

# THE IMPERIALISM OF EURO-AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY IN A NONWESTERN CULTURE: AN ATTEMPT TOWARD AN UMMATIC PSYCHOLOGY

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General psychology includes many areas of investigation: biological bases of behavior, sensation and perception, consciousness and attention, motivation and emotion, conditioning, learning, cognition, language, thinking, remembering and forgetting, intelligence, and personality. During the first half of the twentieth century, psychologists classified themselves as structuralists, functionalists, behaviorists, gestaltists, psychoanalysts, existentialists, humanists, or cognitivists. Today, such classifications are little used in the West. If one looks at the publications of the American Psychological Association and the British Psychological Society, psychologists classify themselves according to their fields or specific topic of interest, such as social psychology, developmental psychology, abnormal psychology, psychotherapy, counseling, occupational psychology, psychometrics, media, women, and so on. Several tools are used in psychology to study behavior, among them surveys, questionnaires, interviews, observations, experiments, and tests.

Psychology is defined as the scientific study of human behavior, and its theories and methods are considered scientific and universal. According to this understanding, there are four important terms that need

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to be clarified: *scientific, theory, behavior, and universality*. Science is an organized and systematic body of knowledge and procedures that produces previously unknown precise and valid information along with evidence to test its validity. A theory is a set of statements and propositions explaining and predicting factual data within a certain area of scientific inquiry. All human actions are a form of behavior, and psychology deals with observable behavior, introspective observable phenomena, and unconscious processes. In psychology, any form of behavior can be interpreted from different perspectives: biological, behavioral, psychoanalytic, humanist, and neuro-psychological. Each perspective claims to contribute to our understanding of individuals and groups. The last important term is *universality*, which is defined as the aim of establishing an objective and general psychological knowledge that is valid for all conditions.

We entitled this study "The Imperialism of Euro-American Psychology in a Nonwestern Culture: An Attempt toward an Ummatic Psychology." By *imperialism* we mean the hegemony, domination, and feeling of superiority and supremacy of this foreign psychology. For the moment, let us understand that by *Euro* we mean Europe (including the former Soviet Union), and by *American*, we mean the United States and Canada. By *ummatic psychology* we mean the social order of Islam, and the term can be used instead of *Islamic psychology*. The question is, Should we respond to the *universality* of psychology or isolate ourselves? We claim that the right answer is to respond. The universality of western psychology has been questioned on many grounds: relativism, ethnocentrism, and reductionism. The tradition of western social science cannot encompass all cultural phenomena and cannot force all individuals and groups from different cultural backgrounds to share the same western values. These sciences were associated with the introduction of imperial western education to other nonwestern cultures.

### Western (Euro-American) Education

The history of Euro-American psychology in the ummatic culture is the history of western education. Modern (or secular) education has a tremendous influence in all indigenous social and cultural systems where it had been imposed. Both positive and negative aspects of education have been discussed by educators, sociologists, psychologists, and leaders. There are variations in sociocultural systems in many aspects concerning the attitudes, norms, and identities of individuals and groups. Each educational system reflects the social and cultural values of its designers as well as their spiritual beliefs and political ideologies. Thus, education developed in one sociocultural system, when imposed upon systems other than its own, might create serious religious, social, moral, and psychological problems. According to Mazrui, education plays a

paradoxical role for the missionary school in Africa. On the one hand, the missionary school was supposed to be the principle medium for the promotion of modern civilization in Africa. On the other hand, western civilization, in its own home ground in Europe, had been growing increasingly secular. In the colonies, missionaries were propagating a concept of Christian religiosity that was already anachronistic in the West.<sup>1</sup> The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) has noted that a secular system of education, which taught western values and methods, was built. Soon, it began to pour into society generations of graduates who were ignorant of their Islamic legacy. A gap began to develop within the ranks of the Muslim community (ummah), dividing it into westernizing secularists and their opponents.<sup>2</sup>

In Sudan, the aim of western education was largely imperialistic. Its purposes were defined early on as the creation of a competent artisan class; the diffusion among the masses of the people of education sufficient to enable them to understand the mission of the government, particularly with reference to the equitable and impartial administration of justice; and the creation of a small administrative class, capable of filling many government posts, some of an administrative, some of a technical nature.<sup>3</sup>

Educational systems introduced by the colonizers were usually European and not very relevant to the colonial areas themselves. Africans, for instance, had to learn the language of their European masters and learn about European history and culture. Educated Africans in the British colonies know about the kings and queens of England, read Shakespeare, Milton, and the English poets, but know next to nothing about their own history and culture.<sup>4</sup> The French, with their passionate belief in the value of French civilization and culture, have regarded the spread of French as their duty. To secure this aim, they devoted themselves to the creation of an African intellectual elite versed in French language, French thought, and French civilization, that would, they hoped, inspire among Africans a devotion to French culture similar to their own. Schools were designed to follow the French system. Local languages and the study of local institutions were to find little or no place in the system of education.<sup>5</sup> In the Arab world, many higher educational institutions were foreign. This had several implications. For an Arab boy or girl to study in one of them was itself an act of social and psychological displacement; it involved studying in accordance with a method and a curriculum alien to the traditions of the society from which he or she came, and doing so through the medium of a foreign language, which became the first or perhaps the only language in which he or she could think of certain subjects and practice certain vocations.<sup>6</sup>

According to Mazrui,<sup>7</sup> western education in African conditions was a process of psychological deruralization. The educated African became,

in a fundamental sense, a misfit in his own village. His parents were often people who had made sacrifices to improve his career opportunities. When he graduated from school, his parents did not expect him to continue living with them, tending the cattle, or cultivating the land. Many parents assumed that the whole purpose of education was occupational improvement. If their son was going to remain in the rural areas, why were all those sacrifices necessary? Trimingham has given the most expressive description of the disruptive influences of modern or secular education on the mentality and the behavior of individuals in Sudan. He described western education as disruptive rather than integrative; this education exposed *effendiyah* minds to greater distraction, but left their spirit hungry. They were taught how to do clerical and technical work, but not how to live. A former warden of Gordon College (a secondary school) classified the boys who left the school into three intellectual types: those who rejected modern ideas and ways of life and became hard fanatical Muslims; those who became secret unbelievers, who stuck to the social system, but over whose lives religion had no influence; and the majority, who kept their modern ideas and religion in separate watertight compartments, which resulted in a split personality.<sup>8</sup>

