

Toward An Ummatic Paradigm for Psychology

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Before writing a textbook in a specific scientific discipline one has to remind one that a textbook is but a compilation of data based on research conducted by a group of researchers dealing with different topics in a specific discipline. Research is therefore the most important part of the series of activities that should be done in the field of psychology before the textbook writers in psychology are able to do their work. Before the researchers can function properly, however, they have to bear in mind the diversity of research methodologies under which their approaches will be categorized. The most dominant of these are the realist and the idealist approaches. The following is an attempt to highlight these approaches and to suggest some approaches by which we hope Muslim researchers will be able to create the ummatic paradigm.

Much of the uncertainty surrounding the social sciences can be traced to the question of the purpose of science. J. K. Smith suggests that confusion over the appropriate goals and methodologies for social science can be linked to an epistemological conflict which is currently dividing social scientists.¹ Smith characterizes this epistemological dispute as a conflict between the realist and idealist positions. He describes the followers of realist epistemology as believing that the purpose of science is to discover universal truth. Scientists who have adopted the realist position believe that “knowledge and truth are questions of correspondence – what is true is what corresponds to reality,” (p. 8) The ultimate goal of the realists in the social sciences is to discover universally true laws that can be communicated through a neutral, culture-free language and that can be applied in any situation to predict, understand, and govern behavior. The realists believe that it is “possible to have a definitive, objective science for all society that would eventually produce *the* system of laws [and that these] laws are, by definition, universally applicable, regardless of time and place.” (pp. 8, 11)

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The followers of the idealist epistemology, on the other hand, are characterized as believing that what humans learn about the world around them is filtered through their senses, and that therefore scientific knowledge does not reflect the true nature of the world. Instead, it represents our best opinions about what is the true nature of the world. For the idealists, the idea that people can possess universal knowledge independent of themselves and that this universal knowledge can be expressed through a neutral or culture-free language is absurd. Idealists believe that human experience is culturally and contextually dependent and that "what is to count as knowledge or to be considered true is a matter of agreement within a socially and historically bounded context." (p. 8) Smith concludes his analysis of the realist-idealist conflict in social science by observing that "the issue brings to the forefront the epistemological question of what is to count as knowledge. If researchers do not discuss this question, they are forfeiting any participation in determining the basis for the authority of their knowledge." (pp. 12-13) It is my belief that implementing a variation of the idealist epistemology in social science would improve the effectiveness of social sciences or human sciences as they relate to the Islamic paradigm and would help resolve the field's feeling of self-doubt.

I. Paradigmatic Epistemology and Scientific Progress

In his brief description of the history of epistemological disputes in science, Smith erred when he assumed that the conflict between the realist and idealist epistemologies was confined to the social sciences. In fact, the philosophical and epistemological soul-searching that currently pervades the social sciences also has been occurring in the physical sciences.² Kuhn's research, for example, challenges the traditional realist belief that the physical sciences have historically progressed through the accumulation of context-free facts; instead it suggests that researchers in the physical sciences have always progressed through a variation of the idealist epistemology, an epistemology we will henceforth refer to as the *paradigmatic* epistemology.

Kuhn examined the development of selected scientific achievements in fields such as chemistry and physics and concluded that in the physical sciences, scientific progress historically has occurred through what he termed "scientific paradigms." According to Kuhn, a scientific paradigm is a theoretical framework, or a way of perceiving and understanding the world, that a group of scientists has adopted as their worldview. Scientific paradigms act as lenses through which scientists are able to perceive and understand the scientific problems in their field and formulate scientific answers to these problems. A scientific paradigm can be thought of as a socially shared cognitive

schema. Just as one's cognitive schema provides each one of us, as an individual person, with a way of making sense of the world around us, a scientific paradigm provides a group of scientists with a way of collectively making sense of their scientific world. When a scientist observes a phenomenon and interprets what this observation means, that scientist is using a particular scientific paradigm to give that observation meaning. In the same way that the meaning a cat has for a child depends on the cognitive structure (or schema) the child has developed about cats, the meaning that a scientific fact has for a scientist depends on the scientific paradigm through which the scientist perceives and interprets that fact.³

Kuhn refers to a group of scientists who have adopted a common view of the world that is, a common scientific paradigm, as a scientific community. The term "scientific community" is not meant to imply a group of scientists working in the same physical location; a scientific community is an intellectual community. The members of a scientific community who share a common paradigmatic view of their scientific world share common language, values, assumptions, goals, norms, and beliefs.

