth of Islam and prove the fallacy of all anti Islamic positions. This must be the guiding principle of the human sciences programmes in our universities.

Belief in the fundamentals of Islam must be so strengthened in the students that presentation of anti Islamic material would be unable to make a dent in their convictions. Until this is accomplished, it would be wrong to present or teach anti Islamic views to students. When the student is ideologically strong, and is well grounded in Islamic thought and belief, then he shall be immune to all false and anti Islamic views and positions. Anti Islamic views can then be presented to him. These presentations not only will not weaken his belief in the truths of Islam,

but would consolidate his faith in the righteousness of Islam's teachings and bring to light the incoherence of the views opposed to Islam. Such views must be systematically studied and disproved in open discussion.

I would like to conclude my remarks here. I pray to God that He may save our Imam until the appearance of Imam Mahdi (A), and give us the opportunity to serve Islam and Muslims. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all