

Social Sciences and Religion: What Relationship?

By: Mustapha Achoui

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Introduction:

When we mention psychology today, the first thing that comes to the mind of a great deal of Muslims, particularly those who are not specialized in the field, is 'Freud'; from then on a succession of ideas leads to the fact that this 'Freud' was born a Jew, and is furthermore, an atheist who wrote books against religion. As for sociology, when it is mentioned, it is instantly associated with Durkheim and Marx, and the fact that they were also Jewish, atheist, and against religion, is also recollected.

This kind of relationship between certain branches of the social sciences and religion, which is so palpably engraved in the minds of our intellectuals and Muslim thinkers, explains the reason why some of these thinkers, and some of the Muslim scholars (*ulema*) have taken a negative stand, if not an opposing one, vis-a-vis the social sciences; especially towards psychology and sociology. Undeniably, quite a number of psychologists and sociologists are in fact atheists, and have indeed made religion the object of their criticism, disrespect, and have assigned themselves the task of refuting all that appertains to religion, whether it be institutions or thought. Whereas some have extended their negative position towards religion, and have disputed its origin, function and the role it plays in society altogether. We will exhibit some of these views in the forthcoming pages

However much this may be true, we should not brand all psychologists, sociologists and social scientists as being atheistic, irreligious and determined to fight religion; neither should this state of affairs, in my opinion, allow us to not distinguish between the social sciences on the one hand, with the subject matters and methodologies pertaining to them; and the thinkers on the other hand, as people with their own tendencies, beliefs, ideologies, and even desires and caprices. So, the aim of this study is confined to the nature of the relationship between the social sciences and religion, within the framework of Islamic thought, and also in Western thought. It takes into account the intellectual changes that have taken place in the West and in the Muslim world throughout the course of history, especially in those aspects related to the progress of the sciences, and their subsequent attempts at separating themselves from philosophy and religion. It also looks at the intellectual changes that began in the nineteenth century and reached their peak in the twentieth. During this process we will look closely at the high status enjoyed by the social sciences, and the role they have played in society, especially in the West.

To delineate the core of this relationship (i.e.. between the social sciences and religion) I envisage the following questions to be relevant to our topic:

- 1) What relationship is there between the social sciences and philosophy in the context of Islamic civilization?
- 2) What relationship is there between the social sciences and the Islamic sciences?
- 3) What type of relationships do the social sciences and religion enjoy in the context of Western thought?
- 4) What relationship is there between the social sciences and values in general?

5) What is the future of the relationship between the social sciences and religion overall?

I would like to quickly draw your attention to the fact that the answers to these questions require long discussions and exhaustive research. My aim is only to raise these issues to be debated amongst the specialists, in the hope that Muslim scholars specializing in the field of social sciences would, on the one hand, provide us with ways to get out of the Lizard's hole; and on the other would keep us from erring into nonsensical myth, delusion and obscure Sufi 'theopathic locutions' and babble talk; all of which do not provide Muslims with the framework with which to surmount long centuries of underdevelopment.

This brief study is, actually, an introduction to auto-criticism of academic theses that are brought forward today by Muslim scholars and specialists in social sciences. This criticism is not aiming to underestimate these efforts, nor is it aiming to refute them. On the contrary, these steps are taken in an endeavor to try to urge those endowed with enthusiasm to increase their efforts towards producing more scientific and practical alternatives, to enable us to diagnose our shortcomings. Also for them to suggest ways of advancement to us, rather than us being led up the garden path and being presented with empty slogans, which only cause us to stray further away from our final aspirations and goals. Aspirations and goals can be shown to be within arm's reach, when in fact what is really being shown is a mirage, and only a mirage.

Before undertaking this task, I should emphasize that what is meant by religion in this study is Islam, whenever we are discussing religion in the context of Islamic thought; whereas in the context of Western thought, it refers then to any belief system. Furthermore, the approach of this study is not based upon unilateral visions and opinions, neither is the bilateral approach applicable. What we have here is, in fact, an attempt to examine the social sciences and their relationship with religion, from various angles, through discussing views in relation to Islamic thought and Western thought, using relevant examples.

The nature of the relationship between the social sciences and philosophy.

What is agreed between men of science, scholars and philosophers alike, is that philosophy was the 'mother of science'. However, this belief which prevails in Western culture does not have a place in an Islamic setting. Thus, philosophy has never been regarded as the 'mother of science' in the field of Islam. Here it is the judicio-religious sciences based on the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet (the *sunnah*), which are the supreme sciences, and the basis of all the sciences.

Greek philosophy passed through many phases during the course of history, i.e.. during the pre-Christian period, the post-Christian period, the Islamic period, and finally its recent development during the contemporary Western period. We will confine our attention to the latter two phases. In the following paragraphs a brief account of the position of philosophy and its relationship with the other sciences during these two phases is given.

1) Philosophy's status within the Islamic civilisation framework.

Philosophy or wisdom (*hikmah*) had not gained much importance in the history of the Arabs prior to Islam. As a matter of fact, philosophy did not occupy any scientific seat during the first chapter of Islamic history, which covered the Prophetic period and the Caliphates of the rightly guided Caliphs. This was simply because the Holy Qur'an and the honorable *sunnah*, as origins of faith and jurisprudence, amply sufficed the early Muslims to answer their questions related to the universe, its Creator, life and death, the creation of man, and his nature and his mission. However the rapidly spreading conquests, and extensions of the boundaries of the Caliphate resulted in the Arab Muslims coming in contact with a number of different cultures and philosophies, such as the Greek, Persian, Indian, and Judeo-Christian philosophies and other religions and philosophical sects. It is against this background that the science of scholastic theology (*kalam*) emerged during the Abbasid period. Indeed, the Mutazilites came into existence in response to the deviated streams and false trends that appeared as the Muslims came in contact with the Magians of Persia and the Hindus. In order to defend the Islamic beliefs (*aqida*) the Mutazilites resorted to Greek philosophy, which was at the time gradually being translated into Arabic (Kasim, 1969). Whilst there is no need to dwell upon the various schools of *kalam* here, it is perhaps worth noting that their intellectual exertions and struggles ended with the loss of the Mutazilites to the Asharites, the victory of the 'People of the *sunnah*' (*Ahli al-sunnah*), and the Jabarite (determinist) trend succeeding over the supporters of the rationalist school and the school of free arbitration (Kasim, 1969. Bintu Shati, 1983). This win has been one of the biggest causes of the underdevelopment amongst the Muslims during the last few centuries.

