

# The Human Sciences and Islamic Ideology and Culture

## Authors(s):

Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi [3]

## Publisher(s):

Ahlul Bayt World Assembly [4]

## Translator(s):

Shahyar Sa'adat [5]

## Category:

Family [6]

## Journal:

Vol. 1, N. 1 [7]

The relationship between Islamic culture and ideology and the field of human sciences

## Topic Tags:

Islamic Culture [8]

Ideology [9]

Human Sciences [10]

# The Human Sciences and Islamic Ideology and Culture

## Introduction

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

...وَمَنْ يَعْتَصِمْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

***And whoever holds fast to Allah, is indeed guided to the right path. (3:101)***

The topic of my talk is the relationship between Islamic culture and ideology and the field of human sciences. Such a topic, obviously, cannot adequately be treated in one speech, and the questions which the members of the audience may wish to ask cannot be satisfactorily answered. This is especially true as this session is being held in commemoration of the anniversary of the Cultural Revolution and something therefore must be said about that.

Moreover, I am also expected to explain the program which has been suggested by the Qum Theological School regarding its participation in restructuring the humanities curriculum in the nation's universities. Therefore, I would like to apologize in advance for not being able to devote enough time to discussion of various issues involved in my topic.

The topic of our discussion encompasses a number of concepts each of which are susceptible to numerous definitions. This profusion of concepts and terms with their varied and sometimes overlapping interpretations has caused a certain degree of confusion about the subject in question. It is obviously impossible to discuss and explain all of the various meanings of the numerous terms involved. A brief explanation of the three most important terms which are involved in our topic of discussion that is, ideology, culture, and the human sciences, is however necessary.

## Ideology

The word "ideology", which is much in use these days, and which originally meant the study of ideas, has two prevalent usages today. Firstly, ideology refers to any coherent system of thought about what man thinks and believes. Such a system would include both the pictures that man has of the external

world as well as normative criteria prescribing what he must do. This is the general usage of the term “ideology” which includes world-view also. In this usage of the term, belief in God is an ideological matter.

Such beliefs as the notion that there is a soul separate from the body, and that man is resurrected after death to be rewarded and punished for his actions in this life, are also ideological matters. Although such beliefs concern views about matters pertaining to the external world and are not directly related to man's deeds, none the less, they are considered to be ideological problems according to the general usage of the term.

“Ideology” also has a specific usage which is used in contrast to “world-view”. In this sense, “ideology” refers to a system of thought which is concerned with the action of man. The function of such a system is to give man guidelines as to what he should and should not do. According to this usage, questions such as belief in God and resurrection are outside the realm of ideology, because they are not directly related to human action.

The two distinct usages of the word “ideology” give rise to a number of questions regarding the relationship between two systems of thought: one concerned with the nature of the external reality, and the other telling man how to act in the world.

These questions are too involved for us to be able to discuss them here in a proper manner. One thing however must be said about this issue. The thing that I would like to bring to your attention, is that there is a relationship between the systems of thought and belief dealing with the nature of the external reality and those which deal with the question of what man must and must not do. In other words, not every world-view is compatible with every ideology.

For example, Islamic ideology is based on the fundamental principle that man's life must be aimed at attaining nearness to the Divine. Obviously such an ideology can be acceptable only if one believes in the existence of God. If someone (God forbid) should deny the existence of God, he could not, possibly, accept an ideology which says: “All the works of man must be done with the aim of pleasing God.”

It is, hence, undeniable that there is a relationship between the two systems of thought consisting of ideology and world-view. To determine the nature of this relationship, and to see if it is a “logical” one or of some other kind, it is necessary that a number of fundamental problems regarding these matters be discussed and explained in detail. Since there is no time for such an in-depth analysis on this occasion, we have to limit our discussion of ideology to what we have just said.

## **Culture**

Another word that needs explaining is the word “culture”, since it is one of the terms used in the title of my talk. The word “culture” is defined in a number of ways by different dictionaries, and there has been much discussion about its nature and qualities. Of the questions that may be raised about the nature of

culture, the most important are:

What is meant by “culture”? How does it come into existence? Under what conditions does it develop and under what conditions does it decay? Is there a law that dictates that every culture must have a period of development and flowering followed by a process of decay and degeneration? Or is it that such a law does not apply to culture? Is culture a continuous process of development no longer susceptible to degeneration and decay?

What I would like to say as a brief explanation of culture is that culture could be thought of as the sum-total of man's intellectual output. There is a real relationship between culture and ideology, because the totality of man's intellectual products obviously includes whatever systems he may design as guidelines for his actions. In one sense, therefore, ideology is included in culture.

