

THE TRANSFORMING EXPERIENCE OF AMERICAN MUSLIMS: ISLAMIC EDUCATION AND POLITICAL MATURATION

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INTRODUCTION

The growth of the American Muslim community in the last three decades has been quite remarkable, and holds a promise of bright future for Islam in America. America has in many ways transformed the Muslims, and in turn stands to undergo profound transformation by their presence. American Muslims, I contend, could contribute profoundly to the restoration of the spiritual and moral core of modern civilization which has been fading away with the advancement of hardcore secularism. Indeed American Muslims are in a position to restore the spiritual and moral dimensions of modern life while continuing to be faithful to the true spirit of liberalism.

I further contend that for American Muslims to undertake this historic mission they need first to build their moral and political strengths by paying closer attention to two interrelated processes: Islamic education and political maturation. This article, therefore, examines the progress made on these two fronts, and then outlines an overall strategy for future Islamic development.

THE GREAT LEAP

To understand the earthshaking impact of the experience of American Muslims, let us first explore briefly the dynamism of the globalization process in the last half century, a period which constitutes the postcolonial era for the bulk of Muslim countries. The postcolonial era represents for most Muslim societies a time of great social turmoil and political upheaval. It has been also a period of experimentation and soul searching.

Colonial powers have been fairly successful in destroying traditional social and political structures and altering Muslim consciousness by introducing new institutions and patterns of social organization and interaction, and by transplanting modern education system in Muslim societies. Colonial powers altered state boundaries, carving new smaller states out of old larger ones; changed the distribution of power; established armies led by new military elites; and introduced a new lifestyle and a modern taste among the educated elites; designed new curricula for schools modeled after European curricula. While these curricula reintroduced to Muslim societies sciences that had been neglected and omitted in traditional schools, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, they also included subjects which brought new interpretations and meanings of human experience, such as history, philosophy, and social sciences.

In the postcolonial era most Muslim countries have witnessed varying degrees of economic deterioration, particularly experienced by social classes which lost their privileged position as a result of the change in power structures. Coup d'état by ambitious military leaders became a frequent occurrence in most Muslim countries. Economic difficulties and political turmoil, combined with the desire of the newly independent countries of the Muslim world to upgrade their technical skills have brought hundreds of thousands of Muslims from the four corners of the world to the United States. Muslim migration to the United States increased after World War II and peaked in the seventies and eighties. Some came as students who were sent on government scholarships or by their families to pursue higher education in American universities, and then decided to make the New World their new home. Others came in pursuit of better jobs and better life. Yet others moved to the United States to escape civil wars, military occupation, or political persecution.¹

The migration of hundreds of thousands of Muslims over the last four decades is undoubtedly an act of historical proportion, may prove to be a defining moment in the history of Islam, indeed in the history of mankind. For as I argue below, the migration of Muslims to the United States has contributed to the profound transformation in the understanding and practices of Islam among Muslim immigrants, as well as among the Afro-American Muslim community.² The impact of this massive migration of Muslims is not limited to the growing American Muslim population alone, but is bound to transform the American society at large, and even has the potential to transform Muslim societies the world over.

IN SEARCH OF COMMUNITY

Throughout the last two centuries, America has been the land of opportunities for those who were denied equal opportunities in their homeland. Many people who aspired for a life of freedom and better opportunities chose the United States as their new adopted home. Muslims are no exception. As Muslims began to realize their dreams of freedom and better economic conditions, they soon came face to face with a question which proved to be more difficult to answer than originally thought: what to do with the newly acquired freedom and wealth? After all, freedom and wealth have meaning only insofar as they can be enjoyed and expressed in a social context. For many of the immigrant Muslims, the social context in which they lived was both alien and alienating. For one thing, many Americans who were comfortable to work with immigrants in professional settings have always found it difficult to interact with people of different cultures and lifestyles in social settings.