The IIT noted that, like the Islamic model, the western educational model rests ultimately on a vision, though different from that of Islam, and is animated by the will to realize that vision. Buildings, offices, libraries and laboratories, classrooms and auditoriums with students and faculty are all material paraphernalia of little worth without a vision. It is part of the nature of a vision that cannot be copied; only its incidentals can be copied. This is why, in nearly two centuries of westernized secular education, Muslims have not produced a school, college, university, or a generation of scholars that matches the West in creativity and excellence.<sup>9</sup> According to al-'Alwānī, it is the non-Islamic secular system that produces the ummah's intellectual and social leaders, the managers of its services and means of production.<sup>10</sup> In Sudan, modern or western education has a great effect in shaping the attitudes of the elite and the intellectuals.

### Western Imperial Psychology

Wundt, considered the father of modern psychology, established psychology as an independent branch of science.<sup>11</sup> He recognized two traditions in psychology: those of the natural sciences and those of the cultural sciences. Wundt considered *Volkerpsychologie* (cultural/mass psychology) to be a new field of knowledge in which human actors occupy center stage and pointed out that language, mythology, art, customs, and religions are products of collective human effort. He noted that individual psychological processes can be investigated systematically in a laboratory setting through controlled experimentation. Cultural patterns and dynamics; however, can not be brought into a lab-

oratory setting. Moreover, *Volkerpsychologie* represents a cultural level of analysis encompassing the individual consciousness. In the latter part of his life, Wundt devoted himself to examining sociocultural influences in psychological processes by writing a ten-volume work on cultural psychology.<sup>12</sup>

The early development of *Volkerpsychologie* is associated with western cultural imperialism and German colonialism in other non-western cultures.

Probably it could be very stimulating to study which kind of psychology corresponded to which type of colonial projects. For example, let us think of the Christian missionaries who carried their religion oriented psychology to the non-western cultures . . . . Sciences, not least psychology, were considered a highly relevant controlling tool of a more rational colonial politics.<sup>13</sup>

There is nobody, however, who can do without knowledge of the respective colonial languages or without studying the psychology of natives laboriously.<sup>14</sup> The concepts of *Volkerpsychologie* and *Ethnopsychologie* were frequently used synonymously in these times. The subject they refer to was part of psychology as well as ethnology. At the Institute of Applied Psychology in Berlin, a large psychological-diagnostic inventory "For the Examination of Primitive People" was developed (*primitive* in the original sense) and used without negative connotation.<sup>15</sup> Stern and Lipmann stated that the inventory was intended mainly for research expeditions and, secondly, for those who were in touch with peoples at a primitive culture level, such as missionaries, teachers in native schools, civil servants, and doctors in the protectorates.<sup>16</sup>

Different sociocultural systems influence the behavior of individuals and groups in different ways. Because of these differences, each sociocultural system needs to be understood in its own right. The universality of psychology has been discussed by many psychologists.<sup>17</sup>

An ultimate goal of science is to discover universal principles. A principle is deemed universal when it explains a relationship between sets of variables in all conditions. Of course, if universal principles can be generated, they can be used by anyone, regardless of race, gender, or social class. But such success can only come about if ethnocentrism is avoided. That is, if researchers can generate and address research questions without being limited by the characteristics, such as values and perceptions, of their own culture. Unfortunately, ethnocentrism, involving a belief in the superiority of one's own cultural group, has influ-

enced research in social psychology so that even some of the most established findings in social psychology do not stand up to the test when assessed in cultures outside North America.<sup>18</sup>

As a consequence, much of what we consider psychological data is not universally—but only relatively—true, as it is applicable in the context of those who share the cultural assumptions of the experimenters and writers. Human behavior is incredibly complex, and the validation of conclusions within a prescribed cultural context does not automatically apply universally. Orthodox western psychology, as taught in the universities, may be guilty of teaching relative facts as universal truth.<sup>19</sup>

First World psychology has been partial to “universal” findings and the scientific values of replicability, verifiability, and generalizability. In a sense, universality is the motive behind the series of systematically replicated experiments from rats to humans and from the laboratory to the field.<sup>20</sup> Theories and practices that are largely the product of Judaeo-Christian western civilization have had long tenure and have dominated the social science departments of universities in Muslim countries. In addition, the press, radio, and television have helped establish these alien concepts among the Muslim masses.<sup>21</sup> Western social sciences in general, and psychology in particular, are characterized by ethnocentrism and are associated with colonial and imperial goals and projects. They are ethnocentric sciences and rely on the arrogance of western culture with its Judaeo-Christian and Greco-Roman foundation. In ethnocentricity, the own frame of reference is used as a yardstick against which other groups are judged and evaluated. Ummatic culture is required to see itself through an ethnocentric mirror that is a form of acculturation to western values and tastes.

Western psychology tries to reduce complex human behavior to biological terms and concerns itself with very microcosmic issues that are not so relevant to the present macrocosmic issues in the ummatic culture. Complex psychospiritual and sociocultural matters have been reduced to the terms of biological bases of behavior. *Haywanah* is the Arabic word for zoomorphism, the study of animal behavior and the generalization of its findings to human behavior. In other words, it is the uncritical application of results generated from comparative psychology to human behavior. *Haywanah* resulted in two criticisms of psychology: biologizationism and abstractionism. Biologization meant reductionism, and abstraction meant basic research with controlled experiments. The argument was that, because human existence is social, explanations at a physiological level could never interpret fully human behavior.

