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FROM RATIONALITY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS: A UNIVERSAL THEORY OF ACTION

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Abstract

This is a paper of methodological orientation. An attempt has been made to delineate the basic elements of a *Qur'anic* view of social reality as an integral part of the worldview of the *Qur'an*. The theoretical frame thus derived from the *Qur'an* is then shown to lay the foundation for a universal theory of social science. A theory of action based on the concept of the righteous actor is contrasted with a theory of action based on the concept of the rational actor, the former representing Homo-Islamicus, the second representing Homo-economicus. The theory of action suggested rests on the work of Imam al Shatibi on the purposes (*magasid*) of *Shari'ah*, which is shown to emanate logically from the *Qur'anic* view of social reality suggested by the author.

Introduction¹

Islam is a universal religion. It is for all humanity. *Qur'an*, the book of Islam, is a book of knowledge about universal truth, truth about the invisible world (*alam al gair*) and about the visible one (*alam al shahadah*). This is so because it is the word of God, the knower of both the invisible and the visible world, both of which are his creation. Social reality is part of the visible world, and the description of the *Qur'an* to this reality, its essence, its beginning and its end, the mechanisms at work that bring it into existence and give it its vitality and dynamism, represent part of the *Qur'an's* world view.

Probing the intricacies of social reality with the purpose of understanding it, is conducted today through the so-called Western social sciences. However, with Marxism becoming almost a history of science, and with the current methodological crises in Western social sciences, Muslim social scientists are turning increasingly to their own legacy of knowledge for help in the hope of shaping a social science conducive to the problems posed by social reality in their countries.

The recognition that social sciences are value loaded, resulted in a trend among most Muslim social scientists to concentrate on developing social sciences specific to Muslim societies, i.e. their applicability is valid only to social reality generated by a society that functions according to Islamic norms. The present author believes that this is a wrong approach that will not help in understanding the social ills of the Islamic world, let alone helping curing them and paving the way for a sustained social development along Islamic norms. Social phenomena that violate Islamic norms in all aspects of life abound in the Muslim world, and certainly they cannot be explained by appealing to a science derived exclusively from normative Islamic principles.

What is needed is a universal social science that is capable of explaining social reality in its indivisible totality and, wherever it exists and under all forms and circumstances. This universality derives from the universality of the Islamic message and its single most authentic source of knowledge about social reality, namely, revelation (*Qur'an, Sunnah*). Only if we build our social sciences on this universality would we deserve a claim to the leadership of humanity, and for humanity to aspire to Islam as a way out from its present impasse.

This paper is a methodological contribution towards a universal Islamic view of social reality, with special reference to economics. It attempts to delineate the methodological implications of a *Qur'anic* view of social phenomena, rigorously derived elsewhere by the author.² The core of that view is what I called the Master Plan of Creation (MPC).

The MPC in brief

The MPC is God's grand design for life on earth to be lived by man, but with consequences that extend beyond this life to the Hereafter. Central to this grand design of life is a test that all humans have to go through, but the results of which for each person will not be known before the Day of Judgment. It is worth mentioning that the first father of man (Adam) was subjected to this very test when he was in Heaven, and his failure in the test was the prime reason for his children to dwell on earth.

The following three *Qur'anic* verses introduce the MPC:

- (1) "I have not created the jinn and men except for this that they should worship Me" (51:56).
- (2) "He who created death and life that he may try you to see which of you is best in deed" (67:2).
- (3) "We showed him (man) the way: Either he is thankful or unthankful" (76:3).

Thus man is created solely for the sake of worshipping God, but this worship takes the form of a test in the domain of deeds. Though man has the volition to do good or bad, however, only good deeds are demanded of him by God. Deeds have to satisfy two conditions to qualify as good from an Islamic perspective; firstly, they have to be intended primarily for the sake of God, secondly, they must be done in strict conformity with Shari'ah.³ Good deeds yield thankfulness to God, bad deeds yield the opposite.

Thus, the following questions arise: where is the domain of this divine test for man? What is the nature of it?