The nature of the struggle between the various schools was such that the *ulema*, being so absorbed in the issue of *aqida*, did not show enough interest in the psychological, sociological, economic and political problems of the Muslim society. Instead, more often than not, their intellectual exertions

served as a disguise for a struggle for power and a concealment of real social and economic issues. Kasim (1969) pointed to this fact when he said: "The Ummayyad sided with the Jabarites because their protagonist views suited, and endorsed the ruling class against their opponents, explaining that the transition of the Caliphate to them was only by God's Destiny." (p.7)

Coincidentally, these were the same tactics followed by the French colonialists in Algeria, as they too mobilized the Sheikhs of some Sufi orders to spread the *Jabarite (determinism)* trend among the population, to make them believe that the French colonization was a predestined that could not be revoked, a *fait accompli!* Imam Abdul-Hamid ben Badis fought with great courage and decisiveness against the defeatist attitude which was predominant as a result of that campaign.

The position of philosophy in comparison to the other sciences remained weak in the context of Islamic thought, until the time of *Maimonides* who founded a library, *Dar-al Hikmah*, for the translation of the Greek philosophical heritage, which, as it is known, was an ensemble of philosophy, medicine and mathematics. There is no doubt that the logic of Aristotle and his views on the soul, the physical world and metaphysics, ran through the works of many Muslim philosophers, doctors and mathematicians. However, despite the indisputable impact of Aristotle, Plato and other Greek philosophers, we find that a number of Muslim philosophers found the courage to be critical of these great masters, and, being inspired by the Qur'an, the *sunnah*, and also by the civilization progress, they added to their works concepts that could never have occurred to the Greeks. Admittedly, it was the topics related to metaphysics and the unseen that the Muslims were most fervent about; but the topic of the soul (*al nafs*) gradually gained momentum among the philosophers and doctors, some of whom had different concepts of the soul from Aristotle's. Thus, Al-Kindi, in opposition to Aristotle, asserted that the soul is an entity separate from the body (Kasim, p.15). Similarly, Al-Farabi whose opinion on the soul combines both the views of Aristotle and Plato, as, in his eyes, the human being is made up of two entities: the body and the soul. Al-Farabi however did not agree with Plato's position regarding the transmigration of the souls (ibid, p.16). Yet, despite these additions made by the Muslim philosophers particularly by Razi and Ibn Al-Qiyam on the concepts of the soul and the spirit, their addendum were not considered as topics that stood apart from philosophy. The same happened to Muslim scholars who wrote about ethics, for example Ibn-Miskawayah's in his *Tahdib Al - Akhlaq wa Tatyib Al - A'raq*, and Ibn-Hazm in his *Mudawatu - nufus*, although the influence on these subjects derived more from the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, than from Greek philosophy.

What I am trying to convey through this brief account of the status of philosophy in the domain of Islamic thought, which started with Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, and ended with Al-Ghazzali, Ibn Tufayl and Ibn Rushd, is the emphasis that was placed on science during this period of Islamic civilization, which demarcated their place from those established during the reign of Greek philosophy. At this time there were also developments in the fields of mathematics, logic, natural sciences, and

theology by Muslim philosophers using as their main sources the Qur'an and the prophetic traditions (Hadith). In addition to the gains made from Greek and other philosophies, there appeared new disciplines in the sciences of the Qur'an and Hadith, and other disciplines that developed from them, for example, the study of the Arabic language and literature. While some philosophers like Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina were trying to reconcile the views of Aristotle with the Islamic *aqida*, others such as Al-Ghazzali accused this group of heresy and disbelief. After refuting the science of *kalam* and philosophy, he concluded that the Sufi path was the way to attain 'true knowledge' (Kasim, 1969); whereas Ibn Rushd endeavored to reconcile philosophy with religious law (*shari'a*).

Whilst *ulema* like Ibn Taymiyyah, who concentrated on jurisprudence, refuted Greek logic, he said: "I always knew that Greek logic is not needed by an intelligent person and not beneficial to a stupid one." (p.29)

Ibn Taymiyyah criticized the Greek philosophers by showing the corruption of their ideas in metaphysics and logic, due to the corruption of their principles, and their restricting the means to achieve knowledge to definitions and 'syllogistic demonstrations'. He goes even further and refutes their arguments about 'the definitions' with which 'concepts' are known and also the various forms of 'syllogisms' and their components 'the invariables'. Ibn Taymiyyah also criticized the use of Greek logic by Al-Ghazzali in such works as *Al-Mustasfa* and *Mi'yar Al-ilm* and *Mihaku Nadhar*. Briefly, Ibn Taymiyyah's refutation of Greek logic is specifically a refutation of Greek "formal logic", due to its sterility, a view that has just recently been agreed to by Western scholars, too.

When we look at Ibn Khaldun's work, we see that he reserved a whole chapter of his *Al-Muqadima* to "the refutation of philosophy and the corruption of its source." He highlighted the predicament in which Aristotle, his disciple Plato and the Muslim philosophers who followed them, fell into, especially those Muslim philosophers who shaped their metaphysics obsequiously on Aristotle (excepting Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina). Ibn Khaldun dismissed the philosophers' contention glorifying reason and rational thinking, summing up his views he said that "Philosophy does not correspond with its aims, furthermore, it contradicts Divine law."