There is, however, another way of looking at this matter which leads us to conclude that ideology and culture are separate from each other. In this latter interpretation, “ideology” refers to beliefs and assumptions, while culture refers to the working out and applications of these beliefs and assumptions in the intellectual realm.

In any case, in order that the relationship of ideology and culture can be clearly comprehended, it is necessary that we should be able to define each of them clearly so that the point of demarcation between the two concepts is well understood.

## **Human Sciences**

As for the human sciences, you brothers who are working in the universities have a definition for this term according to which you classify some of the fields of learning taught at the university as belonging to the “human sciences group” as opposed to the experimental or the exact sciences. You are also well aware of the origin of this term, the course of its development, the branches of learning that it includes, and what distinguishes it from other disciplines.

One may define human sciences as those fields of study which deal with man as a rational, social and cultural being. Of course all sciences are related to man. Here, however, the subject of study itself is man as a human being. To explain, in biology the human body may be the object of research, but the subject of this study is man's animal life.

Thus we can say that all those branches of learning, the subjects of which are not related to human socio-cultural activity (that is, they would exist irrespective of whether man exists as a rational and socio-cultural being, or not) are said to belong to fields other than the human sciences; whereas, those studies the subject of which is connected with man's intellectual and socio-cultural activity could be said to belong to the field, of human sciences.

What we have been doing is defining a term. Now as to whether this definition fully describes the matter

being discussed is entirely another question. It should be kept in mind, that definitions can be extended and restricted to include or exclude various things.

I should add that according to the definition we have given of the human sciences, not all the fields of learning within its fold relate to Islam. Only those branches of learning within the human sciences could be said to concern Islam that deal with concepts which are found in the text of the revelations or in their exegeses.

## Religion, Science and Philosophy

Here we are also confronted with a fundamental problem whose solution would require extensive and time-consuming analysis. The question is this: what sort of concepts are religious concepts? Are they in the same category as scientific concepts? Or do they belong to the category of philosophical concepts?

Or is it that they belong to a third group of concepts? In other words, we want to know whether religious conceptions are in a special category of their own, or that they are shared by science and philosophy also? Is it possible for a problem to arise in science and religion together? Is it possible for philosophy and religion to share problems between them? These are the questions that we are faced with.

Suppose that there are actually problems that are found both in the realm of philosophy and the domain of religion; what characteristics would make it a problem of philosophy or a problem of religion? Perhaps we can answer that if a problem is solved solely through the exercise of reason, and conviction in that solution is also based upon logical-reasoning and analysis, then that problem is a philosophical one.

If on the contrary, a problem is solved solely on the basis of the Revelation, and conviction in such a solution is also based upon the Revelation, then we could say that such a problem is a religious problem. Such an answer, however, is inadequate, and does not solve all the problems involved. For example, we have rational inference used in the Qur'an to prove the oneness of God. Also logic is used to prove that there is a day of resurrection. What are we to conclude, then, about such problems? Are they philosophical, or religious issues? We read in the Qur'an:

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا ..

***If there had been in them (heavens and earth) any gods except Allah, they would both have certainly been in a state of disorder. (21:22)***

The kind of reasoning used in this verse is termed “exceptional syllogism.” Those who are familiar with logic know that the exception in this syllogism is “suppressed”. This is similar to many other syllogisms in which one of the two premises is suppressed. In logic we have a topic which deals with “suppressed

argument,” in which one of the premises of the syllogism is stated while the other one is left unsaid because it is assumed to be obvious. Sometimes the exception of an exceptional syllogism is not stated because of its obviousness.

The purport of the Qur’anic verse just quoted is that if there were any other god ruling over the heavens and the earth beside the One God, the heavens and the earth would have been corrupted and thrown into chaos. But we see that they have not fallen into chaos. The conclusion is that there is only one almighty God. Now, one may ask: Is the matter raised here a philosophical or a religious one?

It is also said in the Qur’an:

أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ  
الْمُتَّقِينَ كَالْفُجَّارِ

***Shall We treat those who believe and do good like the mischief-makers in the earth? Or shall We make those who guard (against evil) like the wicked? (38:28)***

This is the reasoning which the Qur’an uses to prove that there must be a day in which everyone must reap what he has sown; the good shall be rewarded and the bad shall be punished.

Now what are we to think of such a problem, when it is backed by such reasoning? Is it a religious or a philosophical problem? In order to answer this question it is necessary to first explain what is religion? Does religion consist of a series of laws which have been given to us by the Almighty, be they related to individual or social affairs? Does religion consist of beliefs, morals and commands in their totality?

