

# Re-Educating the Muslim Intellectual

If the paramount aim of Islamic education today is the generation of original, creative and authentic Islamic thought, the Muslim intellectual has to re-educate himself first, because his vision of Islam is ethically undemanding and aims to make hermits out of our youth, argues **S Parvez Manzoor**



EDUCATION forms the most important link between man's past and future. In fact, it constitutes that process of evaluation and transmission, of coping with the present and planning for the future, which determines a community's survival. It is through education that the cultural heritage, knowledge and values of a social group are preserved and the continuity of its collective life ensured. In short, education imparts meaning to the existence of a culture and helps it sustain its worldview. As such, it cannot be equated with a mere inventory of the paraphernalia and instruments of instruction, including even institutions and external structures. On the contrary, in every meaningful and constructive way, education is inextricably linked with the general *intellectualism* of a culture, the principal task of which is to provide a forum for self-analysis and criticism. Educational philosophy, therefore, not only shapes the destiny and identity of any historical community; in its function as the guardian and cultivator of values, it is also the very basis of all culture and civilisation.

Looking at our own situation, it cannot be gainsaid that all our images of the future of Islam will, to a large extent, be determined by the ability of the Muslim Umma to provide, or deny, its young the kind of education that is in alignment with its ultimate aspirations. Thus, at a time when every Muslim fervently hopes, and probably strives, for 'Islamic revival', one cannot but agree with Fazlur Rahman when he insists that 'it is the growth of a genuine, original and adequate Islamic thought that must provide the real criterion for judging the success or failure of an Islamic educational system'. The revival and renaissance of 'Islamic intellectualism' thus is both the essence and the goal of higher Islamic education. Given this objective, therefore, it becomes imperative that Islamic educational thought begin by *re-educating the Muslim intellectual*.

Unfortunately, all our toils at the cultivation of a new crop of Islamic intellectualism must start from a very thorny and barren ground. At the outset of any such effort is the painful realisation that the one proverbial unity of Islamic thought has unquestionably been severed in 'modern' times. Though to blame this on Islam's encounter with 'modernity' is *de rigueur*, the seeds of this disruption lay already in premodern times when a kind of pernicious 'secularism' made its appearance in the Muslim world.

no doubt as a result of the general stagnation of Islamic thinking. What started as no more than an insignificant fissure in the bedrock of Islamic intellectualism, however, has developed into an unbridgeable divide in our own times. The dichotomy of 'religious' and 'worldly' sciences, though ultimately of very early origin in our history, today haunts us as a great schism in our soul. On the one side of this dividing gulf are the '*ulama*' which their unimpeachable historical credentials, their impeccable Shari'a methodology and their unchanging notions of societal justice; on the other, we have the so-called *intellectuals* more in communion with the modern world, daring and innovative in their thinking but without the authority and responsibility of the tradition. Will the twain ever meet, is the question of our times.

Until recently, the intellectuals have often criticised the '*ulama*' (at least in the Sunni world) for being conservative, rigid and narrowminded in their approach to contemporary problems. In fact, it has frequently been claimed that their vision of Islam itself is 'outdated' and that they cling to the emotions and thought-patterns of an age long made obsolete by the onward march of human civilisation. Islam, so argue their opponents, is eternal not because of the fixity of its legal rulings and injunctions as the '*ulama*' would have it, but due to the universality and adaptability of its values and precepts. The '*ulama*'s lack of acquaintance with the modern world is further adduced as a proof against the relevance of their approach to Islam. Ziauddin Sardar, for instance, indicts both Abu Ala Maududi and Syed Qutb for paying no attention to 'epistemology and science, technology and environment, urbanisation and development – all burning, indeed pressing issues for contemporary Muslim societies as well as the dominant West.' Even more outspoken and cogent in his censure of traditional scholarship is Fazlur Rahman, who, in fact, never tires of harping about the 'intellectual bankruptcy' of modern 'religious establishment'. Other, equally critical but well-meaning and earnest voices are not lacking either. Whether the '*ulama*' actually deserve these strictures, whether they in fact are the pious simpletons that their critics paint them to be, whether they really are incapable of guiding the faithful in the maze of modernity, must remain unanswered for the time being; what will concern us here is the performance of the intellectuals themselves. How suc-

cessful have they been in interpreting the forces of the modern world and translating their insights into positive guidelines for coping with these forces? How penetrating and compelling, in short, is their perception of 'modernity' and how genuine and authentic is their vision of Islam? What are the moral imperatives that ensue from their approach to Islam and what promises – or perils – does their vision hold for the Umma? And finally, what may be expected of them in the future? Or, in other words, when they exhibit intellectual and moral disarray and disorientation, how may they be *re-educated*?