Despite his harsh criticism, he does remain objective, and fair towards philosophy by stating the positive aspects of this science such as:

- Nurturing mind,
- Training in organizing one's argumentation,
- Training in arriving to the point of an intellectual discussion, by means of arguments and proofs (critical thinking).

In his final point, however, he advises the students of philosophy to resort to the status of "religious" law, and to adhere to Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*). If such was the position of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Khaldun vis-a-vis philosophy and Greek logic, what place then did they, and other Muslim thinkers reserve for sciences in their classifications of knowledge?

The classification of knowledge in Islamic thought.

After Ibn Khaldun insisted that sciences prosper when urbanization and civilization develop, he produced a classification of knowledge organizing the sciences of his time. According to his classification, sciences form into two groups: one is natural, human beings attain it through intellectual acquisition; the other is traditional, they inherit it from revealed sources. The first one refers to philosophical sciences and the second one refers to natural sciences transmitted through revealed knowledge information. Following this overview, he delved into the details of these sciences and organized them as follows:

1) Traditional religious sciences, which are divided into: exegesis, Qur'anic recitation, science of the Hadith, science of the foundation of the law (*usul al fiqh*) and he adds to them mysticism (*tasawwuf*) and dream interpretation.

2) Kalam, which explains religious beliefs and defends them by means of rational arguments.

3) Linguistics, the study of language, grammar, rhetoric, and literature.

4) Rational sciences, which he classified as those sciences, known (during his time) under the name of the 'philosophical sciences', into four groups: logic, physics (to which is attached medicine and agriculture), metaphysics, and mathematics (to which is attached arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music). To these groups Ibn Khaldun added the science of magic and talismans, and the science of chemistry. After he identified all of these sciences and exposed their benefits and their harms, only then did he reserve a chapter to "The refutation of philosophy and the corruption of its origin" as mentioned above.

What we observe regarding this classification is as follows:

1) Ibn Khaldun classified the various sciences of his time into two distinct groups by virtue of the source (revealed and rational), by virtue of the topic (law, *aqida*, language, logic, physics, astronomy, geometry, music, agriculture etc.) and finally by virtue of their methodology (based on revealed knowledge or reflection).

2) Despite Ibn Khaldun's distinction between the "revealed sciences" and the "rational sciences", it is worth noting that he does not, however, separate the natural sciences from philosophy and *hikmah*.

3) Ibn Khaldun invented a new science, with its own subject matter and method (sociology), but he did not mention it in his classification.

There are, however, a great many Muslim thinkers who, in producing their classifications of knowledge, have shown that the majority of non-religious sciences and linguistics are intimately attached to philosophy. When speaking of the classification of knowledge in the field of Islamic thought, Al Najjar (1987) commented that the final purpose of science was "to be a servant of religious truth, which is the ultimate objective for the emergence of sciences and their progress." This seemingly elegant expression leaves us, in actual fact, with a number of unanswered problems that Al Najjar did not attend to.

1) He did not explain the concept of 'religious truth' in his paper.

2) He asserted that this 'truth' "is the ultimate objective for the emergence of sciences and their progress." Which sciences are referred to here? and have all sciences really progressed to the level of this ultimate truth "the service of religious truth"?

After describing the classification of knowledge of numerous Muslim thinkers such as Ibn Nadim, Ibn Hazm, Ibn Khaldun and Ahmed ibn Mustapha; Al Najjar raises questions and levels a criticism at these classifications and claims that in the main they were based on descriptions of science as they "were in reality", and not as "they really ought to be."

The crux of the problem here is Al Najjar's desire for pure rationality which revolves around 'how things ought to be'. This is an instance of philosophical and ethical reasoning, being to the detriment of attempts to come to terms with reality, and trying to change it or reform it in the light of "how things really are". In fact, this escapism from reality and its portrayal in the above terms, as well as escapism from the study of causal and correlational relationships among the different phenomena, amounts, although indirectly, to a refutation of the inductive experimental method which is founded upon investigation. The renunciation of the experimental method, dwelling upon Greek logic or on Sufi thought, limiting ourselves to interpretation of the sacred texts (i.e.. the Qur'an and the *sunnah*) are factors which have led to the underdevelopment of the Muslim nations, and is still draining their mental energies.

These energies and efforts that often start with good intentions, end up generating ethical and idealistic concepts that are far from the reality of the Muslim society at large. They are also far from providing us with practical means to escape this retrogressiveness, and tackle the issues through a grasp of the psychological and sociological aspects of the Muslims' condition as it is today.

Therefore, the majority of publications now tend to come under the heading of "the way things ought to be", thereby ignoring reality. However, it is impossible to alter behavioral and social phenomena to "the way things ought to be", if these phenomena are not comprehended "as they really are".

Perhaps, mentioning psychology as an example of a social science that endeavors to study and describe "reality as it is", as much as possible, may assist us in discerning the aims of philosophy and ethics from those of social sciences when analyzing behavioral phenomena.

Some of the aims of psychology as mentioned by Zimbardo (1980) are as follows:

1) To describe behavior, activities and experiments following gathering the data and information related to the area which is under study.

2) To interpret given behavior within either a cultural framework or model, or a particular theory.

3) To predict anticipated behavior based on prior information and data, and then to understand the possible relationships between them to enable conception of new relationships between certain variables.

4) To control behavior so that it becomes possible to monitor different variables and also to change some types of "deviated" or abnormal behaviors.

5) To ameliorate people's standard of living starting with an improvement in the various sectors including: the health, education and social sectors.

Thus, although psychology is a science that occupies itself with the study and reporting of behavior 'as it is', it should not be labeled as a science that cannot actually help in modifying behavior, and elevating it to the level of 'the way things ought to be'. Altering and improving behavior is precisely one of its aims and that is achieved by means of training, education, learning and at times, treatment.

At this juncture I would like to indicate that one of the aims of psychology from an Islamic viewpoint, may well be to fill the gap between that which is 'ideal' and that which is 'real', primarily at the conceptual level, and secondly at the behavioral level.