If behavior is explained in terms of needs, drives, and conditioning, then behavior would lose its social meaning<sup>22</sup> and its spiritual component.<sup>23</sup> Some psychological theories rely heavily on the comparative

method of Darwinism, which compares the behavior of humans with that of such other animals as dogs, monkeys, and rats. In general, Darwinism has been accepted by psychologists and has influenced deeply their thinking. The significance of the theory of evolution for psychologists is that it led them to believe that as the structure of organic bodies evolves, so does human behavior. Thus, human behavior can and should be understood as a continuation of animal behavior.<sup>24</sup>

### **Some Blind Spots in Euro–American Psychology**

Questioning the universality of Euro–American psychology and its ethnocentric attitude leads to the heart of our present discussion. We are seeking to discover some of the blind spots of Euro–American psychology. The term *blind spots* has been borrowed from biology and indicates an area of the retina that is insensitive to light due to the juncture of the optic nerves at that point.<sup>25</sup> Blind spots can have other similar visual meanings, such as blindness, sightlessness, and a blind side. The meaning can be generalized to hearing as well: deafness, hardness of hearing, and tone deafness. In borrowing these terms, we mean that Euro–American psychology is, in some cases, totally blind or deaf, and in other cases partially blind or deaf, to the particularities of other cultures. Some of these blind spots may not only be a characteristic of the application of Euro–American psychology in the ummatic culture, but may occur with other nonwestern cultures. Euro–American psychology should feel a sense of *dhanb* (guilt) for generalizing local facts as universal. The term *dhanb* means the realization that Euro–American psychology has transgressed a moral or ethical principle that is associated with a lowering of morale and self-esteem and a need to make restitution for the transgression.

In this endeavor, some assumptions related to the application of the Euro–American psychology in the ummatic culture with reference to Sudan are presented and discussed in the light of our own observations, previous research, and the published literature on the field. We hope that the ideas discussed in the present study pave the way for some cross-cultural and cross-ummatic comparisons and contrasts that can overcome the blind spots in Euro–American psychology and promote a sense of indigenization or ummatization that leads toward developing an ummatic psychology.

*Commission.* Euro–American psychology has committed a serious error of commission by applying irrelevant issues, methods of analysis, and tools to illiterate, rural, and traditional people in nonwestern cultures. The term *commission* means doing things that should not have been done. The majority (68.7 percent) in Sudan are illiterate; they have been categorized as borderline and nearly retarded

in their abilities because they showed an average score of 69.8 on one measure of intelligence.<sup>26</sup> The high rate of illiteracy and the extremes of traditionalism/modernism and ruralization/urbanization are real handicaps for standardizing a test. Urban/modern norms discriminate against rural/traditional people. Kagitcibasi, the distinguished Turkish psychologist, notes that

in a country where there are vast differences in lifestyles and levels of socio-economic development, where rural-urban and social class distinctions are sharp, one normative sample fails to represent all of the diverse groups and has disadvantages in terms of test validity. On the other hand, having several different norms for the same test is also problematic. The problem of the appropriateness of the items cannot be solved by having different norms for disadvantaged groups. Nevertheless, the usual approach has been to target a particular group, such as the urban lower-class, as the normative sample.<sup>27</sup>

Whereas literacy is the norm in the First World and in the Second World, important sections of Third World populations are illiterate. Thus, psychologists interested in studying such phenomena as attitudes, attributions, and perceptions among Third World populations will not always be able to rely on such conventional research instruments as questionnaires, which assume a respondent's literacy.<sup>28</sup> In the area of psychological tests, few suggestions have been made to develop techniques that can suit local conditions, such as cut-off points, deleting some tests, having separate norms,<sup>29</sup> or, as Badri and Dennis suggested, drawing on the ground with one's finger if one is unable to use pen and paper.<sup>30</sup>

There is also a quite different concept of mental illness. Some forms of behavior may be regarded in one culture as normal but in another as abnormal. In Sudan, there are three cases of difficulty in classifying some forms of behavioral disorder. First, some Sudanese women are possessed by spirits during the *zār* state; in western psychology, such a state might be classified as hysteric. Second, in the case of *kujūr* therapy, people may be found to be controlled by such outside agents as the spirit of ancestors; in western psychological terms they are paranoid. Third, the state of *ghaḍb* during a Sufi *dhikr*, *mādiḥ*, or religious song and violent rhythm of drums may be seen in western psychological terms as suggestion, hysteria, or brainwashing. All these forms of behavior must be understood within the indigenous belief systems rather than through western perspectives, which can classify the entire Sudanese culture as abnormal or ill.

Badri, the father of Sudanese psychologists, has given this example.<sup>31</sup> In Sudan, there is a custom of flogging volunteers during marriage

ceremonies. The decorated bridegroom mercilessly whips the bare back of an enthusiastic male victim who superhumanly endures his bleeding wounds as though he is in a deep hypnotic trance. Girls reinforce this extreme show of courage on the part of the groom's friend with their usual native feminine cheers. How does a European psychologist view this practice as an isolated form of behavior? The Sudanese groom will not only be viewed as cruel and socially abnormal, but he would also be diagnosed as a sexual deviant who derives pleasure by inflicting pain on others, i.e., a sadist. The flogged friend will be seen as a masochist who gratifies erotic sexual needs through self-punishment. Thus, behavior considered abnormal in one country will be seen as within the norm in another country or after one passes a few years in the same place.

Psychology is guilty (*mudhnib*) of causing some serious social, ethical, and clinical problems. The error of commission causes the destruction of the traditional cultural values of the majority of people in traditional and rural areas. Azuma, the well-known Japanese psychologist, argued that

Western psychology often results in the violent destruction of a people's traditional ways of thinking, which constitute the bases for their identity, reducibility and potential contributions to the world. When a social science is transplanted from abroad, often only a portion of it survives the transition. The new science exists as a direct body of knowledge, without productive roots inside the culture.<sup>32</sup>

One consequence of the transplantation of western psychology to the ummatic sociocultural system is an attachment to new psychological ideas and, at the same time, a detachment from old ones. Some issues in western psychology occupy a central position in the West, while in other cultures they are in the margin. For example, issues related to body image (i.e., slimness and anorexia nervosa), psychosexual disorders (i.e., fetishism, transvestism, rape, incest, and homosexuality), alcoholism, drug dependency, environmental pollution, and so on are not so important or not so relevant to other sociocultural systems. These issues are reflections of the industrial and individualistic systems; when they are studied, taught, and researched in other cultures they take no root because the soil is different.