To trace the ideological, philosophical and spiritual pedigree of the Muslim intellectual and to pin-point the sources, whether indigenous or foreign, of his inspiration would indeed be a task beyond the scope of this essay. Such references as are necessary will, therefore, be made only in passing, just as their internal squabblings will be largely glossed over. Moreover, even if the very notion of 'Muslim intellectual' remains somewhat problematical from the standpoint of our historical legacy, nonetheless, for our purpose we shall define him/her as the 'Islamically-minded and motivated thinker who, for the propagation and dissemination of his-her ideas, writes principally in a modern western language'. Though this definition does give rise to certain anomalies (many a traditional '*alim*' has been translated into western languages), it has the merit of positing an easily verifiable standard which is also very relevant for our inquiry. After all, the first-hand knowledge of any modern western language is of capital importance in determining one's knowledge of, and hence one's attitude to, the modern world. This practical criterion thus successfully captures the dividing proclivities of the current Islamic thought and may unhesitatingly be employed for our purpose here.

In the 1213th year of the Hijra, the Egyptian scholar and historian, 'Abd ar-Rahman Al-Jabarti, has his personal encounter with 'modernity'. The Hijri year, it may be recalled, corresponds to June 1798 to June 1799 – the year in which Napoleon made his invasion of Egypt and, by all scholarly consensus, brought 'Islam' face to face with the might, and even ideas, of the western civilisation. It is instructive that for Al-Jabarti this encounter had the force of a personally *educating* experience. In his monumental work on history, *Aja'ib-al-Athar fi't-Tarajim wa'l-Ahbar*, however, Al-Jabarti seizes

the import of this event which essentially entailed Egypt's loss of *power* to France, in terms of the *religious* calamity that befell the whole Umma. He says:

"So reaced this year its close. Among the unprecedented events that occurred in it, the most portentous was the cessation of the Pilgrimage from Egypt. They did not send the Holy Draperies (*kiswah*) for the Ka'abah and they did not send the Purse (*surrah*). The like of this had never happened in the present age and never during the rule of the Banu Uthman (the Ottomans). Surely, the ordering of events lies with God alone."

Dismayed by his civilisation's humiliating encounter with the more powerful foreigners, the Muslim savant, nonetheless, was receptive enough to immediately begin his own personal re-education. The new rulers of his native land were to help him in this in a strange way. After occupying Cairo, one of the first acts of the French was to stage a 'scientific exhibition'. The Cairene were treated to all the marvels of science, including practical demonstrations, and the inquisitive Muslim historian was one of the visitors. The awesome display of technical wizardry, however, did not impress him. He recorded that 'the French evidently mistook Muslims for children who could be impressed by such monkey-tricks', but that his rather reflected childishness on the part of the French themselves. Instead, it was his exposure to 'French justice' that made a deep impression on his mind. The first instance involved the misdeed of the foreigners themselves. Some French soldiers were found guilty of house-breaking with violence and, on the personal orders of Napoleon, were made to pay for the crime with their lives. The second incident was more disturbing: it concerned the assassination of General Kléber, Napoleon's successor and the commander of the occupation army in Egypt, by a Muslim. Al-Jabarti who was present at the trial and even reproduced *verbatim* in his account documents replete with the French chancery's defective Arabic, was deeply stirred by the fair trial. Honest and conscientious as he was, he does not shirk wondering whether his fellow countrymen, in similar circumstances, would have risen to the same moral level. Clearly, in the Muslim historian's moral scheme, there was no stipulation for according a higher place to the Ottoman form of justice simply because the latter were



Ideas, like flowers, do not survive long outside their natural habitat: Irises by Van Gogh

Muslims. Herein lay Al-Jabarti's personal re-education; for he became painfully aware that the standards of justice of his times, as practised by the Muslims of his land, had fallen below those of the other nations. And this is how all genuine modern intellectualism of Islam may be understood: as a search for the Qur'anic meaning of justice and the creation of a universal moral order in the world of today and tomorrow.