Before embarking on the topic of psychology in general, and psychology from an Islamic perspective in particular, I wish to make reference to the classification of the sciences by Ibn Khaldun and others. The topics which form the social sciences at present, were not, in the estimation of the early *ulema*, topics which were distinguished from philosophy, ethics, or religious sciences. On the contrary, we notice that subjects relevant to the social sciences were scattered either under the category of *kalam*, as in the case of the concepts of freedom and responsibility; or under the category of philosophy and ethics, as in the concept of the soul, its potentialities, its actions, and the scope of its knowledge; or in the case of "illnesses of the heart", they were included under the headings of ethics or *tasawwuf*.

Although this may have been the general trend, we know that tentatively some topics began to enjoy increasing appeal to the point that they appeared as categories of their own. This included tax and financing in economy, and power, its delegation and execution in politics. Others dealt with various psychological and spiritual disturbances and their respective cures (spiritual healing), as well as topics covering the field of nature, education and sociology. This specialization and show of interest, and most importantly innovation in some cases, reflects (as Ibn Khaldun indicated) the spread of civilization in the Islamic cities, as well as an expressed need to arrive at practical solutions to the diverse problems faced in these cities, in the intellectual fields and other areas of life. Despite there being no conflict to speak of between science and religion as such in Islamic civilization; we find that there were some major differences between some *ulema* in the field of *fiqh* and some philosophers, and that these were not rare. These conflicts however need to be viewed in the context of intellectual exchange. We have for instance, the discussion between Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal and the Mutazilites over the issue of the creation of the Qur'an, and the arguments that took place between Imam Al-Ghazzali and Ibn-Rushd which were compiled in the famous *Tahafut al-falasifa* (The Refutation of the Philosophers) and *Tahafut-u-Tahafut* (The Refutation of the Refutation). Some scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah may have, indeed, accused scholars like Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina of disbelief, but this charge was not put forward during the philosopher's lifetime, nor did it lead to punishment.

What we hope to retain from these discussions is the manifestation of different subjects and methods of dealing with them from the examples of

the Muslim scholars, as they studied the situations that were facing them; especially in the areas of *aqida*, *fiqh*, logic and situations related to political power. In the field of physics, there was no fundamental conflict between Muslim thinkers, as they did not mix matters of faith with those that pertained to the physical sciences. In the domain of history, the innovation of Ibn Khaldun for instance, revolves primarily around his criticism of the methods followed by his predecessors. He presented their mistakes and mishaps objectively and eventually suggested a new subject and method for study, which he called the sciences of civilization (sociology).

Interestingly, scholars like Ibn Khaldun, innovators of new topics and disciplines, who extended their own ideas, as well as gaining expertise in the field of education and learning, did not call for a detachment or a separation between their area of specialization and the rest of the sciences, such as the religious sciences. In spite of the lack of a background to the claim for separation in the history of Islamic thought, the dismemberment of the various disciplines of knowledge is, however, being proposed today.

Is it really their detachment from other disciplines that has impeded the advancement of the social sciences in the Muslim world? Is there a definite need to detach the social sciences from the rest of the Islamic sciences? And what is the real difference between 'detachment' and the 'dismemberment' of the sciences?

To answer these questions, however, briefly, we need to address the following issue of the relationship between the topics of modern social sciences and those of religious sciences (*aqida*, law and *fiqh*) in the Islamic setting.

The relationship between social sciences and religious sciences.

The understanding of the Holy Qur'an and the honorable Hadith, and the application of their teachings are, undoubtedly, the platforms from which are launched the religious and the linguistic sciences in the world of Islam. Nevertheless, throughout Islamic history what has actually happened is that excessive attention, a plethora we might say, has been paid towards ritual jurisdiction, to the detriment of jurisdiction which regulates the relationships between the Muslims themselves, and with their environment. This plethora has its own political and psychological motives. Al-Banna tackled these motives in 1996, in his book *For a New Jurisdiction*.

I, myself, in fact, offered this as a subject for discussion to the students of post-graduate studies in the Institute of Fundamental Religious Studies (*M'ahad usul al din*) in Algiers several years ago; as this topic has great relevance to the advancement of the sciences from an Islamic viewpoint in the past, the present and also in the future. The aim was not merely discussion of the topic for the sake of discussion, but to show ultimately that it was necessary not to opt for a cut and dry separation of the sciences, but rather to opt for a separation of purpose. What is inferred by a separation of purpose is the study in depth of a given science after defining its topic and its methodology with precision. In no way should this suggest a divorce between the religious sciences and the social sciences as was suggested in the West, in order to separate religion from science on the one hand, and philosophy from the rest of the sciences on the other.

What we are calling for in the context of *Islamization of knowledge* is for the sciences to be “integrative” once their philosophical frameworks, topics and methodologies are clearly defined, and not allowing one science to reign over another unless due to the criterion of law, reason or a combination of both. Failing to achieve the above mentioned “integration” could result in:

1) The sad separation of the sciences from each other in general and in particular science from religion, as is already the case in a number of Western and Muslim countries. This is most noticeable at the university level and in specialized institutes in the Muslim World, where the specialist in religious sciences barely knows about psychology and sociology, and similarly the specialist in the social sciences knows precious little about the religious sciences.

2) The jumbling up of the topics and the methodologies of these sciences and their aims; in addition to the possibility of experiencing the domination of the methodology pursued in some sciences over that of others, for example, the possibility of experiencing the hegemony of the religious scholars and scholars of jurisprudence (the *fuqahah*) over the other scientists. This would freeze any amelioration in these areas.

To avoid such a sad separation or domination, a number of recommendations have been proposed to tighten the gap between the Islamic sciences and the *ulema* on one hand, and the modern social sciences and their specialists on the other, in the Muslim world. The following are a number of recommendations that have been put forward in the Muslim

world as models in social sciences. They explain the positions of different scholars and their endeavors to tackle this issue from an Islamic perspective.