If we accept the notion that belief is a part of religion, then, the question arises as to whether belief as such is to be considered as a part of religion, or the reason, or reasons, for professing those beliefs should also be considered as belonging to religion.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the aforementioned discussion is that if religion is taken to mean all the things that we are given in the Qur’an and the *sunnah* (tradition), then, we must conclude that there are some issues that are commonly shared by religion and philosophy. At the same time, each of these realms of human thought and experience includes areas outside the jurisdiction of the other. In religion, a number of problems are raised and dealt with that are not discussed or proved in philosophy.

For example, the laws of Islamic jurisprudence or obligatory practices such as the five daily prayers and fasting are not related to philosophy. On the other hand, there are problems and issues in the realm of philosophical speculation that have nothing to do with religion. For example, the question whether objects are made up of matter and form, is a philosophical problem which has no connection with religion. There are, however, some problems which are of importance both in philosophy and religion

(e.g. questions regarding the existence of God, Resurrection, etc.).

In any case, such problems as these require an extensive discussion for which this is not the proper time and place. In fact a whole book must be devoted to such a discussion.

## **Islamic Culture, Ideology and the Human Sciences**

The subject of our discussion is the question of the relationship between Islamic culture, ideology, and the human sciences. We may define human sciences as those branches of learning that deal with man's beliefs and the meaning and reality of his existence. These fields of investigation are centered on the question of the nature of the human being, the possibility of human perfection, and the path which man must follow in order to attain this perfection.

All matters, therefore, that are classified as belonging to the field of human sciences but do not fit the definition that I have just given, are outside the scope of our present discussion. For, though such matters are defined as branches of the human sciences, they have no connection with religion.

For example, applied statistics is one of the branches of the human sciences. This science has nothing to do with religion for, nowhere in the Qur'an or the *sunnah* there is any discussion of statistical matters. Of course, it is possible to argue about the applicability or the reliability of the theory of probability to the solving of various problems. We can ask as to what degree can the truth of hypotheses be proved or disproved by the statistical method.

The next question to consider is whether Islamic culture and ideology should intervene in the human sciences or not? And if the answer to this question is in affirmative, then what form such an interference should take? Should it be done in a revolutionary manner, or in a reformative fashion? Or, should it take a form which is neither revolutionary nor reformative?

If we consider human sciences to include, on the one hand, subjects such as theology, spirituality, resurrection, revelation, prophethood, and on the other hand, to be concerned with topics like law, economy and other such things, then we must say that it is not possible for Islamic culture and ideology to be divorced from the human sciences and not to have anything to do with them.

When Islam is a religion that has laws dealing with various economic issues, how can it be indifferent to economic systems? When Islam is a religion that assigns rights and duties to citizens, governments, societies, individuals and so on, then how can we say that Islam has no connection with the human sciences? If there is no relation involved here, then what does the word "relation" mean?

In short, anyone who has the slightest familiarity with the Islamic sciences knows that some of the branches of the human sciences are deeply connected—one may even say united—with that aspect of Islam which is concerned with codes of practice.

The connection of Islam with the human sciences is not limited to what we have just described. As I have mentioned earlier, there are a number of Islamic beliefs that are issues of concern in various sciences and in the field of philosophy. For example, in Islam, one must believe in resurrection and the return of the soul to the body. This is closely related with philosophy.

Many of the things that we believe in Islam, whether they be fundamental principles such as belief in the existence of God, or secondary matters such as belief in the existence of the hell, or Divine justice, are things that we are taught by Islam and are required to believe in, if we are to be Muslims.

Is it possible for us to say that these things have no connection with either science or philosophy? We know that there are numerous issues in religion that include problems that are specifically mentioned in books on philosophy. One example is the Islamic belief in the unity and oneness of God. It is obvious, therefore, that philosophy and religion are closely connected and that some of their problems are in fact identical.

## **Ethics and Human Sciences**

The most important connection between religion and the human sciences involves ethical questions, especially those that concern the origins and foundations of ethics.

The aim of religion is to guide man towards perfection. Its goal is to actualize what is a potentiality in man. Man is to make himself perfect through the way he thinks, feels, acts and lives. Furthermore, only what man does consciously may contribute to his spiritual growth and development and his movement towards perfection.

It is therefore necessary for man to possess guidelines so that he knows what he must and must not do in order to edify his soul. It is the function of religion to provide man with a set of general rules and ethical principles. All this is, of course, closely connected with education, rules of social and individual conduct and other such matters. It is not possible, therefore, for the science of ethics to be a stranger to religion.