Justice is the key word for all Islamic intellectualism and all Islamic education. The most challenging prob-

lem for Islamic thought today is quite simply to delineate, in the light of the Qur'anic consciousness, the contents for justice within the socio-political framework of the modern civilisation – and, where these demands for universal justice cannot be met, supply rational arguments for challenging modernity itself. The gruesome and excruciating problem for the Muslim intellectual is that whereas the moral imperatives of his faith are quite explicit and unnegotiable, the traditional remedies for implementing these imperatives, indeed all inherited

answers to societal justice, in his perception, have lost their efficacy in the changed realities of today. The 'ulama' on the other hand and quite naturally, are adamant in discrediting any such notions that claim the redundancy of their *authority* or the incompetence of their *tradition*. Notwithstanding these discordant visions of *tradition* and *modernity* entertained by the 'ulama' and the intellectuals the heart of the problem for Islamic thinking, for both, lies in the search for a contemporary socio-political definition of justice. So has it also been throughout all the trying years of political dependency and intellectual stupor.

It goes without saying that at the height of their political might, when Muslim societies lay humbled before them, European powers could not have had a high regard for 'Islam', especially so when the culture they encountered and defeated was already decadent and moribund. The unfortunate historical legacy of perpetual strife between Dar-Al-Islam and Christendom, moreover, left no room for any sympathetic understanding on a reciprocal basis. At the moment of her triumph, Christian Europe's contempt for her old foe was total; whereas the vanquished Muslim world was in the throes of doubt and despair. It is at this 'darkest hour of Muslim history' that the modern 'intellectual' makes its entry. The trait he displayed then endures to this day: normally, he has a first-hand knowledge of Europe (or the West), is aware of her strength as well as her weakness, but at the same time, he also has genuine admiration for her professedly liberal and humanitarian values. One such figure, who fits well in our definition of a Muslim intellectual was Syed Amir Ali of India. In fact, he deserves to be named as 'the father of modern intellectualism.'

Syed Amir Ali (1849-1928) was an eminent jurist who held many important positions in the colonial administration of the British India. His claim to fame, however, is due to his learned, enthusiastic and to some incomparable book, *The Spirit of Islam* which was first published in 1891 and which since then has seen numerous re-prints. At a time when the morale of the modernised Muslims was very low, when the missionary was zealously delivering his hammering blows and when it had become the fashion of the day to assert that 'Islam' was the antithesis to 'civilisation', Amir Ali appeared almost like a knight in shining armour. His work is

indeed a *tour de force* by any standards; it is confident, resilient, full of contagious idealism and written in a language of great beauty and majesty that still entralls the reader. The Islam it presents is very liberal and humane, the ideals it cherishes are among the highest in the world and the truths it embodies are as eternal and everlasting as found in any other moral tradition. *The Spirit of Islam*, so says even a fastidious Christian critic, 'needs to be read for its fullness, its exuberance, its sweep of confidence to be appreciated.' Certainly no Muslim reader can afford to miss it.

Notwithstanding its sterling qualities – indeed in certain respects it had never been equalled, let alone surpassed – Amir Ali's study of Islam also displays all the reprehensible traits of modern intellectualism. Even such a confident presentation has its nervous sides; it is not altogether free from the occasionally jarring note of apology. And this is despite the notable fact that its very erudite and generous author, unlike any of his followers, does not suffer from offended sensibility and hurt pride. Given the paradigm established by Amir Ali's pioneering study, and with the benefit of hindsight, we are forced to conclude that *apology is an essential and inevitable ingredient in all modern intellectualism*. There appears, thus, more than ample justification for accepting the traditionalist's common allegation against the intellectual, namely that the latter is a man split loyalties and perhaps of less than firm faith. True enough, the ubiquitous presence of apology in all the intellectualist discourse does point towards a failure of nerve and a loss of confidence. Nevertheless, it is also true, and he himself sees it in this way, the intellectual is also a rationalist defender of Islam. In fact, he displays more than perfunctory resemblance with the *mu'tazila* of the classical times and his preference for the *mu'tazilite* theology is well-known.