The interdependency of scientific paradigms and scientific communities is one of the keys to Kuhn's understanding of how the physical sciences historically have progressed. According to Kuhn, by definition, scientific paradigms and scientific communities cannot exist independently of one another: "A paradigm is what the members of a scientific community share, and conversely, a scientific community consists of [scientists] who share a paradigm." (p. 176) Implicit in this interdependency is the understanding that science is a social process based on socially agreed-upon rules designed to facilitate the development of social process. Understanding the sociological dynamics of how scientific communities are organized and how they function is essential to understanding science itself.

Kuhn's research suggests that scientific communities in the physical sciences historically have progressed through the interdependent processes of *normal* and *extraordinary* science. Normal and extraordinary sciences are social processes that assume the existence of scientific communities organized around scientific paradigms.

Normal science refers to the research that a scientific community does in an attempt to interpret its scientific world through its scientific paradigm. Kuhn describes normal science as a strenuous and devoted attempt by scientists to force nature into the conceptual boxes supplied by their scientific paradigm. For the purpose of illustration, he equates normal science with putting together a jigsaw puzzle. Just as the solvers of jigsaw puzzles use the picture on the box to guide them as they fit the pieces together, a scientific paradigm provides a scientific community with a picture of what their scientific world should look like once all the pieces of their scientific research have

been properly fit together. Progress in normal science is measured in terms of how many pieces of the puzzle have been assembled, that is, how much of their scientific environment a scientific community is able to perceive and understand; the more of their world a community of scientists is able to assemble (that is, explain) through the lenses of their scientific paradigm, the more scientific progress they make. For example, the more behavior the members of the behavioristic community in psychology are able to explain through the use of their various stimulus-response models, the more scientific progress they make.

Extraordinary science occurs when, during the course of normal science, a scientific community begins accumulating data that are inconsistent with their paradigmatic view of the world. As these inconsistencies, called anomalies, begin to accumulate, the scientific community begins to question whether its paradigm is adequate and whether a new paradigmatic view of the world is needed.

When a scientific community begins questioning the adequacy of its paradigm, it slips into what Kuhn refers to as a state of crisis. The community's attempt to resolve the crisis is the process of extraordinary science. Crises occur only after prolonged periods of normal science and are a necessary step in the process of scientific advancement. According to Kuhn, a crisis is a "self-correcting mechanism which ensures that the rigidity of normal science will not forever go unchallenged." (p. 181) The question the members of a scientific community attempt to answer during the process of extraordinary science is: "Which scientific paradigm will best allow us to engage in successful puzzle-solving?"

If a scientific community resolves its state of crisis by reorganizing itself according to a new paradigm, a scientific revolution occurs. Kuhn suggests that scientists who participate in such a revolution experience a Gestalt-like switch in the way they perceive and understand the world:

It is rather as if the professional community had been suddenly transported to another planet where familiar objects are seen in a different light and are joined by unfamiliar ones as well. After a revolution scientists are responding to a different world [p. 11].

After a scientific community experiences a revolution and the accompanying Gestalt-like switch, the puzzle-solving progress previously achieved during the period of normal science must be totally reevaluated – the process of putting the jigsaw puzzle together must begin anew because the final picture has changed. When a scientific community reorganizes itself around a new paradigmatic view, it adopts new values, norms, assumptions, language, and ways of perceiving and understanding its scientific world. To summarize, Kuhn's model to explain how the physical sciences have historically progress-

ed supports a version of the idealist view of knowledge, which we have referred to as the paradigmatic epistemology. Kuhn's paradigmatic epistemology is founded on the notion that the knowledge accumulated through science does not represent universal truth that is true in all contexts, as the realists contend, but instead represents as socially agreed-upon theoretical and contextual truth, as the idealists maintain. Kuhn's research has shown that knowledge in the physical sciences has not evolved through a gradual accumulation of context-free facts but rather through successive periods of paradigmatic development (normal science), questioning (crisis caused by anomalies), and change (scientific revolutions).