Similarly, most Muslims found it exceedingly difficult to relate to a lifestyle they sincerely believed to be permissive and in several ways sinful. Muslim cultures without exception place great emphasis on chastity and abhor self-indulgence, particularly in the drinking of alcohol and sexual promiscuity. Cultural differences, therefore, limited greatly the level of social interaction between Muslim immigrants and their non-muslim neighbors and co-workers, and forced many of them to search for a community of compatible social norms and values.

The migration of Muslims in the seventies and eighties coincided with the worldwide phenomenon of Islamic resurgence. A significant number of students pursuing university education in the United States brought with them the newly found Islamic identity and activism. The Muslim Students' Association, founded in the early sixties, became the locus of Muslim activities. Initially, meetings and activities were conducted on university campuses, using university facilities. However, soon Muslim students became involved in collective projects to build local mosques, which immediately became centers for all Muslims; students or otherwise.

Throughout the United States, mosques served as a pole around which the Muslim community was galvanized. They gradually became a true community center where Muslims prayed, received education in the teachings of Islam, conducted their marriages, celebrated their festivals, and deliberated their common concerns. It was in America that the comprehensive role of the mosque, exemplified in the Madina Mosque built by the Prophet of Islam and his companions, was restored. In America the mosque reclaimed its true meaning and comprehensive role as the center of the Muslim community.

THE CHALLENGE OF AMERICA

Muslims who came to America found themselves in the midst of a vibrant culture and assertive society. Anyone who decides to leave his or her old society and make America their new home would surely be impressed by the sense of autonomy and equality which form the core of American culture. Americans by and large speak up their minds freely and boldly, assert their rights against any act they deem to be unfair or representing an incident of

excessive use of power, and resort to collective action in pursuit of their shared interests. Muslims slowly but surely have been learning the value of asserting one's rights and the importance of organized and collective endeavors.³

While Muslims have been impressed by the vibrant American culture, and hence willing to learn from its strengths, they have been equally alarmed by its downside. Particularly of concern to Muslims is the increasing moral laxity of the American society, reflected in sexual promiscuity, violence, pornography, drug abuse, and other social ills that have been on the increase. The perceived moral laxity has prompted many Muslim parents to search for alternative schooling and social activities for their children, and hence brought them closer to Islamic centers, and highlighted the importance of community.

Moving to America and becoming part of the American society challenged the Muslims yet in another, and even more profound, way. Living in a society that provided the individual with more freedom and autonomy revealed to many Muslims the moral and political limitations of contemporary Muslim cultures which they brought with them to the New World. The American experience of the Muslims became a constant reminder not only of the extent to which the universal teachings of Islam have been confused with parochial customs and traditions, but also of the serious deformation afflicting Muslim consciousness. America has indeed challenged the old habits of Muslim immigrants and made the need, even necessity, for cultural reform more apparent than ever.

The deformation of Muslim consciousness has been a protracted and subtle process, stretching over many generations. While factors leading to cultural distortions are varied and complicated, two stand out as central to this process: spiritual laxity and intellectual rigidity. Spiritual laxity is a historical process and has afflicted all cultures and civilizations. It has been described and dissected by eminent philosophers and historians, including Plato, Ibn Khaldun, Taynbee, and Spengler, to name just a few.

Spiritual laxity takes place when the strong commitments to the beliefs and ethos of a rising and vibrant culture are weakened by the passage of time. Intellectual rigidity, on the other hand, denotes a state of confusion whereby historically bound practices and behavioral patterns are mistaken for the universal values which gave rise to them in a particular time and place.⁴

Spiritual laxity and intellectual rigidity were brought to the fore in America. They surfaced first when ethnic commonalities triumphed over Islamic bonds as the basis of communities. Many Muslims found it easier to work with people of similar ethnic background rather than going the extra mile to work with those who share with them their values and aspirations. The result has been a continuous fragmentation, and hence waste of human and financial resources, and the loss of power.