In a short epistle (1989), Al-Faruqi endeavored to give social sciences an Islamic tone. After he had shown the shortcomings of Western methodology in the study of Social Sciences and of their scholars; for example the fact that they had overlooked spiritual aspects, their biases, and the fact that they had distanced values from the field of social science. Al-Faruqi then moved on to elaborate on the issue of how to give the social sciences an "Islamic tuning." To realize this, he suggested the following:

1- The "re-integration" of all studies and sciences under the banner of 'Unity' (*tawhid*).

2- The need for social sciences to focus on Allah's vicegerency, which implies man's vicegerency. Following which these sciences could be called "Sciences of the *Ummah*." Al-Faruqi stressed that the study of a society cannot be free of judgmental values.

3 - Sciences of the *Ummah* should not be neglected in favor of natural sciences, they should occupy the same position of importance.

4 - The study of reality should not lead to the neglect of "how things ought to be."

After this appeal, Al-Faruqi goes on to explain the principles that a scholar of social science should abide by, the first of which is Islam and what it aims for; then, to keep close to the Divine Model which manifested in human terms by the Prophet; to take heed of values; to work to search for the truth in the light of that Divine Model; and, whenever it is possible, to produce a new format of criticism in the social sciences; Are these pre-requisites sufficient to secure the casting of an Islamic tone over the social sciences? Can we generalize Al-Faruqi's criticism about the Western social sciences? And can we validate the application of individual Western social scientists to the social sciences as a whole?

I will not pretend that I am able to give answers to these questions in this short study. However, I would like to share an opinion that the nature of the relationship between the social sciences and religion in the West may shed a light or give an indirect answer to these questions and that, as we are aware, will demand engagement in debates, and lucid answers from the Muslim thinkers and researchers, without prejudice or reticence. Al-Faruqi sowed the initial seeds in the field of the 'Islamization of Knowledge', and on the very sensitive topic of 'casting social sciences with an Islamic tone'. He also opened the door to whoever followed him to organize conferences and congresses in order to deepen the study and form different viewpoints. Thus, the International Institute of Islamic Thought held many conferences with the object of cementing this idea, and bringing it to the verge of practice and scientific theorizing. However, these attempts have not been made without enduring some superficial and simplistic approaches to the issue at stake; neither did it go without causing negative reactions nor having to face opposition, at least in some aspect of the project, as expressed in the views of Burhan Ghalion (1993). I will skim over these opinions as the subject does not require a profound study or a full appraisal here.

In 1992, during a conference which was held in Cairo, under the auspices of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and the Architects Union, the problem of differentiating between the social sciences was again raised. A number of related issues were raised, such as 'social sciences at the cross-roads of westernisation and modernization' by Rafik Habib; and 'features of prejudice and objectivity in the Western human social thought and in the Khaldunian thought' by Mahmud Al-Dhawadi, to name but two.

If we consider this last topic as a sample of the many theses forwarded during that conference, we note that Al-Dhawadi defined the concepts of 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity', he then moved on to elucidate the motives for subjectivity in the social sciences in the West. He argued that the crisis that has been endured by man and social sciences for the last two decades at least, is by and large referred back to the issue of objectivity and subjectivity (p.7) and to consolidate this view, he discussed the increasing amount of criticism from Western scholars and specialists, directed at social and human sciences in the West.

Al-Dhawadi is undoubtedly has a right to proceed by giving the claims and views that support his position; however, the mere listing of claims without arguing them, and not giving the counter-arguments could also be seen as a bias that Muslim scholars should avoid. As to the crisis of the social sciences in the Muslim world; in his opinion it can be traced back to two problems 1) our uncritical acceptance of concepts of man and society that stem from the experimental, materialist Western mind, and 2) the fact that since coming under the spell of the West, we have not continued the study of Ibn Khaldun's idea, to gain and access the sources of experimental intellectual knowledge on the one hand, and the sources of psychological, spiritual, and transcendental knowledge on the other.

For my part, I have no objection to adopting Ibn Khaldun's model for the study of civilization, the analysis of history, on the basis of the descriptive and historical model that he adopted. However, I have reservations concerning the first problem identified by Al-Dhawadi, which is based on our uncritical acceptance of concepts of man and society which stem from the experimental and materialist Western mind. Firstly, this claim cannot be generalized, as it does not apply to all of us; and secondly, the effects of this wholesale adoption of Western concepts is not obvious. If this adoption had taken place we would have noticed the spread of empirical thought among the Muslim social scientists, however this is not the case. There is, in fact, such a general and complete withdrawal from experimentation that one worries whether we might be suffering from 'experimentation phobia'.

After this, Al-Dhawadi addressed the field of psychology, and commented on its use of mice, pigeons and monkeys for the purpose of conducting laboratory behavioral experiments which, in his words, has become "commonplace in Psychology and the results are applied to human behavior. This means that psychologists do not differentiate between man and animals,"(p.19)

Again, I have no qualms with this being applicable, to a certain extent, on the followers of the behaviorist school; but how can it be extended to all the branches of psychology (of which there are almost fifty today), and to

individual psychologists who belong to different schools which have completely different methodologies?

In addition to the potent efforts of the late Al-Faruqi in highlighting the serious issue of the necessity to cast the social sciences with an Islamic tone; and efforts made by scholars in The Association of Muslim Social Scientists and other institutions and individuals; there appeared in 1979 an article by Malik Badri from his book *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*. In my estimation, Badri's work made an unquestionable contribution to show the position of ethical and religious aspects in the study of psychology. Laying bare the dilemma of Muslim psychologists is, needless to say, of great necessity but remains insufficient in the face of the problem. Should we not, perhaps, refrain from being obsessed with our problems and rise above our constraints, taming our criticism of Western social sciences? Should our endeavors not converge towards developing the social sciences with precise topics and strict methodologies, to enable us to obtain a clear understanding of Muslim realities, and to stimulate us to resolve the problems in a scientific way that does not uproot our faith nor our consciousness? Thus, in Dr. Badri's work we have been, indeed, warned against the dangers of being in the 'Lizard's hole', but we are still left short of finding ways to get out of it.