II. Psychology and Paradigmatic Epistemology

Although Kuhn developed his model for scientific progress by examining the history of scientific achievements in the physical sciences, we believe his paradigmatic epistemology is as applicable to the social sciences as it is to the physical sciences. If Kuhn is correct in suggesting that researchers in the physical sciences perceive and understand their scientific world through the lenses of their scientific paradigm, and if he is correct when he suggests that the knowledge accumulated by these physical-science researchers is not true in all contexts but is true only within a given paradigmatic context, then it seems logical to assume that researchers in the social sciences must likewise perceive and understand their scientific world through paradigmatic lenses. There is nothing in the nature of the physical or social sciences to suggest that social scientists are able to perceive and understand universal truth, while physical scientists are not. In fact, as Smith has pointed out, social scientists traditionally have believed that the epistemology and methodology of the physical sciences could be applied effectively to the social sciences:

When Durkheim said that we should treat social facts as things, he was saying in effect that the objects of study in the social sciences should be treated in the same way physical scientists treat physical things. This means that if physical scientists can stand apart from their subject and think of it as having an independent, object-like existence, with no intrinsic meaning, the same is true for social scientists [p. 7].

The irony here is that according to Kuhn's research the realist methodologies that most social scientists have been attempting to replicate since the nineteenth century do not exist and in fact never have.

In psychology, for example, empirical psychologists believe in the materialistic concept of the soul as the only concept that justifies the study of the correlation between psychic phenomena and physiological processes.⁴ Recently, there were attempts to apply Kuhn's paradigmatic epistemology to

psychology – with little success because there has never been any modification and adjustment made. For example, although the concept of scientific paradigm, as Kuhn defined it, might be adequate to explain scientific progress in fields such as physics or chemistry, the concept is clearly too limiting in the social sciences, for example, psychology. The concept of scientific paradigm must be expanded if it is to be applicable to the social sciences because the context in which social scientists solve problems differs so greatly from the context in which physical scientists solve problems. Kuhn, in response to Sir Karl Popper, recognized these contextual differences as the primary reason why the social sciences have taken longer to mature than have the physical sciences:⁵

Whenever Sir Karl contrasts science with philosophy, as he does at the start of his paper, or physics with sociology, psychology, and history, as he does at the end, he is contrasting an esoteric, isolated, and largely self-contained discipline with one that still aims to communicate with and persuade an audience larger than a single profession. [Physical] science is not the only activity the practitioners of which can be grouped into communities, but it is the only one in which each community is its own exclusive audience.

III. Psychology and the Ummatic Paradigm

Islam demands the existence of a Muslim community or *ummah* on earth. Allāh said: And there may spring from you a community (*ummah*) who invite to goodness, and enjoin good conduct and forbid indecency. Such are they who are successful. (Qur'ān 3:104) The Muslim community represents a system of social relations meant, among other aims, to maximize the enjoyment of the goods on earth within the Divine Plan. It is a system meant to facilitate the flowering of spiritual aspiration while at the same time representing an ordered way in exercising the *amānah* regarding life, intelligence, power, and property. In effect, the emergence of the *ummah* is to actualize or make operative the trust or *amānah* desired by Allāh. It can thus clearly be seen that Islam is a religion that does not define relations merely between Allāh and mankind but also between individuals and society as well as those between mankind and the resources of this world. Regarding this last detail on earth's resources Allāh said: "See ye not how Allāh had made serviceable unto you whatsoever is in the skies and whatsoever is in the earth and hath loaded you with His favors both without and within?" (Qur'ān 31:20)

Accordingly, Islam demands that the material cares of men must not be at all neglected but should be a matter of concern provided that one holds fast to the fundamental guidelines. Islam demands the development and search for knowledge in accordance with the prescribed prayer: "My Lord! Increase my knowledge." (Qur'ān 20:114) Knowledge here includes the kind of

knowledge that comes about in the study of the different manifestations of nature – veritable revelations of Allāh. Besides the development of the intellect, a virtuous and moral life is enjoined. Then and only then can the desired *ummah* be realized. Allāh said: “Ye are the best *ummah* that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and ye believe in Allāh.” (Qur’ān 3:110)