Some issues, tools, and methods of western psychology may be appropriate within the framework of the modern sociocultural system in the Muslim world because it has been shaped by western or colonial forces. Thus, we need to have two different forms of understanding: one form for the traditional sociocultural system and another for the modern one. In a dual society, when psychological tests need to be applied, there

is a serious problem of having a single norm that is supposed to be suitable for all diverse groups. Here we agree with Moghaddam and Taylor, who have introduced the concept of "dual perception" to argue that psychology in the Third World tends to be limited to the modern sector and divorced from the traditional sector of developing societies.<sup>33</sup>

**Omission.** Euro-American psychology has committed a serious error of omission by excluding many phenomena in other cultures that can enrich the mainstream psychology. The term *omission* means failing to do things that should have been done. Euro-American psychology is rarely influenced by concepts and phenomena outside of Europe and America. However, it can learn from this error of omission. Azuma argues that

American psychologists can not appreciate phenomena found outside of the USA. When a psychologist looks at a non-western culture through Western glasses, he may fail to notice important aspects of the non-western culture since the schemata for recognizing them are not provided by his science.<sup>34</sup>

At a cross-cultural level, Badri noted that contemporary schools of psychology have either failed, or are doomed to fail, in meeting the most urgent needs of modern humanity. This failure is attributed to a basic error in the fundamental approach of such schools.<sup>35</sup> In Sudan, meningitis and malaria are very common diseases and cause profound psychological disorders in some cases. Khaleefa has administered Stanford-Binet with a group of 35 survivors of acute bacterial meningitis (ABM) from a group of 44 Sudanese children. The mean IQ score for a subgroup of 19 post-meningitis children was 92.3 ( $SD = 13.9$ ), which was found to be significantly lower than that of their nearest age sibling controls, which was 100.7 ( $SD = 10.2$ ;  $p < .01$ ).<sup>36</sup> Malaria is also important in tropical psychiatry. It causes general debility, and a depressed state of physical health is a fertile ground for mental illnesses to take root. It also causes a high fever that may overheat and damage the brain. Schistosomiasis or bilharzia, encephalitis, meningitis, and other infections are all too common and contribute to psychological illnesses in both the ways described above.<sup>37</sup>

Such phenomena as *qadar* (fate), resilience, submission, and surrender to religion, if they are investigated, can enrich the development of psychology. Psychology can learn more from *'ashīrah*, a word covering kinship relations, family relation, sacrifice, mutual assistance, support, and collaboration. Even Euro-American psychology can learn from many acute problems in Sudan, such as the psychology of poverty, illiteracy, and refugees. It can learn from the very distinctive and

respected Sudanese social behavior, such as *karam* (generosity, free hand, open house, munificence), *ikhā'* (brotherhood), *takāful* (solidarity), and *nafir* (collective effort). It can even learn from a universally condemned behavior, such as an apathetic attitude toward work, laziness, indifference to time, and the barbaric customs of female mutilation and circumcision. The pluses and minuses of these two types of social behavior need to be investigated, for they represent the paradoxical particularity of the Sudanese personality, in the coexistence of the most appreciated behaviors and the most condemned.

It is very important to look at such issues as dependency (*ittikāliyah*), helping behavior (*murū'ah*), group structure, emotionality, social intelligence, social creativity, and memorization. Dependency is a characteristic of some individuals, and perhaps of some groups, that is based on the motive to be helped and cared for or to have support through social and psychological affiliation with others. The emotional pattern needs to be investigated, as do strong social and excessive spiritual emotionality. Helping behavior, the sense of constructive consideration of relatives, friends, the clan, and the religious group and which is entirely contrary to individualism, egoism, and selfishness, also needs to be studied. The group structure of a Sufi order, other religious groups, and the tribal system are rich areas for investigation. So are the relationships between individuals within a group, the characteristics of relationships between different groups, and the structural relation between different Islamic countries, which determine the interpersonal relations within the whole ummatic cultural system.

Mystic influence and social intelligence are other matters that can be studied. How do the Sudanese Sufi *mādiḥ* and violent drum rhythms influence the spirit and emotions of the masses in a deep transcendental process toward harmonious relations between self and other? The level of satisfaction, peace of mind, and tranquillity of some Sufi shaykhs and disciples need to be investigated. Social intelligence, as the ability to interact intelligently with others and to serve the community without personal sacrifice, is an alternative to the concepts of abstract intelligence as found in orthodox Euro-American psychology. Social creativity is a form of invention in human relations that respects the uniqueness and dignity of others. Memorization of the Qur'an without making a single mistake needs to be studied within the area of memory. Memory in psychological writing consists of learning, retention, recall, and recognition. Memory is a characteristic of all human beings, but there are some cultural variations. Some Sudanese children can recall and memorize many chapters from the Qur'an, and some the whole book, without making a single mistake in pronunciation. If we stay within the limits of the orthodox Euro-American psychology, memorization has been seen as a negative factor in developing creativity among Sudanese students.<sup>38</sup>

However, memorization, regardless of that criticism, is valued in the ummatic culture and is a form of excellence and distinction in which competitions are held, prizes are awarded, and festivals are organized.

*Motivation, Speed, and Aspiration.* Sociocultural systems set different values on motivation and aspiration. Euro-American psychology relies on western standards of speed, motivation, and aspiration. Measuring the performance of individuals and groups with psychological tests relies on the western sense of time, which values speed and rapidity. Africans generally approach tests very warily or slowly.<sup>39</sup> They are not interested in individual speed at work and, with intellectual puzzles, do not like to take risks and therefore use "safe" strategies.<sup>40</sup> Slowness arises more from a general lack of interest in speed of performance rather than by a slower operation of mental functions.<sup>41</sup> Africans need more time to work on tests.<sup>42</sup> Among the educated, the concept of intelligence is associated with the word *fast*, while villagers associate it with the word *slow*. Intelligent behavior is that which leads to respect of and compliance with society's ways.<sup>43</sup>

In Sudan, there is a tendency to slowness and patience without haste. The application of western intelligence tests in Sudan showed that there is a bias in the time factor. For example, the full administration of an intelligence test (WAIS-R) required between 60 and 90 minutes. However, according to Sudanese subjects, the test requires between 90 and 150 minutes. Sudanese participants need almost one hour more to complete the test than Americans.<sup>44</sup> This factor might be due to the different concept of time in different cultures, or it might relate to the level of education: illiterate subjects usually take longer to complete the test. Individuals in modern and urban areas complete the test in a shorter time than those in traditional and rural areas. This variation has its consequences in an acculturation and dependency relation with urban western systems of motivation.