The parochialism of Muslim immigrants was further highlighted in the generation gap between the first generation who continued to be emotionally attached to their old cultural habits, and very often insisted on replicating the old environment and living habits in all details, and the second generation who identified themselves with America, their natural homeland and the only society they ever experienced. The gap is particularly pronounced whenever the parents insist on assigning religious significance to otherwise parochial customs and traditions.

EMERGING NEW REALITY

The limitations cited above notwithstanding, several indicators reveal signs of positive developments, and hence engender hopes for better and more promising future for the Muslim community. Evidently, spiritual and intellectual limitations have not been equally distributed throughout the community, and the Muslim community has been blessed with

countless individuals who have been able to rise above their socio-cultural limitations, and have in the process succeeded in pulling others along with them.

One outstanding feature of the Muslim immigrants who came to the United States in the last few decades is that many of them are highly educated with remarkable personal achievements. The free and well-organized American society has provided these achievers with ample challenges and opportunities to bring their talents and skills to bear on the life of their communities and the greater society around them. The outstanding achievements of the morally committed and highly skilled Muslim leadership is revealed in the mushrooming of full-time schools and national organizations committed to advancing a genuine and authentic Islamic spirit despite mounting odds. The concerted and organized efforts of the local and national

Islamic organizations have made remarkable inroads in a relatively short time into the mainstream social and political American life. The list of achievements includes: the establishment of hundreds of Islamic centers and full-time schools, introduction of Muslim chaplains into the U.S. military, establishment of political action and lobbying organizations, publishing houses, small size media organizations, etc.

Also remarkable is the great enthusiasm given to Islamic education by America Muslims. In a relatively short period of time, the efforts to provide Islamic education to Muslim youths progressed from weekend schools to full-time Islamic schools. There is hardly any major city in America without an Islamic school. Metropolitan areas, such as Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago, have over a dozen full-time Islamic schools each.⁵ A number of Muslim education councils have been established to coordinate efforts to improve Islamic education, particularly in the area of curriculum development and teacher training.⁶

Another remarkable achievement has taken place in the area of political organization. Several national organisations concerned with politically mobilizing the Muslim community and defending the civil and political rights of Muslims have been established in the last decade, such as the American Muslim Alliance (AMA), the American Muslim Council (AMC), the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), and the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC). These political-action organizations have been quite instrumental in raising Muslim awareness regarding their civil and political rights, educating them as to how they should respond to various political events through local gatherings and national conventions. They have also been lobbying the Congress and federal agencies on their behalf. This is quite remarkable, given the fact that individuals leading these efforts belong to the first generation of Muslim immigrants.⁷

The great interest in Islamic education and political action, alluded to above, though still in its infancy, holds a great hope for brighter future. But the American Muslim community will have to travel a long way before its struggle for Islamic education and effective political voice can bear fruits. More importantly, Muslim leaders must develop sharp vision and clear goals, and then proceed to plan their steps with precision and vigor. I will therefore devote the remainder of this article to addressing some of the concerns pertaining to the main foundations of the future development of the Muslim community in America: Islamic education and political maturation.

THE PREDICAMENT OF SECULARIST EDUCATION

Historically, education was viewed as a process aiming at both providing students with technical skills and inculcating a set of values and beliefs that are basic and essential for the formation of conscientious citizens and good human beings. Indeed this was the purpose of education in the United States throughout the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. Gradually, however, the inculcation of moral values was deemphasized,

and schools were seen as a place for providing students with technical know-how. Many educationists thought that value inculcation amounted to indoctrination, and hence was inappropriate for secular schools. A secular school's mission, they insisted, should be limited to teaching students how to think and make decisions, and hence allow them to adopt their own values and beliefs. Others thought that since moral values are rooted in the religious experience of the people, a secular school operating in a multi-religious society should better leave the task of moral orientation to parents and the churches. In many cases, however, neither the could children come to grips with moral issues on their own, being denied guidance by school authorities, nor could families provide proper moral orientation in a rapidly changing and exceedingly complex modern world, as they were lacking the professional training or the time needed to handle this strenuous task, or both.