But the fact that Islam requires a community as a witness to it implies that Islam has a social function. In other words, it is not confined solely to the definition of the relations between the individual as such and his Lord and Creator. It prescribes a strong, healthy, and well-organized social life. This has been one of the aims of the *shari’ah*. Another function is to sustain the intellectual life of the Muslim community without which the whole community will disintegrate. As Allāh says:

If a *tā’ifah* (community)
 From every expedition Remained behind
 They could devote themselves
 To studies of Religion and admonish the
 People when they return to them
 That thus they (may learn) to guard
 Themselves (against evil). [Qur’ān 9:122]

The above verse demands that a community (*tā’ifah*) within the Muslim *ummah* has to confine itself to the study of religion to sustain the life of the community. In other words, a community within the *ummah* has to pursue knowledge for the whole *ummah to survive*. This *tā’ifah* of knowledgeable members of the *ummah* form a scientific community within the *ummah*. This scientific community is not meant to imply a group of scientists working in the same physical location, but rather is an intellectual community. The members of this early scientific community, mentioned in the above verse, share a common language, values, assumptions, goals, norms, and beliefs due to their membership in the *ummah*.

The history of the early development of science in the Muslim world shows that a scientist mastered all the branches of knowledge existing in his lifetime. The history and development of *revealed knowledge* in the early history of Islam showed the existence of a group of scholars, especially among the companions who learned and recited the Qur’ān and Sunnah.⁶ Those were the pioneers, such as Mu’ādh Ibin Jabal (R.A.A.), who spread Islam to newly discovered territory. Therefore anything pertaining to Muslims’ affairs in those early days was always referred to those groups (*tā’ifah*) of companions who had mastered the Qur’ān and Sunnah, and especially to those knowledgeable in *ibādāt*, family, economics, education,

and so on. In the first few centuries of Islam, however, on account of political changes as well as the emergence of new social situations, the Muslims community was led to produce various schools of jurisprudence (*madhāhi*). In effect, these schools, at least in the minds and interpretations of their founders and immediate disciples, represented an effort to maintain a well-ordered Muslim society which while adhering closely to the imperatives of revelation could, at the same time, confront the exigencies of the times as brought about by new economic, social, and other forces. During the historical development of Islam, these schools, by means of certain jurisprudential techniques such as *ijma'*, *qiyās*, *istihsān*, and *istislāh* succeeded in generating certain social structures and cultural institutions, many of which have persisted up to the present. The schools in jurisprudence are the clear evidence of the existence of *tā'ifah* (community) within the Muslims *ummah* dealing with paradigmatic epistemology concerning certain aspects of the Sharī'ah, that is jurisprudence.

Having described the development of one of the sciences in Islam dealing with Revelation, namely, jurisprudence in terms of paradigmatic epistemology, let us proceed to see how psychology could be perceived from a paradigmatic point of view. Psychology, as can be seen from Figure 1, is one of the sciences categorized as *human sciences*, which in turn are a branch of the acquired sciences as contrasted with the revealed sciences.⁷ We will describe below how scientific progress will occur through *psychological community*.

IV. Scientific Progress Through Psychological Community

The organization of psychological communities around psychological paradigms, as done by physical science communities around physical paradigms, will make psychological progress through normal and extraordinary science possible. Let us assume, for example, that one group of psychological researchers is organized around a paradigm based on the principles and methodologies of behaviorism, while another psychological community is organized on the principles and methodologies of humanism. During the period of normal science, psychological researchers in both communities would be functioning as normal scientists, trying to solve psychological problems (that is, paradigmatic puzzles) through their respective paradigms. The more effective each paradigmatic community is in developing psychological technologies that are consistent with their paradigm's goals, the more scientific progress each community will make.