The most damaging charge against Amir Ali, and all the intellectuals after him, however, is *moral*. It has often been observed with great perspicacity that for the apologising intellectual, Islam is his *being* from which he derives pain and ecstasy, but which is not a *moral imperative*. Thus, intellectualist Islam is very sublime and beautiful, but it makes no *ethical* demands on the Muslim and inspires no activity! One may just as well sit anywhere and *admire* it and be captivated by its ethereal beauty and truth. The essence of faith, however, is not self-admiration and the essence of



Scholarly Masthead: Jamaluddin Afghani and Mohammad Abduh's monthly magazine influenced a whole generation of Muslim intellectuals

Islam is moral dynamism. The intellectual has not so far given any convincing reply to the allegation of the ethical poverty of his image of Islam. The principal task before anyone desirous of re-educating the Muslim intellectual, therefore, is to imbue the intellectualist Islamic vision with the fervent and vibrant moral dynamic of the Islamic faith.

A modern orientalist describes, what to him is, one of the attractive qualities of the author of *The Spirit of*

*Islam*, as such: 'Amir Ali stands practically alone among Muslim modernists in that he does not attack the West on political grounds and in that he does not intimate a temporal resurgence of Muslim power'. Thus, besides apology and ethical quietism, the third most conspicuous trait of Amir Ali's thought is its political acquiescence to the power of the West. It is my contention that even in this, the modern intellectual walks in Amir Ali's tracks. At first, such a

statement sounds strange, especially so in our own days when everyone is clamouring for the resurgence of Islam. Indeed, one normally assumes that all modern intellectualist discourse, because of its lukewarm interest in matters of 'religion', is pre-eminently an involvement with the problems of 'power' and that the issue of the political resurgence of Islam is foremost in the intellectual's agenda. Nonetheless, very little that one finds in the actual writings of the intellectual himself lends support to this belief. In fact, our analysis will try to bring this out quite clearly that, with respect to power and politics, the intellectual is not a *knight* but a *hermit* of Islam.

Before we examine and assay some of our more notable contemporaries whose writings are available to us in western languages and who thus according to our definition belong to the category of 'Muslim intellectuals', a recapitulation of the main characteristics of their corporate thought is in order. Getting our cue from Syed Amir Ali and the lesser known pro-western figures of the last century, we come to the conclusion that, besides his deployment of western concepts and vocabulary, the intellectual distinguishes himself from the traditional 'alim in three aspects: first, the tenor of his thought is incontestably *apologetic*; second, his Islam is an *ethnically undemanding* doctrine; and third, in terms of political philosophy, he is a *quietist*. There is indeed a fourth characteristic, namely that compared to the standards of traditional scholarship, the intellectual's knowledge of 'Islam' is shallow, just as his sensitivity to 'Islamic' symbols and images, both in terms of intellectual comprehension and emotional loyalty, leaves much to be desired.

A worthy successor to Amir Ali, exhibiting the same kind of high intellectual acumen but also similar apologetic proclivity, is Isma'il Raji Al-Faruqi. Equally a man of great erudition, argumentational flair and crusading zeal, Al-Faruqi has emerged as one of the most cogent spokesmen of Islam among western academic circles. More than that, he has had considerable following among students and other sections of intelligensia throughout the Muslim world, partly due to the fact that he is first and foremost a debater and that his numerous writings are in English (his stray Arabic articles seem to be mostly translations from the English originals, his Palestinian origin and his proficiency in the classical language notwith-

standing) but partly also because that he had been actively guiding and monitoring nearly all the 'semi-official' Muslim organisations. To give an adequate analytical account of Al-Faruqi's total intellectual output is of course beyond the scope of this essay; suffice it to say that only those aspects of his thought that impinge upon our theme will be briefly discussed.