Each individual has his or her own standard of excellence, and that achievement motive is an impulse to meet that standard. Achievement motivation is a desire or need that exists as an implicit personality variable on the preconscious or unconscious level in an individual's mind.<sup>45</sup> Many psychological studies have investigated the need for achievement.<sup>46</sup> This early work gave impetus to a great deal of research into a range of issues related to need achievement. According to need achievement theory, achievement behavior is characterized by a psychological need to excel, a desire to enter the competitive race for social status, and a willingness to adopt the high value placed on personal achievement and success in western societies. McClelland's view presents one attempt to explain varying levels of motivation among individuals and groups. Researchers using the McClelland construct and methodologies in cross-

cultural settings made little attempt to validate their use in these settings. A number of early cross-cultural studies, however, suggested that the antecedents and manifestation of achievement motivation are culturally variable and that researchers need to consider the more complex socio-cultural forces that may contribute to the development of social motives in a range of cultural groups.<sup>47</sup>

Variations in achievement patterns between cultures, especially between Third World and western cultures, are too obvious for social scientists not to try to find explanations for them.<sup>48</sup> There is much to be gained from examining the different ways achievement motivation may be fostered in different cultures. The "me" emphasis in the more individualistic cultures and the "for my group" emphasis in more collectivistic cultures are not necessarily mutually exclusive.<sup>49</sup> Pareek noted in regard to the weakness of McClelland's work that while his model was helpful, it ignored one important need in the development of entrepreneurial activity: the need for extension, a need to relate to a large group or cause.<sup>50</sup> Sinha noted that stressing individually oriented achievement leads to competitiveness, hoarding and selfishness unless it is blended with a cooperative spirit and sharing.<sup>51</sup>

The impact of the West on the motivational patterns of the peoples of the Third World is a major dimension of dependency. Structural analysts often refer to interlocking elites between the developed and the developing worlds. What the structural analysts do not always realize is that those elites who identify with the dominant developed countries and reinforce dependent structures have been captured culturally by the West. The nature of their ambitions, the directions of their aspirations, and the boundaries of their tastes and desires are important factors behind their behavior.<sup>52</sup> There are at least four important consequences of this process. First, the social sciences reinforce cultural and intellectual links that bind the modern sector of the developing world to the developed world. Second, they are part of the modern educational system, which is modeled on the developed world and propagated as advanced and superior to traditional systems. Third, access to the social sciences in the developing world is limited to persons educated in the modern sector. Fourth, the social sciences almost exclusively focus on issues that are important in developed societies.<sup>53</sup>

In this context, it is important to define achievement motivation, which varies across cultures. Achievement motivation is a personal (intrinsic) and social (extrinsic) drive to do something of value and importance. Western systems of motivation, which rely basically on urban white middle-class values, might not be the yardstick by which motivation in other cultures or societies can be measured. For example, social motivation is very important in ummatic culture, as in the cases of full integration in the community and fulfillment of the fam-

ily and religious groups needs. Many western educated individuals who are inspired by western values by living a western middle-class lifestyle are associated strongly with the western system of motivation. Education, and in particular social sciences, reinforce the dependency relation between the urban modern sector of the society with the western spirit of motivation.

*Soulless Psychology in a Soul Culture.* **Euro-American psychology marginalized the role of religion in shaping human behavior. This psychology needs to be applied in other cultures that centralized religion.** Religions play a marginal role in contemporary western thought, in general, and in Euro-American psychology, in particular. It is seen as fetishism, the opium of the people, illusion, delusion, and intimidation of intelligence. According to Voltaire and Comte, religion originated in fetishism.<sup>54</sup> Religion is seen by Marx and Engles as a sign of the oppressed creature, the heart of the heartless world, just as it is the spirit of the spiritless situation.<sup>55</sup> It is the opium of the people. For Freud, religion's technique consists in depressing the value of life and distorting the picture of the real world in a delusional manner, which presupposes an intimidation of intelligence.<sup>56</sup>

In other psychological writings, religion is reduced to responses, pragmatism, tribal affairs, therapy, biological substrain, or universal obsessive neurosis. Morris has reviewed several psychological ideas regarding religions.<sup>57</sup> For example, Radin notes that people lived in a situation of fear and economic insecurity and that the idea of the supernatural arose out of their attempt to cope with this uncertain external world.<sup>58</sup> Lowie defines religion as a response to abnormal phenomena, a feeling of amazement and awe that has its source in the supernatural, extraordinary, weird, sacred, holy, divine.<sup>59</sup> According to James, God was simply a hypothetical idea and, since it worked for the general good of humanity, it was to be treated as true.<sup>60</sup> Malinowski recognizes religion as a "tribal affair" involving the community rather than the individual.<sup>61</sup> Jung argues that religion is related to the "collective unconscious," which has a biological substrain and a therapeutic function.<sup>62</sup> However, the most aggressive attitude toward religion is expressed by Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, who defined religion as a universal obsessional neurosis of humanity; like the obsessional neurosis of children, it arose out of the Oedipus complex, out of the relation to the father.<sup>63</sup>

In general, according to Badri,

Western behaviorists and experimentally-minded psychologists are aware of the influence which culture plays in shaping the behavior of the subjects they study. But very few of them are conscious of the role played by the ideological and attitudinal

components of their own culture in coloring their perceptions and observations of these subjects. Western psychologists claim to take a neutral stand with respect to the existence of God and the place of religion and to apply an objective nonbiased "scientific" approach in studying spiritual phenomena. Nevertheless, they will treat man as a materialistic animal with the sole motivation of adjustment to his physical and social environment of the "here and now," which is in itself an atheistic point of view. It is a "psychology without a soul" studying a man without a soul.<sup>64</sup>

This "psychology without a soul," which emphasizes materialism, was applied in the ummatic culture, which put more emphasis on the role of sacred religious values in the behavior of individuals and groups. Islam contains a system of sacred values and a way of behaving; there is a need for such values. In the words of Mazrui: "What emerges so clearly from the experience of the past is the importance of sacred values as the umbrella under which all other things, including training in technical skills, ought to occur."<sup>65</sup>