The psychological problem-solving that occurs during normal science provides that best illustration of why the membership of psychological communities must include psychological researchers as well as practitioners. Dur-

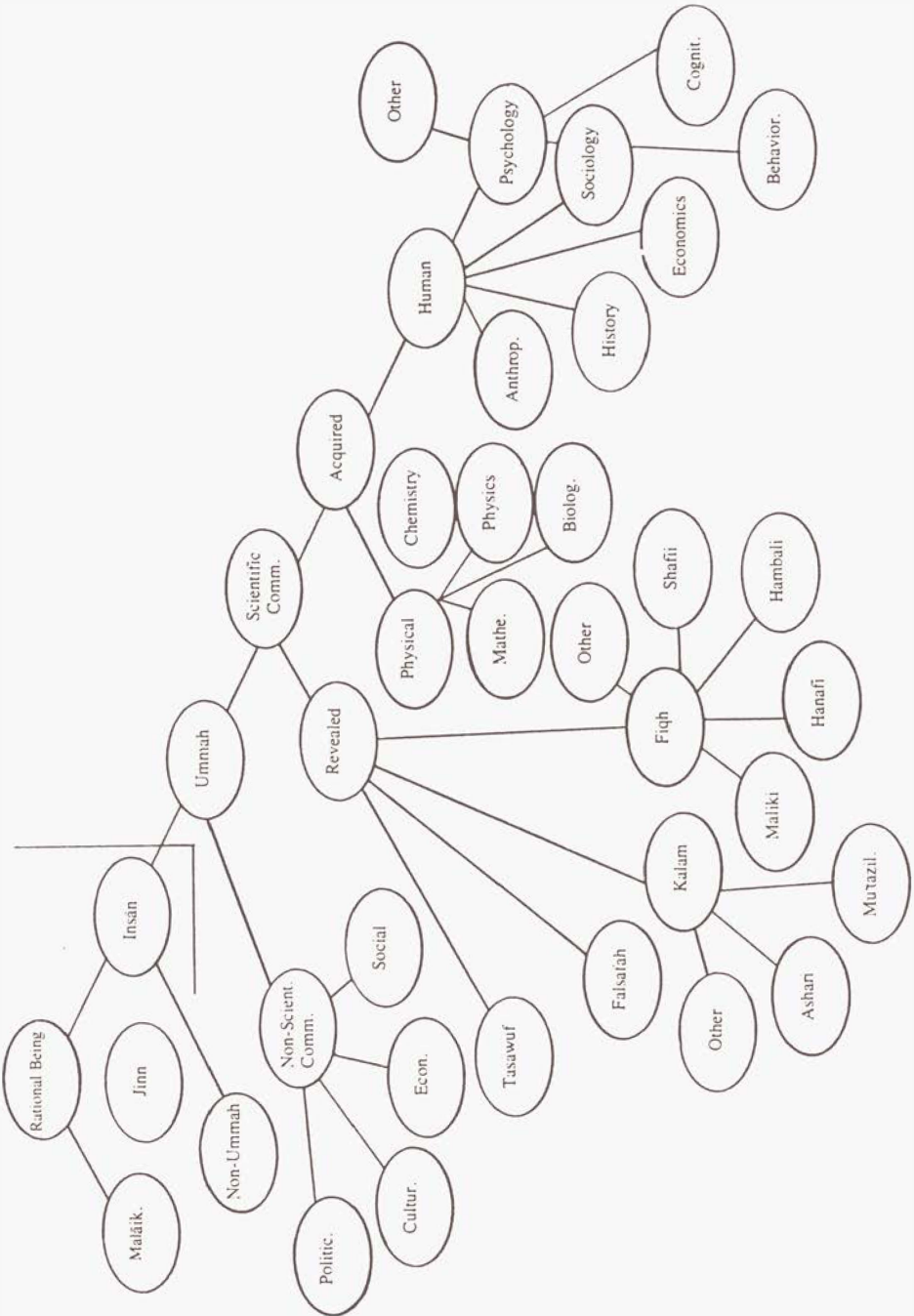


FIG. 1: Schematic View of Scientific Communities Within Ummatic Paradigm.

ing normal science the job of the psychological scientists and practitioners is the same; to develop, implement, and evaluate a psychological technology based on their paradigmatic assumptions. For a scientific community to make progress during normal science, psychological scientists and practitioners must realize that their jobs are interrelated and that they are dependent on each other for success.

It is also important to remember that the scientific progress achieved by the humanistic community during normal science is of little use to the behavioristic community that is attempting to solve a different paradigmatic puzzle through the use of different norms, values, language, assumptions, and goals. One community's attempt to solve the problems of another paradigmatic community is like trying to assemble a jigsaw puzzle with the pieces from two different puzzles; as the current failure of the psychological sciences indicates, this is not the most effective method of puzzle-solving (meta-analysis is an example of this type of misguided activity). During periods of normal science, scientific progress for the behavioristic community can be measured only in terms of how many problems are solved within the behavioristic paradigm.