The *Qur'an* tells us that the domain of the test is the 'glittering things of the earth': "That which is on earth we have made but as a glittering show for the earth, in order that we may test them as to which of them are best in deed" (18:7).

The *Qur'an* then explains the nature of the glittering things to be none other than 'wealth' and 'children': "Wealth and children are the glittering (allurements) of the life of this world" (18:46).

In its primordial form the test takes the form of an interaction between three primary factors, "self," "wealth" and "children." This interaction as we will see, is responsible for generating the entire social phenomenon with all its ramifications. The concepts of "self," "wealth" and "children" are all generic *Qur'anic* concepts and the analysis of each can unfold into an entire spectrum of social phenomena.

Now, the following questions arise: What is characteristic of 'man' that makes him susceptible to being tested in 'wealth' and 'children'? What is inherent in 'wealth' and 'children' that makes them the place for man's test?

The *Qur'an* tells us that what is characteristic of man is his multiple duality. Firstly, there is a duality between 'body' (physics) and 'self' (metaphysics): "He began the creation of man from clay; then spread his progeny by an extract of a humble fluid. Then he shaped him and breathed into him of his spirit" (32:7-9). Secondly, there is a duality within the 'self' itself: "by the human self and him who balanced it, then inspired it with its debauchery (immorality) and its piety. Truly successful was he who purified it, and a failure he who buries it in darkness" (91:7-10).

The duality between 'body' and 'self' gave rise to a duality of motives. Firstly, there are the biological motives pertaining to the needs of the body, e.g. hunger, thirst, desire for cover and shelter and sexual desire. Secondly, there are social motives pertaining to the self. The latter are themselves dual, in the form of motives for debauchery, e.g. greed, miserliness, selfishness, arrogance, envy, haste, etc., and motives for piety, e.g. patience, truthfulness, mercy, honesty, generosity, modesty etc.

The biological motives are internal, i.e. they are activated from within by the needs of the body, and their satisfaction is a necessity. The motives of the self, on the other hand, are activated mainly from without by social interaction, i.e. they are fundamentally social motives. We will later show that the interaction of the three primordial elements (self, wealth, children) in the MPC necessarily leads to the creation of societies.

The *Qur'an* gives us a fundamental breakdown to the two generic concepts of 'wealth' and 'children'. The concept of wealth breaks down into mineral, animal and agricultural wealth as well as their transformation into consumables. The concept of children breaks down into a man-woman (sexual) relationship and family (offsprings) relationship derived from the first one.

This *Qur'anic* breakdown of the elements of the MPC is related to the test that man has to undergo on earth. The wisdom of God infused 'wealth' and 'children' with pleasures and created a lust in the human 'self' for these pleasures: "Alluring unto men is the love of things they covet: Women and children, heaped-up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded, and cattle; and agriculture. That is the pleasure of this world's life" (3:14).

The test for man, based on the interaction of the three elements of self, wealth and children, takes the form of a demand by God that man out of his own volition should be thankful to God for the enjoyment of His bounties (wealth, children): "If you become unthankful, God has no need for you, and He like not unthankfulness from his servants: And if you are thankful He like it for you" (39:7). Thus we have an input-output relationship such that a certain combination of the inputs of self, wealth and children produces the output of thankfulness, and another combination results into unthankfulness. Both options are available to man, but only the first outcome is acceptable to God.

The outcome of thankfulness requires the satisfaction of three conditions: Knowledge, psychological state, and action. Knowledge consists of knowledge about four things: Firstly, knowledge about the attributes of God that make him the sole creator and benefactor of all bounties. Secondly, knowledge about the bounties themselves and in what way are they bounties for man. Thirdly, knowledge about man in relation to God's bounties. Fourthly, knowledge about what God wants man to do with his bounties.

After the acquisition of the necessary knowledge, man must acquire the right psychological motives to realize the purposes of God on earth. Lastly, the right actions (good deeds), that actualize the pattern of God on wealth and children such that the reality of life is an embodiment of thankfulness to God for his bounties, must follow. Thus it is knowledge that is cardinal in determining any Islamic attitude, at the level of the individual and society, in real life situations.