In the ummatic culture, religion has a meaning and has both psychological and social functions. According to many investigations, religion has a crucial psychological function in facilitating the adjustment and adaptation of individuals and the groups to their life:

Religion in the Sudan is used to inspire all aspects of life: ideological, artistic and productive. Central to this process is the concept of deity, which is expressed in a symbolic manner to denote "God" either as a Christian "Lord," a Muslim "Allah," a Dinka "Nhialish," a Shilluk "Jor," or a Nuer "Kouth."<sup>66</sup>

In theory, every northern Sudanese has a "shaykh" or a man of religion whom he/she consults on various matters. Whether or not he/she is the follower of a religious order, my master *sidi* is a central belief in the theology of all orders.<sup>67</sup> Culturally, Sudan would seem to be a more traditional and homogeneous society and one very much influenced by the predominant Islamic religious ideology. Islamic beliefs and practices exert a significant influence on attitudes and behavior in many realms of life in Sudan.<sup>68</sup> Yousif, the Sudanese social psychologist, notes that in Sudan, "religion is more central to the way of living, the country is dominated by the Islamic culture to the extent that social behavior is largely a function of Islamic teaching."<sup>69</sup> Human behavior is more complex and multifaceted than the physical or material aspects treated by western or Euro-American psychology. Thus, the approaches and tools of the soulless psychology are limited in explaining the deep psychospiritual, as

well as sociocultural, aspects of human behavior in the ummatic culture. Psychology, in order to be appropriate to the soil of the ummah, must incorporate an adequate understanding of religion as an important dimension in the behavior of individuals and groups.

### Toward an Ummatic Psychology

The purpose of this section is to generate questions regarding our attempt to formulate an "ummatic psychology." We hope that these questions may pave the way for more discussion by ummatic psychologists. We need some cross-cultural and cross-ummatic comparison and contrast that can illuminate the blind spots in Euro-American psychology.

The term *ummatic* is derived from the Arabic word *ummah*, which is the most expressive term for Islamic society or culture: "The ummah is the social order of Islam, and the movement that seeks to actualize its goals is called ummatism."<sup>70</sup> Since humanity's vicegerency is necessarily social, the sciences that study it should properly be called *ummatic*. If we continue to call them *social*, we do so in defiance of the West, which insists on separating them from the humanities. We must remember that the study of society cannot be free from judgment and valuation and is therefore subject to the same rigor, or absence of it, as philosophy, theology, law, literature, and the arts. Conversely, the humanities are as much concerned with the ummah as the so-called social disciplines and are capable of applying the same principles of validation to their materials and conclusions.<sup>71</sup>

The ummatization and ummaticness of psychology is to make it relevant to the soil of the ummah. The present psychology in the ummatic culture is divorced from both the creative past of Islamic civilization and the creative present of western thought. We need creative ummatic psychologists who can understand both the great tradition of the past and the present dynamic modern thought and who are able to consider all of the processes and evolution between them so as to make the past living, active, and effective. However, the spirit of imitation in psychology (modernization) has been exported from the West, not the techniques and methods (modernity). We have taken from the past the spirit of imitation, not the spirit of vitality and productivity. The terms *taba'iyah* (imitation) and *thabāt* (originality) are part of our present behavior and must be understood within the framework of psychology by ummatic psychologists.

### Who Is an Ummatic Psychologist?

Badri unequivocally asserts a theme, namely, "the lizard's hole," in which many modern Muslim psychologists are now ensnared. It is lamentable, he asserts, that such Muslim psychologists are nowadays parroting theories without taking pains to verify them. The Islamic religion

strongly urges people to learn, to think, and to get what they learn in good faith, to the benefit of the human race in general. Psychological knowledge in that sense is in no way exceptional. Ummatic psychologists are the ulama of the ummah and must have a common understanding of individuals and groups seeking the advancement of the ummah and of humanity in general.

The Muslim social scientists are the "Ulama" of the Umma today. They are the planners of its strategies and designers of its future, the educators of the Umma at large as well as of its political, social and economic leadership. In short, they are the scientists whose object of study is the Umma in all its activities as an Umma. Their studies are "ummic" sciences, i.e., those disciplines which study human behavior as it affects, and is affected, by the society. The significance of ummic science is fulfillment of its ultimate responsibility for the Umma's course in history.<sup>72</sup>

An ummic psychologist is a psychologist who is committed fully to the ummah. Perhaps he or she has a Ph.D. in academic or professional psychology, research, and/or teaching post and has some publications in local, regional, and international journals. Some modern Muslim psychologists are devoted to worship, but by practicing modern psychology without considering the particularity of ummic culture, they have acquired a coexisting dual personality.

### **What Is the Contribution of Ummatic Ulama to Psychology?**

The West has made a tremendous contribution to the development of modern psychology. Most other cultures, including the ummic culture, have borrowed and adopted this psychology. Islamic civilization, during its most flourishing epoch, contributed to the understanding of Greek thought and the development of some psychological ideas. Concerning Greek thought:

By the Middle Ages Europe was still relatively asleep under centuries of intellectual stagnation. But then the West began to respond to the Arabian [Islamic] influence from the twelfth century on, and through that influence came the renewed impact of Greek civilization. One part of what later came to be known as Europe learned from another part of Europe through the intermediate services of Islamic civilization.<sup>73</sup>

Scholars from some European countries came to study from Muslim theologians, thinkers, philosophers, doctors, and linguists. Ibn Rushd,

who represents the impressive synthesis between science and religion, is a good example of the enormous contribution of Muslim scholars. Arkun wrote:

In the creative classical epoch of Islamic civilization, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) represents the highest seal of this epoch with his rational, philosophical and scientific attitude. This distinguished philosopher has stimulated two of the major academic institutions in Europe in the thirteenth century, these are the Sorbonne and Oxford. His great philosophy reflected in a rational movement called in France "La Rationalié Averrosite." This means that he was a significant reference in his time in both the Arabo-Islamic and European of the Christian Latin. In other words, he represents the fertile cultural interaction which crested the modernization movement in Islamic history.