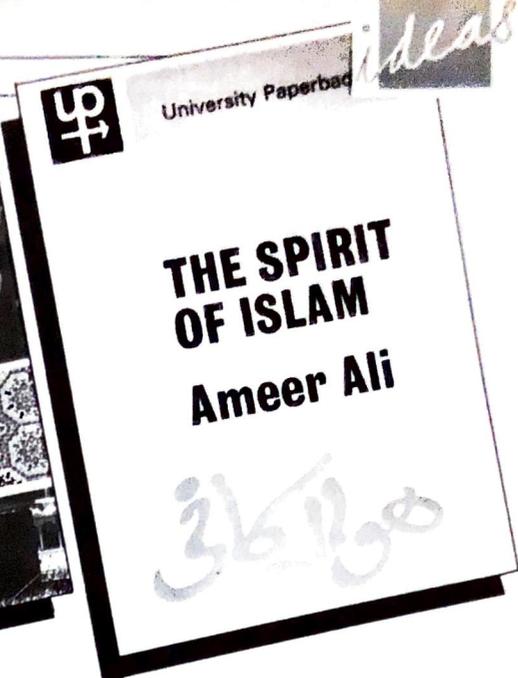
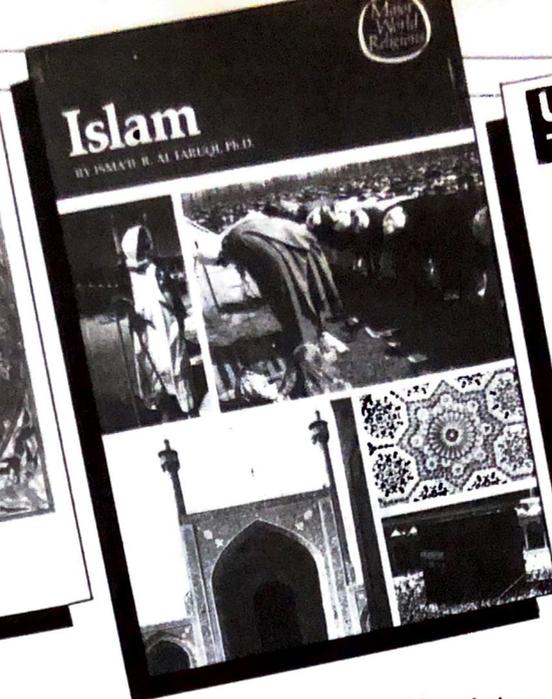
For a lifetime of devotion to 'education' in its various ramifications, from pure academism to formal leadership of various 'youth organisations', the most surprising aspect of Al-Faruqi's thought is its frustratingly *abstract* character. Despite our genuine admiration for the always inspiring and gratifying quality of his intellectual approach to Islam, we must reproach it for its glaring lack of concreteness and its total disregard of empirical realities. That his vision is always directed towards the ideal is no consolation for use who are in search of moral imperatives within the inescapable context of modernity. Thus from an educational perspective, for all its sublimity and beauty, Al-Faruqi's 'Islam' remains painfully estranged from history; it has no immediate design for the remaking of this world and carries no conviction for sacrifice or martyrdom. No doubt, it is a total system of thought, coherent and logical to the utmost detail, just as it possesses absolute spiritual perfection, but, unfortunately, it is also its own reward.

A purposeful examination of Al-Faruqi's recently published work, *Tawhid: Its implications for Thought and Life* (Kuala Lumpur/Wyncote, 1982), which is a choice collection of essays that have appeared over a long period of time and thus marks a conscious synopsis of his thought, would bring home the point I have been emphasising. Despite the forbidding diversity and variety of its thematic topoi, its argumentational thrust is buttressed by a single, uniquely unifying motif: *Tawhid*. No doubt, it is the genius of Islam which is ultimately responsible for this unity and clarity of intellectual vision; nonetheless, it is also a tribute to Al-Faruqi's perception to have delineated that vision with such elocution and splendour. However, it remains a *vision* which may only be beheld and not a *charter* which may be given formal allegiance to, let alone a *plan* or a *programme* which may be enacted. Out of the 13 times, each elucidating a fundamental and universal concept from the clarifying vision of Tawhid, the one dealing with 'Political Order' ranks 10th, succeed-