As Kuhn's research in the physical sciences has shown, the scientific progress made during normal science makes extraordinary science possible. If the members of the behavioristic community found that despite their best research efforts they were not able to develop an effective educational technology to achieve the educational goals articulated by their paradigm, the behavioristic community would cease the technical problem-solving of the normal science and begin the philosophical and theoretical questioning that is characteristic of extraordinary science. If these technical failures continue, the members of the behavioristic community will begin to question the adequacy and correctness of the behavioristic paradigm. To resolve their doubt, the members of the behavioristic community could decide to revise some of the basic assumptions implicit in the behavioristic paradigm and, in effect, organize a new psychological community around a new psychological paradigm, or they could simply adopt the values, goals, norms, and way-of-perceiving of the humanistic paradigm and become members of this already existing psychological community. If the behavioristic community does abandon the behavioristic paradigm for a new or competing psychological paradigm, a scientific revolution will have occurred. A scientific revolution represents scientific progress because the members of the behavioristic community would not discard the behavioristic paradigm and the work they put into developing this paradigmatic view of psychology unless there were overwhelming evidence that a new or already existing psychological paradigm

was more effective than the behavioristic paradigm.

During periods of extraordinary science, the field of psychology must decide which of the competing paradigmatic communities has developed the most effective psychological technology. The reason that normal science is so crucial to this process is that the answer to this question can be determined only after the prolonged period of normal science during which the members of the competing psychological communities have developed the best possible psychological technology based on the assumption of their psychological paradigm. Without the accomplishments (and failures) of normal science to guide them, the members of the psychological communities would have no basis on which to choose between the competing psychological paradigms.

Seen from an *ummatic* point of view, especially in jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and theology (*kalām*), the above conception of scientific progress is very pertinent. The schools of jurisprudence, such as Hanafī, Mālikī, Shāf'ī and Hanbalī, as well as the schools of theology – *Ash'ariyah* and *Mu'tazilah* – went through successive paradigmatic developments from normal science through the extraordinary science of questioning and change (scientific revolution) at which point the old schools abandoned their paradigmatic view to adopt the new paradigms.

V. Resolving Paradigmatic Disputes

In his writings, Kuhn has been vague about how paradigmatic disputes are resolved, suggesting simply that the specifics of this process probably could be understood with the assistance of psychology and sociology.⁸

Fortunately, Muslims have their own tradition of resolving such disputes from the history of the development of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), as we have mentioned earlier. As already stated, the two fundamental or primary sources of Islamic law are the Qur'ān and the *Hadīth*. But since the Qur'ān and the *Hadīth* did not specify all the details for every legal problem that a social organization could potentially generate, Muslim jurists were led to apply certain juristic techniques so that any emerging problem would fall within the scope of religious and moral precepts. Among these are: *ijmā'*, or the consensus of the community, in our case the psychological or the paradigmatic community, which became, in effect, the consensus or the learned: *qiyās*, or reasoning by analogy; *istihsān*, or juristic preference (in our case paradigmatic preference), and *istislāh*, or taking public welfare or interest into account, or, in present terminology, taking the pragmatic approach. Jurists have also used *ijtihād*, or disciplined individual reasoning, to deduce a legal rule from other legal premises. It is accepted that the *Fiqh* and *Usūl al-Fiqh* are the greatest expressions of Islamic spirit as well as the most developed

disciplines in the history of Islamic civilization. This tradition should be continued if psychology is to develop an Islamic spirit as well as a strong and mature scientific field.