Evidently, to provide logical and methodical knowledge and then expect inexperienced and fragile souls to make right choices and correct decisions is to expect too much. For one thing, making choices and decisions is never merely a procedural matter, but presupposes the presence of a set of principles and criteria that form the basis of one's decision. But for another, it is quite unreasonable to expect a child who lacks moral fortitude to begin with, to forego immediate pleasure and gratification for personal and societal interests that seem distant or elusive. This is more so when youngsters are bombarded with media programs which constantly glorify violence and thrive on erotic stimulation. Most vulnerable and susceptible to the effects of the sex-and-violence content of media programs are the children who come from poor and broken families, and who lack parental guidance and supervision.

It is quite appropriate before we turn to examine the role of Islamic education in counter-acting moral laxity to pause a bit to understand the social and cultural conditions which contributed to the moral "neutrality" of the education system in America. The current neutralistic posture of the American education system signifies an advanced stage of the project of secularism which has successfully undermined the authority of religion as an essential source of moral and ontological knowledge. The process of secularization started as an effort aiming at liberating science and scholarship from the authority of the church. Early advocates of the separation of state and church, such as Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, had no intention to undermine religion, or faith in the divine, but rather predicated their reformist ideas on the notion of God and civil religion. Descartes, hence, argued "that the certainty and truth of all knowledge depends uniquely on my awareness of the true God, to such an extent that I was incapable of perfect knowledge about anything else until I became aware of him".⁸ Similarly, Rousseau, while critical of the way religion was traditionally taught and practiced, recognized the need, even the necessity, of religious commitment and faith for the modern state to function properly. He, therefore identified a number of "dogmas", and argued for their inclusion in the "civil religion" he advocated: "The existence of an omnipotent, intelligent, benevolent divinity that foresees and provides; the life to come; the happiness of the just; the punishment of sinners; the sanctity of the social contract and the law – these are the positive dogmas. As for the negative dogmas I would limit them to a single one: no intolerance."⁹

Even Kant, who limited the notion of truth to empirical experience and labored to set morality on rational foundation insisted that "without a God and without a world invisible to us now but hoped for, the glorious ideals of morality are indeed objects of approval and admiration, but not springs of purpose and action".¹⁰ However, by denying the possibility of transcendental truth, and as a result of the relentless attack on the authority of revelation as a source of ethical and ontological knowledge, secularist scholars have been able to successfully marginalize religion and undermine morality. The efforts to ground morality in utility and cost-benefit calculation, rather than truth, proved to be counter intuitive and futile,

and gave rise to moral relativism; which continues to undermine efforts to revive ethical teaching in schools.

Overcoming the moral crisis of education requires a solution that restores religious faith while continues to be mindful of the need to avoid any authoritarian imposition of beliefs and values particular to any specific religious group on others.

A MODEL FOR ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION: TOWARDS INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE

By undermining the authority of divine revaluation as a source of moral values and the overall meaning of life, secularism has contributed in a decisive way to the loss of meaning and transcendental purpose of life, and hence has precipitated the rise of the hedonistic and nihilistic tendencies of modern society. Drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, school violence, collective suicide, rampage killing, and child prostitution, are some of the more visible manifestations of modern-day hedonism and nihilism.

The loss of meaning did not happen immediately as a result of the marginalization of religious knowledge because philosophy replaced religion as the provider of the overall meaning and purpose of life. Indeed, up to the late nineteenth century the various fields of knowledge were seen as branches of the study of philosophy. While the various fields of knowledge were united around a core of religious beliefs and values in medieval times, the unity of knowledge and the interconnectedness of disciplines were ensured later by a core of metaphysical beliefs and values.

However, by the mid-nineteenth century, knowledge began to experience a process of fragmentation or disintegration, as philosophy, religion, and ethics were reduced to disciplines standing on par with other disciplines. The various disciplines of knowledge have become autonomous spheres lacking any uniting core of overarching beliefs and principles. With the fragmentation of knowledge, the concept of universally valid truth and moral principles became problematic, and truth became parochial, as it became valid only to a specific discipline or community.