ing such protean entities as 'History', 'Knowledge' and 'Metaphysics'. The really astonishing fact, however, is not the relative insignificance or subservience of the political to the metaphysical in Al-Faruqi's scheme, but that his political thought is not *political* at all! The two primary units of his 'political order', like those of any other Muslim thinker today, are *Khalifa* and *Umma*. However, it is my contention that by *no stretch of the imagination can Umma and Khalifa be considered as political units today!* The vagaries of history have depleted them of all their political content. For a vindication of this view, let us listen to Al-Faruqi himself. He says:

"The vision of the *umma* is one; so is the feeling or will, as well the action. There is consensus in the thought of the *umma*'s members in their decision, in their attitude and character, and in their arms. The *umma* is an order of humans consisting of a tripartite consensus of mind, heart and arm. It is a universal brotherhood which knows neither colour nor ethnic identity. In its purview, all men are one, measurable only in terms of piety. If one of its members acquires knowledge, power, food or comfort, his duty is to share it with others. If anyone achieves establishment, success and prosperity, his duty is to help others do likewise. It is an order of human beings who opt to govern their lives and seek to govern the lives of all other humans, by the *umma* values and principles."<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, not even Al-Faruqi's bombast can hide the abject poverty of his political thought. Indeed, inadvertently, he lays bare with merciless clarity the pathetic impasse in which contemporary Muslim (Sunnī) political theory finds itself. The cynic may wonder, with the membership of this transcendental body granted to every Muslim gratuitously as it were, what is left for an individual Muslim to do but sit back, relax and feel ecstatic about belonging to it. Moreover, whatever the idealised *umma* of Al-Faruqi's description may be, it is certainly not a *polity*. Nor is it a historical entity beyond the consensual Medinese state. Such a body-politic (Al-Faruqi would perhaps like to call it *body-ummatic*), assuming that it is indeed so, could never 'defile' itself with the profanity of power and rule. But, by this very sublimity it would also forfeit its Islamic duty to bring about *justice* in the world, for all *human pursuit of justice must of necessity take place within a historical, perforce political, context*. Such indeed



is the tragedy of apoliticised conscience that, contrary to its perception and ethos, there exists no a-political history and there exists no a-political being. To aspire for *justice* is therefore to strive for *power*, for there is an *ethics* of power, just as there is its immorality. This is the lesson which the Prophet of Islam first learned himself and then taught to his *ummah*. Could there be any teacher more worthy of emulation than the Prophet himself? And, could there be any other re-education for the Muslim intellectual than to follow the *sunnah* of the Prophet?

Fortunately, such is the legacy of the Prophet that Islam can never acquiesce to a *totally* apoliticised ethos, nor can any individual Muslim become *completely* depoliticised. Of course, Al-Faruqi is no exception. Nonetheless, the significant fact is that the political impulse in him, as in other intellectuals of similar persuasion, finds its outlet either in *nostalgia* or in *utopianism*. Unfortunately, from the standpoint of political morality, both these are nefarious emotions; they either lead to lethargy and inaction or to anarchic activism but never to any disciplined and constructive action which is the essence of a stable social order. For instance, the very widespread, and in its own right perfectly justified, sentiment prevailing today which claims that *all* contemporary Muslim rule falls short of the 'true' Islamic standards and hence is illegitimate and unworthy of a Muslim's allegiance, has been instrumental in inculcating, even among otherwise sincere, devoted and active Muslims, an ethos of quietism and recluse that is the very negation of Islamic faith. Despite the nobility and piety of this emotion, therefore, such an attitude