The majority of the exertions made by Muslim scholars working on the issue of knowledge, could be reduced to superficial claims about Western social sciences being in a crisis, that they are prejudiced, against values, have ignored the spiritual aspect, are not humane, and finally, that they are also secular. Sadly, apart from some rare exceptions, one does not often come across scholars who discuss the *raison - d'etre* of these sciences, the actual part they play in diagnosing problems, and to solving some of them, or any other positive factors. (See Rajeb, 1996)

It is true that some institutions, universities and colleges begin to appear here and there in the Muslim world with intentions to devise curricula that will assure the "integration" of instruction in "revealed knowledge" with instruction in modern social science, in the hope that this would ease the reticence felt by both parties. Despite these exceptions, one still witnesses that proposals put forward by Muslim scholars to overcome this crisis are still, to my understanding, far too idealistic and not scientific. One cannot but hold in deep respect, the candid endeavors of the scholars, but I question whether this pattern of thought should become our way of legitimizing the social sciences.

The reality is, that the origins of these ventures, that aim at subjugating all sciences to the methodology and the fundamentals of religious sciences are not recent. They can be traced back to the middle period of the Islamic civilization, when the doctors of *kalam* were immersed in the acute question of the relationship between reason and revelation (Attiya, 1980), for example, Ibn Rushd discussion in his book *Final conclusions and accounts of the connections of Philosophy and Law (Fasl al-magal, wa taqrir ma bayna al-shariati wal hikmati min itisal)*.

Recently Dr. Jamal Attiya held a seminar on the issue of jurisprudence and the social sciences during which he asked these two questions:

1) Is it within the means of jurisprudence to make contributions towards the development of methodologies in social sciences?

2) Can jurisprudence gain something from the methodologies of the social sciences?

According to Attiya there are two groups with two different answers to these questions. One that emphatically rejects the methodology of jurisprudence, this is the view of the specialists in the social sciences, (but he did not specify whether he was alluding to Muslims or non-Muslims); and a second that believes that "the social sciences cannot develop if they are tied to strict criteria" (p.11) As for Dr. Attiya himself, he is of the opinion that the science of jurisprudence was originally designed to make the orders of Allah precise and clear, and subsequently to deduct rules from them. It was not designed to explain social phenomena and causal relationships, nor to find the rules which control these phenomena. It is therefore unjust to ask the science of jurisprudence to bear a burden that it cannot take. (p.12)

Dr. Attiya's input to finding way for possible cooperation and "integration" between jurisprudence and the social sciences is not to be discredited. It is just as he himself pointed, that jurisprudence is founded on deductive methods. I would like to add here, that the social sciences are founded on both the deductive and the inductive methods; generally making more use of the latter.

The desire to subjugate the social sciences to jurisprudence, whether it be from the aspect of methodology or content, is still luring Muslim researchers up until now. The periodical of Islamization of knowledge *Islamiyat al Marifa*, in its first edition (June, 1995), published an article by Doctor Louay Safi, the title of which was *Towards a fundamentalist methodology for social studies*. Safi asserts that "Conflict between sciences and religion is not a deterministic conflict that applies to all human culture," and he adds "but it is specifically related to the Western historical experience." He also points out that any attempts to reproduce the same conflict within the Islamic culture are invented attempts. After this assertion he continued to the topic of the source of knowledge, and explains that "The efforts of early Muslim scholars were limited to the development of instruments for, and methods of text research, consequently they did not develop a high-standard of methodology to study historical and social phenomena; thus their social and historical knowledge was lacking in scientific precision and methodological cohesion."

This unconditional criticism which spared none of the scholars, with the exception of Ibn Khaldun, is difficult for me to accept. Nevertheless, I find myself in agreement with Safi when he attested that "Development of textual methodology, to the detriment of historical methodology led to a clear theoretical and conceptual dysfunction, especially in those areas where precision concerning a society structure and social organization is needed."

Disregard for inductive methodology was common among Muslim scholars, excepting the efforts of Razi and Jaber ibn Hayan in medicine and science, and Al Shatibi in *shari'a*, who all contributed to the development of induction as a methodology for research. Despite the efforts of these

scholars, exceptional as they were, they were unable to lead to the propagation of the experimental spirit, nor to the establishment of inductive methods to conduct and execute experiments among the Muslim nation. After a critical review of methodology in the Muslim context, Safi, (as do most modern Muslim scholars,) moves on to a criticism of Western thought, drawing attention to the 'methodological mishap' that is reverberating in the Western scientific milieu due to "the gradual estrangement from revelation."

In reference to the fundamental methodology proposed by Safi, it is regarded as a "balanced methodology" which aims at realizing "“integration”" between the rules and regulations deduced from revealed sources and those induced from historical sources.

When we ponder over endeavors that hope to legitimize social sciences, by creating bridges between them and the sciences of the *shari'a*, especially with jurisprudence, we will notice; unfortunately, that the Muslim mind is infatuated with the power of its heritage, and finds itself fettered by its own manacles. Some of the leading figures in the Islamization of knowledge movement have indeed been alerted to the hindering weight of heritage, which, if mishandled, reinforces the grip of its traditional concepts and methodologies on the Muslim mind. These scholars, despite regarding the Muslim heritage as one of the richest of all human heritage, insist that we should see to it that it is filtered, as it cannot be followed 'through thick and thin till death do us part'.