In the West, religion and science are seen as opposed; by contrast, in the ummatic culture they are seen more frequently as mutually enriching. Islamic civilization has made a tremendous contribution in developing the harmonious syntheses between them.

There were times when religion more explicitly promoted science. Some of the most striking successes of this kind of marriage are to be found in the histories of Islam . . . , which evolved a scientific commitment that, at least for awhile, indicated an impressive synthesis.<sup>74</sup>

Ibn Rushd is an excellent example of the synthesis between science and religion. He lived during the end of the development of philosophy in Islam and, perhaps, marked its summit. He was the greatest authority on Greek philosophy and famous for the theory of the "unity of the intellect." The faculty of cognition, or knowing, is the intellect, which is the projection of the mentacomic intellect into the individual knower. The unity of intellect looks similar to the unity of consciousness (*waḥdat al-shuhūd*) and the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*).<sup>75</sup> In his *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, Ibn Rushd developed a synthesis between the harmony of religion and philosophy by using analogy and reason. He based the discussion on the principles that philosophy is true, that the revealed scriptures are true, and that, therefore, there cannot be any disharmony between them.<sup>76</sup>

Al-Ghazālī also contributed some psychological ideas. His contribution can be classified into three phases. The first phase concerns the nature of the soul and resembles the early stage in the development of modern psychology, which was associated with the study of the psyche. In his *Mi'yār al-'Ilm* (The Criterion of Science) and *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*

(The Incoherence of the Philosophers), he includes the nature of the soul and its immortality.<sup>77</sup> Al-Ghazālī grades the human soul (*rūh*) into four levels: sensory, imaginative, rational, and transcendental. Like most Sufi thinkers, he mostly refers to the soul in symbolic terms and uses the analogy of life.<sup>78</sup> The second phase is al-Ghazālī's concept of the conditioned reflex, which is related to the middle period of the development of modern psychology. In this stage, psychology is defined in terms of conditioning and the association between stimulus–response.<sup>79</sup> The third phase is al-Ghazālī's idea of direct experience. According to him, direct knowledge is not that of reason or faith, but that of direct experience.<sup>80</sup> The idea of personal experience occupies a central realm in some modern existentialist and humanistic schools of psychology, all of which protested the reductionism of psychoanalysis and the application of behaviorism to human behavior.

According to Badri, although modern psychology has refined rigorously its methodology in terms of observation, experimentation, and measurement, the long trail of ideas nevertheless can be traced far back into history. It is an outcome of continuing human thought. Earlier generations of Muslims played a vital role in the development of psychological thinking. They understood psychology, according to the true essence of Islam, as a vitally dynamic way of life and not merely “a highly traditional, rigid, bearded sheikh or mullah.”<sup>81</sup> Modern psychology is not all “western”; it is largely the accumulated experiences of human beings about human beings. There were a number of Muslim pioneers, such as Ibn Sīnā' in psychotherapy and psychiatry, Ibn Khaldūn in sociology and social psychology, Ibn Sīrīn in dream interpretation, and al-Ghazālī and al-Muḥāsibī in personality studies. And today, some eminent Muslim psychologists are making great contributions to western academic and applied psychology. Clear examples are found in the work of al-Kousi in the factorial analysis of intelligence, Sherif in the field of experimental social psychology, and Mustafa Suef in personality and in mathematics.<sup>82</sup>

The dialogue between Ibn Rushd and al-Ghazālī was considered to be the most famous *munādharah* in the history of Islamic civilization. Is it possible that a higher level of constructive dialogue could be repeated today? In current psychological terms, we need a dialogue like that between Jean Piaget, the Swiss structural psychologist, and Naom Chomsky, the American psycholinguist. We need ummatic psychologists who can understand the original Islamic contribution in the arena of psychology, link it to modern thought, and make a synthesis between science and religion as did Ibn Rushd.

*Where to Start Ummatic Psychology?* Is ummatization to start from generality or from particularity? Is it to start from modern and advanced Euro–American psychology or from traditional cultural val-

ues? If from modern psychology, is it to start from where the West began its investigation, in the concept of soul and psyche, through the old fashioned schools (e.g., structuralism, functionalism, psychoanalysis, behaviorism, gestalt)? Or is it to start from where the West is now, with fashionable theories in intelligence, personality, social, developmental, abnormal, counseling, and clinical psychology? Another question follows from where should we start: from pure or applied psychology? Applied psychology is the use of concepts, theories, and tools from various fields of psychology for practical purposes, for example, educational, clinical, occupational, counseling, military, and industrial.

If the emphasis is to be on particularism and uniqueness, ummatization must start from indigenous or traditional cultural values. The term *psychology* has been translated to Arabic as '*ilm al-nafs*'. Some Muslim psychologists started to focus on the concept of psyche (*nafs*) as found in the Qur'an.<sup>83</sup> In this case, it might be argued that such a discussion indicates a return to the early stages of psychology, which discussed the study of the soul and psyche.

By [the] 1700s some individuals interested in understanding human behavior stopped studying the soul and began studying the body and environment. These early psychologists left spiritual matters to religion. Since psychologists could no longer blame such individual differences on gods or on the soul, they had to find a new way of explaining the relationship between stimulus inputs and responses, or outputs. Thus, the concept of consciousness became part of psychology, and with it the concepts of mind and mental activities.<sup>84</sup>

Or should we start from the original Islamic contribution to civilization made by figures such as Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina', Ibn Khaldūn, al-Ghazālī, and others? The great contributions by those gigantic figures were highly creative and were respected in their times. They planted the seeds of ummatization, but these seeds were not watered adequately by later scholars in different historical epochs and so could not grow and live dynamically in the present. However, their language, concepts, and philosophies have no direct influence in present psychological thought. Should we start from the present reality of the Muslim world, taking into consideration all of its cultural traditions and systems of belief and the subcultures within the dominant Islamic culture? Islamic culture, as we know, influenced many other cultures and, at the same time, was influenced by them. In this case, all traditions of the Muslim community that have affected many people in traditional sectors and rural areas could be considered. These include the consideration of the positive aspects of all

indigenous psychological ideas and practices and other methods of healing that become part of the traditional belief system.