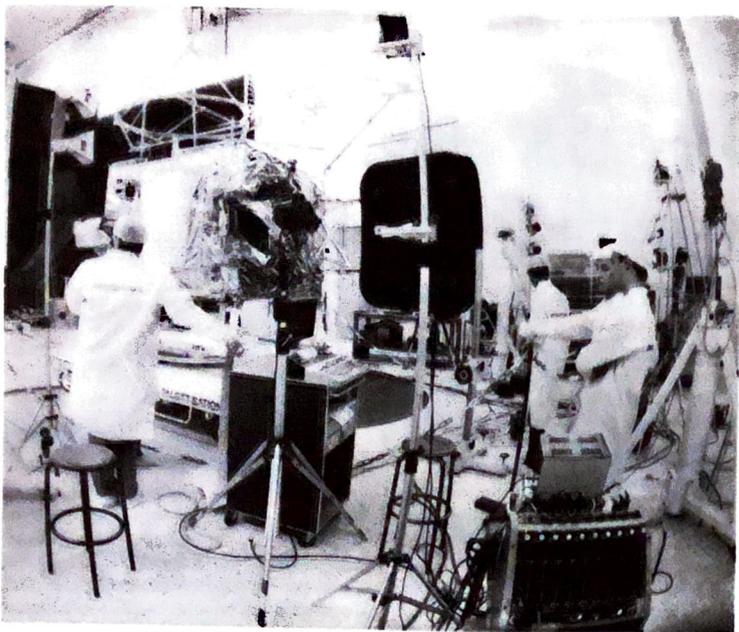
must be condemned forthwith as being a perfidious betrayal of the Prophet's legacy.

The most pernicious outcome of this withdrawal of the 'conscientious' Muslim from the 'public' sphere is that the vacuum left by him is filled by every kind of scoundrel and hypocrite. Since no form of 'political' discourse in a Muslim society can be carried out without the use of Islamic symbols and concepts, for such still is the pervasiveness and emotive force of Islam in its own milieu, 'Islam' thus becomes an empty political metaphor to be used and abused by anyone irreverent and unconscionable enough to disregard its sanctity. No doubt, if 'Islam' is to rise above sheer demagoguery and the vagaries of day to day politics, Muslims must be *educated* to channel their sacred emotions into creative socio-political activities. To provide a cogent and meaningful link between higher ideals and mundane deeds is the primary task of all intellectual thought. But as long as the Muslim intellectual has the propensity to keep on distilling a vision of Islam which is all ideal and no activity, which is all thought and no deed, he cannot fulfil his paramount duty. If he intends to play any worthwhile role in the Muslim society, the Muslim intellectual therefore has an obligation to re-educate himself. And that goes equally for Al-Faruqi, because, despite the ostensibly, and even self-consciously, political terminology and rhetoric of his discourse, his thought aims at the cultivation of a thoroughly depoliticised personality, which cannot be the aim of Islamic education.

In an essay devoted to the theme of education, we have dwelt on the problem of power and politics at some length simply because any worthwhile

discussion on this all-important issue is totally missing in contemporary educational thought. Education is simply assumed to be the development and perfection of an individual's character and, unlike for instance the central concern of the western civilisation, it is assumed to have very little to do with the obligations and rights of the individual as a *citizen*. Personality rather than society, psychology rather than politics, individual rather than community thus forms the nucleus of Muslim intellectual's educational interest. Of course, it is the prevalence of the *Sufi* ethos, always strong in the Muslim world, that accounts for this propensity of Islamic intellectualism. Sufism, moreover, seems to have a firm hold on the mind of the Muslim intellectual, as the number of intellectuals displaying Sufi loyalties in some form or another is disproportionately large. Since the intellectual is, in all practical reality, the only knowledgeable Muslim interpreter and transmitter of the ideational currents of modernity, it is not surprising that modern thought reaches Muslim youth only after it had been filtered by the Sufi mind. Sometimes, the results are very disappointing. Not only do the vigorously concrete issues assume the garb of metaphysical niceties in the process of Sufi re-interpretation, the generation of alternative Islamic criteria for the assessment of alien thought is also hampered by the Sufi monopoly of Muslim intellectualism. A very pertinent case in point is the apprehension of western science and technology in recent Islamic thought.