VI. The Hierarchical Nature of Paradigmatic Communities

Another major concern that needs to be addressed is the question: How will members of competing psychological communities, with different values, norms, languages, and ways of perceiving and understanding the psychological process, be able to communicate well enough to arrive at Islamically satisfactory resolutions? We believe that psychological scientists and practitioners will be able to communicate well enough to resolve paradigmatic disputes Islamically for two reasons: first, because paradigmatic communities are organized in a hierarchical fashion, and second, because psychological scientists and practitioners are members of several hierarchically organized paradigmatic communities at the same time. For example, as scientists we are members of the community of all scientists in the disciplines of acquired knowledge. As members of this community of "acquired scientists" we share a belief with chemists, biologists, geologists, and other scientists in the importance of science and join them in subscribing to common values, norms, assumptions, and ways of giving meaning to our experience. As members of the "community of acquired scientists" we are members of the general community (*tā'ifah*) of all scientists. As members of this *tā'ifah* we share a belief with the jurists, theologians, philosophers, and *sūfīs*, and join them in subscribing to common values, norms, assumptions, and ways of giving meaning to our experience. All these scientists believe in the Unity of Allah, the Unity of Creation, the Unity of Knowledge, the Unity of Life, and the Unity of Humanity, as described by Ismā'il al Fārūqī,⁹ and believe that science is a never-ending process, which constantly seeks to expand the quality of our existing body of knowledge, in accordance with the prayer taught by Allah to the Prophets Muhammad (pbuh): "Oh Lord! Increase my knowledge." Qur'an 20:114 This general community of all scientists breaks down into subcommunities.

As psychologists, we are not only members of the scientific community at large, but are also members of communities of specialists in acquired science, of human scientists, and of all psychologists. In addition to sharing the values and assumptions of the entire scientific community (*tā'ifah*), as psychologists we also share values, norms, language, assumptions, and ways of perceiving and understanding the world with other human scientists and especially with other members of the psychologists' community. The paradigmatic view of the world that all psychologists share as members of the psychologists' com-

munity is not shared by biologists and physicists. Biologists, physicists, geologists, and other scientists have likewise organized themselves into smaller subcommunities that are based on their unique paradigmatic views of the world. So even though psychologists, biologists, and physicists may all be members of the same paradigmatic community at the general level, we are all members of different paradigmatic communities at a more specific level. The paradigmatic puzzles that physicists are trying to solve are not generally the same puzzles that occupy psychologists. Progress made by psychologists in understanding some aspect of human behavior, for example, does not help physicists gain a better understanding of the nature of matter at the sub-molecular level, though at least one scholar of paradigms does suggest a parallel.¹⁰

The community of psychologists also breaks down into subcommunities. Behaviorism and cognitivism, for example, are subcommunities within the larger psychological community. Psychologists who are members of the behaviorist community believe that behavior can be understood and explained by examining physically observable (and measurable) stimuli and responses. Members of the cognitivist community believe that psychologists must take into account mental operations if they are to understand and explain behavior. The paradigmatic view of the world that all behaviorists share is different from the paradigmatic view shared by all cognitivists, even though behaviorists and cognitivists all share a common paradigmatic view as members of the community of all psychologists. Because cognitivists and behaviorists are working on different paradigmatic puzzles, the progress made by the behavioristic community during periods of normal science is of little use to the cognitivist community, and vice versa. So how is the paradigmatic dispute between the cognitivists and the behaviorists to be resolved *ummatically* if the members of the competing communities perceive and understand human behavior through different paradigmatic lenses? The paradigmatic dispute between behaviorism and cognitivism cannot be resolved at the paradigmatic level at which the dispute has occurred; instead, it must be resolved by a community at a higher paradigmatic level. The dispute between the Mālikī and Shāfī'ī schools of jurisprudence cannot be resolved between Mālikī and Shāfī'ī schools but by a paradigmatic community at a higher level, that is the community of jurists (*Fuqahā*).

The dispute between the cognitivists' community and the behaviorist community will not be *ummatically* resolved by cognitivists or behaviorists but by the community of all psychologists. It is necessary to resolve paradigmatic disputes at a higher paradigmatic level because the quality of communication and understanding necessary to resolve these disputes *ummatically* does not exist at level of the conflict. Because all psychologists share a paradigmatic view of the world they are able to communicate well enough to eventually

reach an ummatic resolution of the behaviorist/cognitivist dispute. Members of the behaviorist and cognitivist communities will of course participate in the resolution process, but they will do it as members of the community of psychologists and not as members of the behaviorist or cognitivist communities. As long as they continue to perceive and understand the world strictly as cognitivists or behaviorists, they will be unable to decide which paradigmatic view is best able to explain and understand behavior. Disputes between psychological communities will be resolved by communities that are functioning at a higher paradigmatic level.