The new concept of truth did not only take away the total meaning of human existence, but led to the fragmentation of human consciousness and knowledge. For in the absence of a set of absolute values universally valid, the various branches of modern knowledge (i.e. sociology, economics, psychology, political science, etc.), which emerged out of the demise of modern philosophy, developed their own idiosyncratic standards. With the development of modern social sciences the unity and interdependence of the various fields of knowledge were lost. Henceforth ethics and religion were reduced into two of the various spheres of knowledge, independent of economics, politics, psychology and all other fields of social sciences. Thus morality does not figure in economic studies and is not a legitimate concern of the specialist in the field. Economic transactions are valued or devalued only in relation to the concern of utility maximization; justice, fidelity, and fairness are not legitimate concerns of the modern economist.

Because modern knowledge lacks a central core and overarching principle to keep the totality of social experience in unity, the consciousness of the modern man has been disintegrated, and modern social sciences have been fragmented. The mission of Islamic education is to reintegrate the fragmented consciousness of modern man by once again repositioning divine revelation at the core of human consciousness, the binding and nurturing core which the secular project has managed to destroy.

Methodologically speaking, restoring the divine core to the spheres of knowledge means that revelation has to be reinstated as a source of knowledge. This has to be done without bouncing to the other extreme one finds in traditional knowledge, whereby notions found in the divine text are dogmatically interpreted, without regard to the knowledge

acquired through worldly experience. Both revelation and the experienced reality should form the foundation for producing a body of knowledge dealing with modern socio-temporal challenges while remaining true to the spirit, purposes, and aspiration of transcendental truth. This body of knowledge has to emerge out of a vigorous and methodical application of reasoning on the two main sources of knowledge: divine revelation and the observable world.

The above conclusion has far reaching implications for the ongoing effort to develop an Islamic education capable of producing well-balanced personalities that combine efficacy and vigor with profound religious commitment and faith. The complete secularization of the autonomous spheres of knowledge simply means that the Islamic school curriculum that haphazardly combines subjects produced by secularist schools with Islamic subjects does not go far enough towards producing a balanced Islamic personality. For such a curriculum fails to reconcile the internal contradictions between the secularist worldview embedded in the subjects adopted from the public school system and the Islamic worldview reflected in the Islamic study subjects.

If the Islamic school project is to succeed in achieving the goal of graduating well-rounded human beings, creative energy and financial resources must be channeled to produce an alternative school curriculum capable of bringing about integration of knowledge and consciousness, so ultimately students graduate from Islamic school with (1) clear awareness of their purposes in life and responsibilities to their family, community, and humanity at large; (2) sharp vision as to what has to be accomplished for the betterment of human life; and (3) methodical thinking and substantive knowledge of the social and natural environments.

While some schools and individuals have already started moving in this direction, the resources required for achieving these goals are beyond any individual person or school.¹¹ The task requires concerted action on the part of the entire Muslim community. The few educational councils concerned with advancing the agenda of Islamic education, and effecting better coordination among Islamic schools and educationists, such as the Council on Islamic Education (CIE) and the Council of Islamic Schools of North America (CISNA), have not received the type of community support required for the arduous task they face. The lack of substantial support is due partially to the lack of awareness of the need for an alternative school curriculum based on the notion of integration of knowledge. The meager support given to educational councils is also due to the fragmentation of communities and organizations alluded to earlier, and the absence of strong and well-organized cooperation on the national level.

The above conclusion underscores the interconnectedness between the development of educational system and the political maturation of the Muslim community, and hence leads us directly to raise the question of political action. This is the focus of the following section.

POLITICAL MATURATION

Most Muslims who migrated to the United States grew up in societies that had become accustomed to political elitism and popular quietism. It was, therefore, quite natural for them to shun political activism and maintain low-key political posture.