That modern science and technology is the real basis of the West's power today, just as it has been, and still is, the most effective means of spreading western domination throughout the



globe, need no longer be contested by anyone on any grounds. Moreover, for Islam's part, the growth and expansion of western science holds special interest, and perhaps affords an edifying lesson, not least because it is an outgrowth of what the Muslim possessed and practised one day. Hence, a proper study and close scrutiny of the nature and activity of modern science should form the most paramount topic of Muslim intellectualism, and by extension, of its educational thought. Needless to say, such has not been, nor is, the case. The 'Ulama', though very conscious of the detrimental effects of western science on Muslim societies, do not have any profound knowledge of its worldview or ethos. They have thus displayed a very ambivalent attitude towards it; at times considering it a morally neutral instrument of knowledge and power, at other opposing it on instinct or due to the generally anti-western thrust of their ideology. No doubt countless numbers of Muslims have become involved with it as practising scientists or as passive consumers, nonetheless, Muslim world's knowledge of modern science as an autonomous worldview, ethos, culture and value-system is very shallow indeed. Some of the blame for this confusion, no doubt, goes to S. Hossein Nasr who has established himself as the indisputable Muslim authority on both 'Western' and 'Islamic' science.

Before anything adverse may be said about Nasr's perception of 'scien-

ce', let it be stated without equivocation that this writer is a great admirer of Nasr and indeed holds that but for the depth of his vision, the general contents of modern Islamic intellectualism would be very poor. Nevertheless, it is also my belief that Nasr's influence, especially in terms of his educational impact, has been by and large quite negative. It is not that there is anything *intellectually* wrong with Nasr's approach to science. No, it is the mystical bend of his mind which, despite its comprehension of vision, has beclouded the social issues of modern science, especially for his immature and gullible readers. Nasr's interest in science, both 'modern' and 'Islamic', is essentially in its metaphysical and epistemological aspects. Though such a stance, unquestionably, is quite rewarding for the ultimate *evaluation* of science as a doctrine, it also has its limitations. Most important among these is Nasr's disregard of science as a set of social activities, or as a problem-solving paradigm, even as an agent of acculturation. Such an approach to science would have been more easily accessible and culturally meaningful to Muslim youth. That Nasr has shown no interest in these aspects of science merely confirms that the metaphysician in him takes precedence over the teacher. This is regrettable.

In conformity with the apolitical temper of the westernised intellectual, Nasr too has largely ignored the role of science as the generator of *power*.

Among his numerous insights, there never occurs any analysis of the affinity of scientific institutions with the centres of political power, a phenomenon which in our own times has acquired very ominous implications. During the 1976 exhibition named 'Science and Technology in Islam', which was essentially conceived and monitored by Nasr, I received this shocking lesson. The exhibition, which was part of the 'Festival of Islam' euphoria, which followed in the wake of OPEC boom, was held in the Science Museum, London. The whole repertoire of the 'science' of Islam was housed in a small room, containing mostly such innocuous objects such as astrolabes, Qiblah indicators, balances, quaint alchemical apparatus, even maps and astronomical tables. Outside, the monstrous beauties of modern science, mostly steam engines and other machines of early industrial society, were endlessly pounding their gigantic hammers in a mock display of feverish activity. The discrepancy in size alone was sobering: a single machine of 'modern' science could have encompassed all the trophies of bygone 'scientific' culture, just as one blow could have pulverised the entire display of 'Islamic' technology. For such disquieting experience, S.H.Nasr's vision of science had no explanation!

We have tried to show that the crucial problems of modern civilisation, namely politics and science, have been appropriated in the thought of the Muslim intellectual in such a fashion that they do not offer any constructive educational guidelines for the Muslim youth, indeed for the Umma in general. The third most important issue of modernity, which incidentally is the favourite of Muslim intellectuals, namely that of knowledge and epistemology, is also bereft of educational promise. For instance, Naquib Al-Attas, another giant among Muslim intellectuals, conceives the problem of knowledge in purely mental terms. His 'all is in the mind' approach, however, as we have shown earlier (Afkar-Inquiry, June 1985), cannot serve as the basis of concrete action. Even he must re-educate himself.

Despite the explicit injunction of the Prophet that there is no monkey in Islam, the modern westernised intellectual has been educating and training us for entry into his holy order. To re-educate the youth of Islam, and its intellectuals, from hermits to *mujahids* is the most challenging task of Islamic education today. ■