The same principle, it has been suggested, can operate even among devout members of different religions, which is the major purpose of interfaith dialogue.”

VII. Toward an Ummatic Paradigm

The term *ummah* is not translatable and must be taken in its original Islamic Arabic form.¹¹ The *ummah* is a universal society (Qur’ān 21:29) whose membership includes the widest possible variety of ethnicities or communities, but whose commitment to Islam binds them to a specific social order. Its territory is not only the whole earth but all of creation. It is trans-racial and regards all humanity as its actual or potential members. The *ummah* is not a state because it is a transnational world-polity within which it may include and contain several nations. Persons may be members of the *ummah* even though they may not fall under the political sovereignty of any Islamic “state.” The *ummah* is a sort of United Nations. The *ummah* is the social order of Islam, and the movement that seeks to actualize its goals is called *ummaticism*.

The social order of Islam therefore is universal, enveloping the whole of mankind without exception. Islam recognizes the nature of groupings of humans into families, tribes, and nations as a God-created and God-ordained arrangement.¹² But it rejects every concept of groupings as ultimate or absolute, that is, as definitive of man and as constituting a final criterion of good and evil.

Although the message of Islam is universal in intent and character, it defines the conditions for the emergence and formation of a Muslim *ummah* with the assumption that there will always be other religious communities existing alongside it. The *ummah* is meant to serve as a witness to the concretization of the Divine Message as expounded in the Qur’ān or, as Professor al Fārūqī puts it, in particular, the operationalization of both worship and *amānah*.

The ummah therefore is the uniting force among the diverse paradigms and

communities within the Muslim community. Diversity in paradigms is welcomed as it is a sign of progress, so long as it does not exceed the boundary of the *ummah*. The ummatic model also provides for resolving disputes between scientific communities (*tawā'if*) within the *ummah*. The application of the model to nonscientific communities – political, economic, social, and so on – is possible with some modification.

Notes

1. J. K. Smith, "Quantitative Versus Qualitative Research; an Attempt to Varyify the Issue," *Educational Researcher* 12:3, 1982, pp. 6-13.
2. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Resolutions* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1964, 2nd ed., 1970; and Imre Lakalos and A. Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1970; and S. Toulmin, *Human Understanding*, Vol.I (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972).
3. J. Piaget in the *Origins of Intelligence in Children*, New York, International University Press, 1952, developed the concept of *schema* as compared to paradigm for cognitive individual development (progress) through the interdependency of assimilation and accommodation.
4. W. Turner, *History of Philosophy* (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1929).
5. Thomas S. Kuhn, "Reflections on the Critics," *op. cit.* p. 254.
6. The classification of knowledge into *revealed* and *acquired* was developed at the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Makkah, March 31-April 8, 1977. The idea, however, is not new. Muslim scholars such as Ibn Khaldun used the same classification with different terms, such as *naql* and *'aql*, *fardu*, *'ayn* and *fardu kifāyah*. See Umm al-Qura University, World Center for Islamic Education, Makka al-Mukarrama, *Recommendation of the Four World Conferences on Islamic Conferences on Islamic Education*, Makka al-Mukarramah, 1403/1983.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Thomas S. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, 1964 and 1970.
9. Ismā'il R. al Fārūqī, "Islamization of Knowledge: Problem, Principles, and Perspective," in *Islam: Source and Purpose of Knowledge* (Herndon, Virginia: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1987); first published in *Knowledge for What?* (Islamabad: Ministry of Islamic History, Culture, and Civilization, 1982). See also al Fārūqī's book, *Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1982); and *Recommendation of the Four World Conferences on Islamic Education*, World Center for Islamic Education, Umm al Qurā University, Makkah al-Mukarramah, 1983.
10. Muhammad 'Arif, "The Islamization of Knowledge and Some Methodological Issues in Paradigm Building: The General Case of Social Sciences with a Special Focus on Economimics," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 4:1, March 1987.
11. Ismā'il al Fārūqī, *op. cit.*. See also his *Toward Islamic English* (Herndon, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, Islamization of Knowledge Series No. 3, 1986).
12. See Qur'an 49:13.