This is perhaps what led Dr. Alouani (1993) to affirm that Islamization of knowledge as a methodology of knowledge revolves around the six main axes, i.e.: the methodological treatment of the Qur'an, the *sunnah*, Islamic heritage, and human heritage, the formation and building of a Qur'anic methodology, and lastly the building of a contemporary Islamic knowledge system. Without a positive and conscientious intercourse with the heritage, it could become a factor that may become a stumbling block to what could otherwise be discovered by the Muslims about the universal knowledge contained in the Qur'an. Consequently this heritage may produce another heritage that might be considered by a thirsty person as water, when in actual fact it is only a mirage. This type of heritage cannot effectively motivate a society.

During a seminar on the Islamization of knowledge (June, 1996 in Malaysia) Dr. Alouani insisted on a sober criticism, and a revision of a number of matters related to perception, timing, and movement towards religion, innovation and change. He drew attention to three steps:

- The revision of the studies based on the Qur'an.
- The revision of the studies of the *Sunnah*, and their interpretations.
- The revision of heritage studies.

Besides the hegemony of fundamental methodology (i.e.. that based on deductive Qur'anic analysis); its impact and grip on the minds of many contemporary Muslim thinkers; and the weight of jurisdictional, theological and political pressure they have been subjected to, contemporary Muslim thinkers have to also face the looming danger of the 'normative theory' with its jurisdictional values, and other impending complications that are often presented in the form of dualisms, e.g.. true and the false. We do not hesitate

to say that these looming dangers, and the excessive desire to criticize the West as a way of trying to dispel Western domination, will have grave consequences on theorization and diagnosis operations, and ultimately on the ability to provide solutions for the underdeveloped state of the *Ummah*.

Abu Sulayman (1992) stated that one of those consequences would be the 'live burial of social sciences'. He explained that the development of events and political conflicts in Muslim countries had brought about a separation between the political leadership and the intellectual leadership. He said that immersion in descriptive and traditional studies; living meagerly on the literalism methodology and the sciences relevant only to the Qur'an; as well as the separation of the intellectual leadership (especially the jurisdictional) from the political leadership are, among the factors that have hindered the progress of social sciences, and led to the plethora of doctrinal writings on ritual jurisprudence (*Fiqh al-Ibadat*) to the detriment of transactional jurisprudence (*Fiqh al-Muamalat*). This was explained by Al-Banna (1996), who demonstrated that the political factors which had prompted the accumulation of *Fiqh al-Ibadat*, continue until today. One of the worst sequels of this 'ritualistic accumulation', to use Al-Banna's words, is the fact that it is causing a distortion so profound and so pervasive, that it is virtually becoming synonymous with today's Muslim personality.

For even though this unrestrained attack on traditional jurisdiction, blaming it for the backwardness and the distortion of the personality of Muslims, could be regarded as harsh, the fact remains that Al-Banna and Abu Suleyman, among others, have somehow put their finger right on the long malady which has made the Muslims be unable to progress. This has been epitomized in the intellectual aspect, particularly in regard to methodology, due to the importance of the categorization of the sciences being based on the criteria of their content and methodology. In fact, to make the utilization of these sciences feasible for Islamic societies, it is incumbent on us to by-pass the unrealistic intellectual problematic of 'reason and revelation', 'the Qur'an and actuality', 'the true and the false', 'normativism and positivism' and 'certitude and speculation' and so forth. It is unrealistic that all our energies be expended on the treatment, repetition and reiteration of these problematic from centuries ago, and them still consuming so much of our time and efforts. It has almost become like an obsession ruling over conscious and subconscious alike, despite the existence of guidance in the Qur'an and the vast amount of literature left behind by many thinkers in the league of Ibn Rushd or Ibn Taymiyyah.

Adding to these problematic issues is the question of ethics or *aqida* and their influences on the sciences. One can hardly read anything today that does not refer to the prejudice of Western social sciences, the fact of their being driven by Western values, or their overlooking the issue of 'values' altogether! It is worth saying here, that the nature of knowledge or science is impartial it is rather its usage and the direction taken by human beings that produces prejudice.

In other words objectivity and subjectivity are qualities that pertain to humans, and not to sciences, or even to art. Those who claim that the social sciences have overlooked, for example, values, often said this at a time

when it had become a major theme in psychology and sociology, enjoying discussion in a number of books and studies being published. Moreover, there is nothing to prevent us from studying values ourselves from an Islamic perspective, and including it in our psycho-social studies? Hand-cuffing the social sciences to the statute laws of values will not give birth to social sciences, but rather to ethics, Sufism, religious sciences and so forth.

Indeed, the subjugation of social sciences to fundamental methodology, or chaining them to the laws of ethics would, inevitably be conducive to the investigation of the true and the false; and the question of belief and disbelief. This in turn, would hold us hostages under the uneasy weight of heritage; where as a practice, all differences in the traditional sciences are to be sent back with immediacy to ethical law, as Dr. Alouani pointed out. It is because Islamic sciences are based on the fundamentals of religion and jurisdiction, which are both established on the same ethical laws that some serious dualism have emerged in Islamic thought i.e.: those who are right and those who are wrong; the saved sect and the damned sect, etc. So as to avoid such intellectual standards, it is more laudable to refrain from our obsession with this dualism (Alouani, 1996), and practice the famous Arabic saying: "Savor that which is clear from that which is unclear."

It goes without saying that, we as specialists of social studies, are under the obligation to promulgate these sciences to the service of religion and the Islamic nation, in the light of this I would like to suggest the following principles:

1) To avoid, as much as it is possible, reference to ethical laws during the study of psychological, sociological and historical phenomena. This does not insinuate estrangement of the topic of ethics, nor to rejecting Islamic values. On the contrary, the topic of ethics ought to be regarded as a specific one in psychology, and ought to enjoy scientific study with the aim of showing the gap that exists between the world of ethics in Islam, and the world in which the Muslims are behaving. This could be done in the light of some major factors such as personality, age, sex, environment, culture and history.

2) To avoid being engulfed by heritage, and being maladroit in its application to contemporary psychological phenomena, especially with a heritage that is strongly influenced by Greek philosophy and medicine, and by bygone conceptions.