How does the MPC work such that social reality in all its ramifications is but a necessary consequence of the primordial interplay of the three factors of 'self', 'wealth' and 'children'.

Societies emerge as a result of the necessary man-wealth and man-children relationships. People must live in groups to satisfy these necessary relationships. The necessity is a biological one the satisfaction of which works as the catalyst that triggers the mechanisms of the test involved in the MPC. The latter is responsible for all the ramifications of social reality that bewilder social scientists.

It is the biological motives; hunger, thirst, desire for sex, desire for cover and shelter etc., which ensure that every mature person, one way or another, must come in touch with the other two interactive factors in the MPC. The satisfaction of these biological needs is a necessity for the survival of the human race. However, it is exactly in the process of satisfying these needs that the 'self' is introduced to the pleasures infused in 'wealth' and 'children'. Thus the social motives dormant in the self (greed, miserliness, mercy, generosity etc.) are activated. These are the mechanisms through which the test involved in the MPC is carried out. The vigorous work of these motives requires the presence of societies, and the interaction of people in the process of acquiring the glittering things on earth. This means that the MPC must account for the emergence of societies.

The emergence of societies as a natural result of the test involved in the MPC is not difficult to explain. The necessary man-woman-offsprings relationship requires people to live in groups to make families and raise children. The satisfaction of this relationship has a mutual dependence on the other necessary man-wealth relationship. The satisfaction of this latter relationship also requires people to live in groups and cooperate through various forms of division of labour. Thus the primordial form of society is generated by the necessary relationships in the MPC.

However, the ramifications of social reality are generated by the volitional dimension in the MPC. Thus when the 'self' is introduced to the pleasures of wealth, sex and children, the powerful motive of greed will be activated. In the absence of strong moral restraints more of 'wealth' and 'children' will be desired by each individual, not for need but for greed. However, because of the scarcity of the pleasurable relative to the greed of people, they will be esteemed, and the acquisition of as much as possible of them will be, in general, the goal of all: "know you (all) that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children" (57:20). It is within this context of social interaction that all the other dormant, negative (debauchery) and positive (Piety) motives of the 'self' are activated. They interact in such a manner as to give the test involved in the MPC its true force. Thus the baffling social reality is born.

The essence of the test takes the form of normative ‘do’ and ‘don’t’s’ instructed by God for man to follow in his use of ‘wealth’ and ‘children’ on earth. The strict volitional submission to these divine injunctions is the only way to bring about thankfulness to God for his bounties, and the only road to good life in both worlds. However, since these injunctions are meant to put moral restraint on man’s indulgence in worldly pleasures, and to bring him out of being a slave to his whims to being a slave to God, a process of purification to the ‘self’ becomes necessary, whereby the ‘negative attributes of *‘fujoor’* should be purged and the positive attributes of *‘taqwa’* should be cultivated.

All the messengers of God have been sent with the single purpose of making man aware of the test involved in the MPC, and the implications of passing or failing the test for his life in this world and in the world to come. They brought with them guidance from God as to how people can make their way to safety. The history of humanity has been in general the history of the consequences of systematically making the wrong choice regarding ‘thankfulness’ or ‘unthankfulness’ to God for His bounties on earth: “They say Life is only this worldly life of ours. Here we shall die and live, and nothing but the change of time destroys us. In fact, they have no knowledge concerning this; they merely guess.” (45:24)

The *Qur’an* uses two distinct concepts to summarize the dual approach of man to the use of God’s bounties on earth. The concept ‘*hayat al dunya*’ or ‘life of this world’ is used by the *Qur’an* to refer to that approach to the use of ‘wealth’ and ‘children’ which is grounded on man’s denial of the existence of the Day of Judgment, as the verse above shows. The ‘*dunya*’ approach according to the *Qur’an* is motivated solely by the desire to maximize worldly pleasures (57:20). In this approach man’s own ‘whims’ become his god: “Have you ever considered the case of the person who has made his lust his god?” (25:43). In the ‘*dunya*’ approach the ‘self’ is dominated by the motives of debauchery (greed, niggardliness, arrogance, envy, etc.). The *Qur’an* calls this state the ‘whimsical self’.