However, beginning with the late seventies, a new wave of Islamic activists arrived in America. These were mainly young men who have come to pursue their higher education in American universities. Emboldened by the nascent Islamic resurgence in the Muslim world, and saturated with Islamic idealism, they busied themselves with political agitation and mobilization. But the political activism of these Islamists was limited to activities targeting the Muslim community in particular, and involved mainly programs that were high on rhetoric and low on action. While high-rhetoric conferences and meetings served initially as an outlet for the anger and frustration of Muslim activists with regard to moral degradation

and political subjugation practised by Muslim regimes supported by major western powers, including the U.S. government, they also served as avenues for exchange of views and ideas, and the education of the American Muslim community about the plight of Muslims the world over.

The early nineties witnessed a remarkable elevation in the level of Muslim political involvement. For the first time American Muslims began to rally mainstream political leaders to their causes. The effort to use the voting power of Muslims to influence the decisions and priorities of American politicians has been led by Islamic centers and community-based organizations; some national organizations (e.g. AMC and CAIR) have been playing an important role in educating the public on Islamic causes, and providing logistical and technical support to Muslim activists. National political action groups have also been lobbying the Congress and the Administration in support of Islamic causes.

Yet the overall impact of the political action of Muslim organizations on the general public and the American political scene is hardly noticeable. While reasons for the meager impact of Muslims on American politics are multifarious, two clearly stand out: political fragmentation and political aloofness.

Political fragmentation is often the result of the lack of political experience and maturation. Many Muslims are comfortable in working with those who share with them cultural attitudes and habits, or ideological commitments. The result is a lot of reluctance and hesitation in dealing with individuals and organizations outside their group. Some self-seeking community leaders have found it convenient to play the ethnic and ideological card to maintain their grip on the community affairs. While selfishness and short-sightedness play an important role in the fragmentation of Muslims, the lack of political experience and maturity lies at the core of the problem. Many Muslims came, as has been pointed out earlier, from a socio-cultural background characterized by political quietism. People of such background often possess a negative attitude towards political action in general and tend to harbor suspicion against any individual or group projecting an assertive agenda. It is therefore imperative for the American Muslim political leadership to address the misgivings and insecurities of the American Muslim population and gradually build confidence and trust. One way to overcome this limitation is to demonstrate the uplifting effects of concerted political action by providing exemplary models and success stories. Such success stories of effective cooperation can stir the imagination and uplift the spirit of the community.

Political aloofness, on the other hand, manifests itself in the lack of serious involvement in issues of concern to the general public. By and large Muslim political action addresses questions involving the violation of the civil rights of American Muslims, or human rights and political liberties of Muslim communities worldwide. While these are legitimate concerns of American Muslims, and should naturally take priority over others, it is very vital for Muslim individuals and groups to stand for the principles of right and justice in general, and support good causes, regardless of the ethnic and religious affiliation of their beneficiaries. Muslims should also join hands with different groups including non-Muslims, in fighting injustice and corruption; such an involvement of the Muslims is only natural as emphasis on universality of good will and intention is the hallmark of Islam itself.¹² After all this is the essence of the principle of *tawhid* which emphasizes the unity of: the divine, revelation, creation, truth, and humanity.¹³ The dynamism and integrative power of Islam has been beautifully captured by Hegel when he states : “The leading features of Mohammedanism [Islam] involve this — that in actual existence nothing can become fixed, but that everything is destined to expand itself in activity and life in boundless amplitude of the world, so that the worship of the one remains the only bond by which the whole is capable of uniting. In this expansion, this active energy, all limits, all national and caste

distinctions vanish, no particular race, no political claim of birth or possession is regarded — only man as a believer.”¹⁴

Yet the political mobilization of the Muslims should not center on the assertion of rights and the promotion of justice. Equally important is the question of institutional building and the development of human resources. Muslim socio-political organizations should work towards the development of educational bodies devoted for producing school curricula based on the idea of integration of knowledge, discussed in the previous section, and for the preparation and training of quality teachers. They should also channel Muslim talents to the various areas of services the community requires, including journalism, law, media, scholarship, etc.