When the aim of religion is to teach man the method of spiritual growth, development and perfection, would it be possible for it to remain indifferent to ethical questions? Inevitably it must affirm certain ethical stands and oppose others. We must conclude, therefore, that the human sciences have, in the most part, a close and direct relationship with religion, and that we can not draw a line of separation between them and religion.

## **Conjecture and Conviction in the Human Sciences**

Now we face the question of how to introduce Islamic culture and ideology into the human sciences. Actually, taking note of what I have already said, such a question seems irrelevant. If we believe that our



religion is the truth, then we must believe in all that it teaches from the major principles to minor details. It also follows that Islam is relevant to everything that has to do with man. We believe that whatever is written in the Holy Book is the truth and no falsehood could have possibly entered it. We also believe in the truthfulness of the *sunnah*. On the question of its own reliability the Qur'an says:

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ ۗ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ

***Falsehood shall not approach it from before it nor from behind it: [it is] a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One. (41:42)***

Then, how can we accept some of the views, expressed in certain fields of learning, which contradict with the Qur'an or the *hadith*? This is not a simple question and requires considerable discussion for the answer to be clear. To put it in a nutshell, if the opinion expressed in a particular field of study really represents the truth, it could never contradict the teachings of the religion of Truth, which is nothing other than Divine Revelation.

True religion is given to us by God. The Creator of this universe is also God. The Creator and the Lawgiver being identical, how is it possible that the same being that has made us and the universe should give us misleading laws and guidelines?

It goes without mentioning that such a notion would (God forbid) contradict and negate the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions. Whenever we run into theories in any of the fields of science which appear to contradict any of the teachings of Islam (and by Islam we mean any of the teachings of the True Doctrine), we must closely examine the nature of contradiction by evaluating the religious concept and scrutinizing the theories and ideas forwarded by the related science. As you are probably aware, almost ninety-nine percent of what is presented today as "scientific" material has never been conclusively proven to be true.

Most of these so-called "scientific" theories are nothing but imaginative conjectures based on probabilities that are abandoned after a short period of time. How can we give equal validity to something that is ninety-nine percent conjecture and is based on probabilities and to something which we know with hundred percent certainty to be from God and to be the Truth?

If by "science" we mean the sort of conjectures and guesses that are presented in some books in the name of science, and are opposed to some of the things that are clearly and incontrovertibly established in the Divine teachings, what we have here is simply a question of guess and conjecture as opposed to conviction and certitude.

If, on the other hand, by "science" we mean those principles and laws which correspond to reality, irrespective of whether they are discovered by the mind through logic and reasoning or discovered

through research and experiment, such things could never be in opposition to the content of Divine Revelation. It is thus clear that the notion that science and true religious teachings can contradict each other is a false one and corresponds to nothing in the external reality.

To sum up what we have been saying, if a man truly believes in the teachings of the True Religion, he must bring these teachings and beliefs to bear on the content of those fields of the human sciences that have any relationship to the questions and issues dealt with in the True Doctrine. Otherwise, he would be forced to believe both in the principles and instructions of religion as well as in the theories of a field of learning that may contradict those teachings and principles.

## **The Relevance of Islamic Ideology in Human Sciences**

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 Qur'an, 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 Qur'an 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 Program for Reconstruction of the Human Sciences**

Another matter which I must discuss, although in brief, is the program 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 Qur'an points out, they are like a tree that lacks firm roots:

وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ

***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 Qur'an, 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 Qur'an 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 program for his growth and development?

The program 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 programs 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.

---

**Source URL:**

<https://www.al-islam.org/al-tawhid/vol1-n1/human-sciences-and-islamic-ideology-and-culture-ayatullah-muhammad-taqi-misbah>

**Links**

- [1] <https://www.al-islam.org/user/login?destination=node/22972%23comment-form>
- [2] <https://www.al-islam.org/user/register?destination=node/22972%23comment-form>
- [3] <https://www.al-islam.org/person/ayatullah-muhammad-taqi-misbah-yazdi>
- [4] <https://www.al-islam.org/organization/ahlul-bayt-world-assembly>
- [5] <https://www.al-islam.org/person/shahyar-saadat>
- [6] <https://www.al-islam.org/library/family>
- [7] <https://www.al-islam.org/journals/vol1-n1>
- [8] <https://www.al-islam.org/tags/islamic-culture>
- [9] <https://www.al-islam.org/tags/ideology>
- [10] <https://www.al-islam.org/tags/human-sciences>