The *Qur’an* uses the concept of ‘*akhirah*’ or ‘hereafter’ to refer to that approach of man to ‘wealth’ and ‘children’ which is grounded on the belief in the unity of God, vice-gerency of man on earth and the

day of reckoning. The '*akhirah*' approach according to the *Qur'an* is motivated solely by the desire to accumulate 'good deeds' that yield thankfulness (23:61).

In the '*akhirah*' alternative the 'self' is completely dominated by the positive motives of piety (patience, humility, contentment, generosity, etc.). The *Qur'an* calls this state the 'tranquil self'. This is the state of the normative believer who is in complete submission to God, and all his desires are streamlined to be consistent with the purposes of God: "O Muhammad say: I am a human being like you. It has been revealed to me that your God is only one God. Therefore the one who expects to meet his lord should do righteous deeds and should not associate anyone with him in worship' (18:110).

The '*dunya*; and '*akhirah*' alternatives are mutually exclusive, since they derive from opposite value sets. This fact has been succinctly stated by the *Qur'an*: "Whoever seeks the harvest of '*akhirah*' we do increase his harvest; and whoever seeks the harvest of '*dunya*' we do give him of it here, but in '*akhirah*' he will have no share whatever" (42:20).

It is important to notice that the domain of action for both alternatives is one and the same, namely 'wealth' and 'children', but the value sets from which these actions emanate are completely different. The *Qur'an* states clearly that man's life is but a process of choice between these two alternatives. However, the *Qur'an* also states which choice is superior: "This worldly life is but a play and a passing delight; and the life in the '*akhirah*', is by far the better for all who are conscious of God. Will you not, then, use your reason?" (6:32).

Though all the actions of the normative believer emanate from the '*akhirah*' action set (tranquil self), the positive believer will have some of his actions emanating from the '*dunya*' action set, and others from the '*akhirah*' action set. When the actions oscillate between these two action sets, the *Qur'an* calls the self the 'blaming self'. This is a state of disequilibrium and restlessness, where the believer often blames himself for a wrongdoing or for forsaking a good deed that he could have done. This disequilibrium state represents the general case in real-life situations, and takes the form of an evolutionary learning

process of life experience, primarily as a result of the interaction between self, wealth and children.

Islamic *Shari'ah* is firmly grounded on the MPC as depicted above. This can be readily seen from the fact that the five wholes which early Muslim scholars rigorously derived inductively from diverse observations of *Shari'ah* injunctions and concluded that they represent the necessary pillars of *Shari'ah*, are but the constituent elements of the MPC. These five wholes are religion, self, reason, children and wealth. Shortly we will show how they are interactive and mutually dependent, and that religion is nothing but the interaction of self, wealth and children from the perspective of Islamic knowledge (reason).

In the MPC religion is represented by its essence, i.e. '*iman*' or, which amounts to the same thing, "thankfulness".⁴ The 'self', 'wealth' and 'children' are matching. The extra element of 'reason' that appears in the five wholes but not in the MPC, poses no problem since it is but an aspect of the element 'self', and has no independent existence.

The interactive nature of the elements of the MPC can also explain the classical classification of shari'ah knowledge into '*ibadat*' '*adat*', '*mu'amalat*' and '*ginayat*'. '*Ibadat*' (prayer, fasting, zakah, hujj) are directed to the psychological treatment of the 'self' as means of purification from debauchery motives and inculcation of piety motives. '*Adat*' refer to the appropriate habits which should govern the relationship between the 'self' and 'wealth' and 'children' like eating, drinking, dressing, marriage, divorce etc. '*Mu'amalat*' and '*ginayat*' govern the interaction between people in their acquisitive pursuit of 'wealth' and 'children'. Hence, '*mu'amalat*' describe the right approach from an Islamic perspective to the temporal man-man and man-God relationships. '*Ginayat*', on the other hand, prescribe the penal code which should apply in each case of breaching the appropriate man-man and man-God relationships.