The answers to the preceding questions could depend upon what the ummatic culture values: ideal or reality, theory or application, history or present, foreign or indigenous? If it values all of these variables, there may be a form of synthesis between them. In this case, it might be a comprehensive psychology characterized by the spirit of tolerance and flexibility that can overcome the dichotomy, shortcomings, and blind spots of western thought.

If the emphasis is more on "universalism" than "particularism," we must focus on the dynamics of modern psychology and respond adequately to it without imitation and without isolation. It is better in this response to separate the wheat from the chaff. Is it possible to use western techniques in an ummatic spirit? In this case, it is useful to learn lessons from the most skillful nation in the world of the twenty-first century, namely, Japan. Japan is the leading country among the Asian "tiger economies" and is characterized by advanced technology, advanced skills, hard-working lifestyles, and high investment.

There are some similarities between Japan and the Islamic world in terms of family stability, strong social relations, and respect for sacred values. Our admiration for Japan does not mean that it is the ideal model to copy; it is more appropriate to respond to its experience in adopting and adapting psychology and developing technology together with the preservation of social values.

One of the large tasks insisted upon by the ruling occupation powers was the social and psychological reform of Japanese society. Psychology was expected, by both Japanese and Allied leaders, to help guide such reform. Areas of study that quickly spread during this period were group psychology, clinical psychology, social psychology, and anthropological psychology. Kurt Lewin was one psychologist who was well-known in pre-war Japan. Consequently, Lewinian studies of small groups were among the first to take root in postwar Japan. The advantages that showed for democratic leadership over autocratic leadership were given great play in the reform of post-war Japan. Macro-social psychology also was used to point up the feudal, autocratic and irrational aspects of pre-war and wartime Japan, and invoked to help establish a more "democratic" society.<sup>85</sup>

Mazrui asks this question: To what extent is it possible to import western technical skills without at the same time also importing such aspects of the western way of life as are relevant and necessary for the use of such skills? Furthermore, to what extent might such skills, devoid

of their relevant western cultural accompaniments, succeed in the African cultural context? Traditional African societies succeeded admirably in teaching skills that were compatible with their own sacred values. It is this harmonious relationship between the two arms of education that is now largely lost.<sup>86</sup>

Ummatize, then, means to make psychology, which was imported wholesale from Euro-American culture, adequate to local conditions. Psychology must abandon its imperial and ethnocentric legacy in order to be relevant to contemporary ummatic culture. It is ethnocentric, as we discussed earlier, because it is the white middle-class people of Europe and America who provide the concepts and tools as well as the measure by which individuals and groups in the ummatic cultures are evaluated and classified. Ummatic psychologists are responsible for decolonizing their social sciences, in general, and psychology, in particular, and developing a spirit of "ummateness" and originality in new sciences, a spirit that can understand and predict the behavior of individuals according to their own values and norms.

There are two major forms of ummatization: major or universal and minor or local. The major one is to decolonize and filter these sciences from the Euro-American imperialism, hegemony, and ethnocentrism and make them relevant to the needs of individuals and groups in the ummatic culture. The minor or local ummatization is to extend these sciences from the modern, western, and urban sectors and to make them relevant to the masses in traditional rural areas. In this context, ummatic psychologists must learn lessons from those who drank deeply from the wells of traditions, Sufi shaykhs, healers, indigenous leaders, philosophers, artists, historians, anthropologists, poets, and others.

When the adapted modern psychology achieves its aims, it can pave the way for the second stage of independence from the dominance of western psychology. Here, we agree with Berry, the well-known cross-cultural psychologist, that there is hope, because dominant societies (in the literature of acculturation) do not remain dominant forever, just as dominant scientific paradigms occupy center stage for a time, and are then replaced by others.<sup>87</sup> In the second stage, there is a need to develop a scientific psychology that can understand, control, and predict the behavior of individuals and groups in the ummatic sociocultural system.

If we agree to start from indigenous cultural values, ummatization means specifying and examining the psychospiritual and sociocultural concepts from the perspective of the traditions and the reality of the local conditions that are suitable to the ummah. This process does not mean to think in a dichotic way, for example, western/ummatic, foreign/native, secular/religious, and modern/traditional. This process should be understood as a way to discover the ummatic spirit and values, to

renovate and revive the positive aspects of the past and the present as well as the positive aspects of the indigenous and the foreign, in building a sense of the identity and dignity of individuals and groups toward a high level of solidarity.

*How Can Ummatic Psychology Be Achieved?* The transition of psychology to ummatic psychology cannot be realized without encouraging enthusiastic ummatic psychologists through adequate training, preparing good tools and generous grants for research, conferences, library facilities, original books, articles, essays, discussion groups, and workshops; and producing creative, original, and innovative writings. An ummatic psychological society also needs to publish journals.

Of course an active Islamic psychological society with frequent scholarly meetings in which papers are read, published and circulated and in which Islamic psychologists can co-operate in publishing a journal of Islamic psychology can be of unlimited help in changing passive Muslim psychologists into dynamic practicing Islamic scholars.<sup>88</sup>

Psychology gives tools, techniques, and methods that can engineer and shape our behavior and contribute to the development of the ummah. Ummatic psychologists who understand the needs of the ummah will use psychological knowledge properly according to the ummah's heart and mind. If we achieve that stage, then we can validate our ummatic psychology and make it reliable without permanent isolation. Visionary ummatic psychologists, with creative and active brains and grand ideas, can generate productive solutions to complex and multifaceted problems. (By *productivity* we mean the most effective use of the available ummatic resources.)

We need enthusiastic and interested psychologists who can think creatively, not merely those able to learn and apply western psychology. Increasing interest will result in increasing research, evaluation, and refinement. There is a need for a dynamic ummatic psychology that can reflect the spirit of the ummatic cultural system, its needs, beliefs, values, and identity; a psychology that can move effectively the productivity of both individuals and groups toward a high level of development. By so doing, ummatic psychologists can be at center stage and in the heart of the present discussion and can make a new equilibrium. Finally, we emphasize the need for a creative and innovative psychology that can contribute positively to the ummah and to the advancement of humanity in general. In this case "the ummah is the universal society" (Qur'an 21: 29).

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