3) To avoid extreme positions vis-a-vis that which is not Islamic, and benefit from the heritage of humanity, with justice and good faith. Needless to say, heritage is not just Western, but also Eastern, Southern and Northern also!

4) To avoid a blind imitation of the West in all its theories, philosophies, and ideological backgrounds.

5) To sanction the Holy Qur'an and the *sunnah* as the two sources of knowledge that are complementary to the universal knowledge which man has formulated by way of using deductive, inductive and other methods of scientific research; maintaining these two sources as the main references in matters of *aqida*, ethics, morals and conduct.

6) To refer to the social sciences and their various branches to describe Muslim problems, psychological, sociological and educational etc.. Thereby creating a description endowed with such precision that it should enable us to adopt strategies and plans relevant to Muslim society, and in accordance with its environmental, cultural and historical conditions.

7) To establish Islamic institutions specializing in social sciences, and to form organizations and bodies which would set up networks enabling Muslim specialists to exchange experiences and cooperate in various fields, and for the publication of specialized journals.

8) At the university level, there is a need to devise methodologies that will help us to secure the “integration” of Islamic knowledge with specialization in social sciences, as well as a need for experts and specialists to contribute to the publication of books and reading material for the various specialties.

What I am attempting to say briefly is, that our criticism of the West is marred by emotionalism and reductionism, as we are inclined to view human heritage as connoting Western heritage only. Due to this attitude, we show either a feigned ignorance or a lack of awareness of the multiplicity and variety in Western, as well as universal thought. We also ignore the criticism of Western thought from within itself; and not only that, failing to grasp new specialties in the West, we are likely to reduce the meaning of science in the West, to secularism, in the same way that we have reduced psychology to 'Freudianism' The truth of the matter is that there are many sub-schools even in 'Freudianism'. The number of specialties in psychology alone is now more than fifty, and the American Psychological Association is one century old. It is true that these specialization's are there for the service of man and society, and that some of them are also devised to exert their influence on us, to oppose us, and to invade us culturally and psychologically, and they might, indeed, work to deepen our conflicts and sectarianism and busy us more and more with deadly superficialities.

If this happens, on what grounds do we have for putting the blame, of our own incompetence and failure, on the West, or other than the West; and reducing ourselves to playing the victim, simply turning a blind eye to the fact that the terms of defeat lie within our own hands.

We can summarize the different positions and attitudes to moving foreword in the following way:

1) Religious thinkers and scholars of jurisprudence (the *fuqaha*) in particular, should cooperate with specialists in the social sciences. This recommendation was included in Malek Bennabi's book *The Muslim in the Economic World* (1979 edition). In this work he appealed to the experts in economics to cooperate with the *fuqaha*, in economic matters. According to Bennabi the specific function of the *fuqaha* is to restrict themselves to saying whether or not the proposals put forward by the specialists are acceptable, according to the principles of Islamic jurisprudence.

2) What is being proposed in the field of social sciences should be publicized. It is from this point of view that the scholar of religion or jurisprudence is able to ascertain whether there is any contradiction between the intellectual findings of the social sciences; the fundamentals of faith; the

principles of religious law; and matters of jurisprudence. One of those scholars that made this point recently is Ibrahim Rajeb (1996), and his view is not unlike Bennabi's.

3) Studies should rely on methodology properly suited to the social sciences (see Safi,1995 and Attiyya,1988).

Although I am happy to present these views to you, and to read about them for my own knowledge, I do not support these proposals, as they appear to promote the religious scholar to the status of a final judge.

Nevertheless, I feel that cooperation should start at the grass-roots to avoid falling into circumstances which facilitate the monopoly and domination of the former over the latter, and even reach the stage where the religious scholar would actually refuse from the outset, a great many psychological and sociological theses.

Dr. Rajab mentioned that in a private encounter, one religious scholar had asked him about his field of specialization, and that when he had told him that he was a specialist in social sciences, the scholar turned away murmuring "I seek refuge in Allah from this" !!! Now, how can it be conceived that a specialist would exhibit the cream of his work to this 'pseudo-scholar'? This attitude is fortunately a rare one.

Moreover, these trends, in particular the third, aims at, I am afraid, to propagate the domination of the science of jurisprudence's methodologies over social sciences, which is a methodology that is more suited to deal with theoretical texts and forms. Thus, to avoid these same dilemmas, and to bring the social sciences and religious sciences closer, it is important that the specialist in religious sciences should undertake some psychological and social studies, as is happening at the Islamic University of Quentina (Eastern Algeria), the Institute of Fundamental Religious Studies in Algiers, and the International Islamic University of Malaysia. Likewise, the specialist in social sciences should undertake some religious studies (again this is being practiced at the International Islamic University of Malaysia), but unfortunately this second combination is very rare.

Once the appropriate methodology and curriculum to achieve these goals have been established, some results are anticipated as a consequence of the closure of this gap:

1) The development of future generations of multi-accomplished scholars, who besides mastering their specialty, do not suffer from ignorance, nonchalance, shortcomings or incompetence in other fields, especially not in those that are related to their fields of specialization.

2) The development of future generations of scholars and researchers who will not only assert the position, and epitomize the methodology of intellectual "integration" between the Islamic sciences and the social sciences, but also the "integration" and the interaction of the various factors that contribute to the formation of psychological and social phenomena.

3) The development of future generations of scholars and researchers who are able to make personal efforts in elaborating on the field of religious sciences, based on a sound interpretation of the sources, and an ability to decipher reality at the same time. This would revive the exercise of personal judgment based on the Scriptures (*ijtihad*) and would assist in intellectual

exertion in the field of *Fiqh al-Muamalat* rather than adding to the already existing surplus in *Fiqh al-Ibadat*.

4) The development of future generations of specialists in social science who are well informed about the place of revelation as a source of knowledge, and who are also well aware of psychological and social realities when studying any phenomena related to their field.