Community strength does not come from sheer activism, but requires strategic planning. While it is true that numbers count in a democracy, it is equally true that spiritual and technical strengths of the individuals whose numbers add up to form the community are quite essential for the making of a critical mass. A good strategy, therefore, should enhance unity and cooperation among Muslims and ensure the diversity and sophistication of their skills; while the bulk of Muslim professionals work as physicians, engineers, and businessmen, the Muslim community is in a dire need for lawyers, teachers, journalists, novelists, and similar professions that provide direction, project the correct and true image of Islamic ethos and values, and raise the Muslim voice so that the American Muslim community can be heard loud and clear.

To sum up this discourse, the emerging Muslim Communities like their earlier counterparts of various religious communities from Europe, have lodged themselves in a free, challenging and dynamic world where all have the opportunity to express their true Islamic impact. Islam by its universalistic value system and simple, commonly understood ethical norms and practices has a natural vitality which prevails in such situations. Islamic history is full of precedents where as Islam appeared on similar-cross-roads of cultures and conglomerations of peoples in situations of chaos and moral confusion, it succeeded in uniting them around the central and binding core of unity of *tawheed* and led to the new vision of building the society on the divine purpose. So today in America Muslims have a role and a duty to lead the way through Islamic education, sound moral conduct,¹⁵ and active participation in positive political movements, to the creation of a just, peaceful and righteous society.

Notes

¹For more details on the history of Muslim Migration to the United States see Yvonne Haddad, *A Century of Islam in America* (Washington, D.C: American Institute of Islamic Affairs, 1986); also Fareed H. Numan, *The Muslim Population in the United States*, (Washington: American Muslim Council, 1992).

²For a general account on the impact of Muslim Migration on Afro-American Muslims see Jonah Blank, "The Muslim Mainstream," *U.S. News*, 20 July 1998.

³For an interesting news feature on Muslim self-assertion see Donna Abu-Nasr, "Muslim Learn to Speak Up Like Americans," Washington: Associated Press, August, 29 1996.

⁴For a detailed account on the impact of moral laxity and intellectual rigidity on cultures and civilization see our book, *Truth and Reform: Exploring the Patterns and Dynamics of Historical Change* (The Open Press, 1998), pp. 45-72.

⁵There are a little over one hundred full-time schools nation wide, over sixty percent of which are concentrated in six states: California, New Jersey, New York, Illinois, Michigan, and Texas. See the Muslim Students' Association's website for a complete list of Islamic Schools [URL:www.msa-natl.org/resources/schools.html].

⁶There are over fifteen educational councils and organizations involved in promoting Islamic schooling and providing training and consultation. See *ibid.* for details.

⁷There are over a dozen socio-political Islamic Organizations which are committed to promoting Muslim unity and encouraging collective action. These include, in addition to AMA, AMC, CAIR, and MPAC, Islamic society and North America (ISNA), Islamic circle of North America (ICNA), Islamic Assembly and North America (IANA), Human Assistance and Development International (HADI), Muslim American Society, Muslim Students' Association (MSA), and others.

⁸Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1986), p. 49.

⁹Jean-Jacque Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Trans. Maurice Cranston (London: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 186.

¹⁰Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. 640.

¹¹Susan Douglass, in association with the Council on Islamic Education, U.S.A., has made important contribution in this area; see, for example, *Strategies and Structure for Presenting World History* (Beltsville, MD: Awana Publications, 1994). Similarly Freda Shamma, in association with the International Islamic School Project, under the auspice of the International Islamic University, Malaysia, has done some important seminal work in Islamic curricula development.

¹²A Quranic verse (21:107) characterizes the mission of the Prophet of Islam as follow: "We have not sent you but as a mercy to humanity".

¹³For more on the notion of *tawhid* see Ismail al Faruqi, *Al-Tauhid.: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992).

¹⁴G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. T.M. Knox (New York: Dove Publications, 1956), p. 357.