Obviously the dynamic interaction in the MPC gives rise to a wider knowledge of *Shari'ah* in the domain of social reality than that found in traditional Islamic 'Fiqh'. This additional knowledge is mainly that of social phenomena in terms of the laws of motion that govern social change and social rules generated by the interaction

between people in their acquisitive pursuit of 'wealth' and 'children'. Social phenomena generated by human interaction are indicators of the good and bad fortunes of a society in motion. Therefore knowledge of their causes, the way they can be cured if bad, or enhanced if good, all such knowledge is fundamental if a society in motion is to be kept within a predetermined trajectory, or to put it on track if it went out of its way, i.e. social control.

It may be time to ask about the theory of knowledge implied by the MPC as briefed in the previous pages. In the following pages we give an outline of the implied theory of knowledge which has been elaborated by the author elsewhere.⁵

Knowledge Formation in the MPC

In the MPC we established the necessity of man interacting with his environment (wealth, children). This necessary relationship between man and his environment, establishes, on the other hand, the cardinality of knowledge acquisition by man in this interactive process. However, the MPC also revealed the profound wisdom of God behind this triangular interactive relationship. This profundity, which could have never been revealed by positive (ontic) knowledge alone, establishes the necessity of Revelation as the only source of primordial axioms of knowledge (epistemic) about the socio-scientific realities of our universe seen from the perspective of the MPC.

Knowledge, defined as intellectually grasping the limited truth sought in the facts under investigation, be they physical or metaphysical, is conditioned in the MPC as that knowledge which enables man to be thankful to God for His bounties (wealth, children) in the interactive process described earlier. Every fact has layers of limited truths but also an absolute truth, however, there is no relative truth. Relativity is a problem of methodology in knowledge acquisition. Only limited truth is within the reach of man in this world, but absolute truth is known only to God, for He is the limit of all truths. Let us take the example of water where a layer of limited truth concerns its chemical structure (H_2O), and another layer concerns the fact that every living thing is made from water. Both of these truths could be known by positive knowledge divorced from revelation, but their significance for humanity remains local. Only if

they are discovered within the process of knowledge formation grounded on a worldview emanating from revelation will they play their global role, not only as laws of physics and biology helping man to realize the Divine pattern on earth, but also as signs (*ayat*) whose uniqueness and pervasiveness is an indication of the unicity of their creator. However, a higher truth about water that goes a long way towards its absolute truth is that water was once the carrier of God's Throne (11:7). No positive knowledge could have revealed this layer of truth about water, but it is the *Qur'an* that did so.

Even our knowledge about the truth of our own actions and the social reality generated by them is only partially available to us in this world, as the *Qur'an* has told us. Only in 'akhirah' would we have complete knowledge of the truth about every thing of concern to us. Yet the limited knowledge available to man in this world, if sincerely pursued by him, acquired, disseminated and utilized according to the directives of revelation, it is sufficient to realize the full potentials of thankfulness to God on earth. However, this limited knowledge is not available lock, stock and barrel to be acquired once and for all. Be it knowledge from revelation or the empirical universe, it accumulates in an evolutionary process of trial and error. Again this is not a problem of knowledge or truth in itself but a methodological problem.

Thus we may conveniently summarize the theory of knowledge implied by the MPC in the domain of social reality within the following pillars of knowledge acquisition. Source, content, method, acquirer, and purpose. The MPC gives us two models of knowledge, one based on the secular '*dunya*' alternative, the other based on the Islamic 'akhirah' alternative. The *Qur'an* described the modes of knowing in both models, but we limit ourselves here to the Islamic mode.

1. Source: In the Islamic model God is the source of all knowledge. The created universe, seen and unseen, is an embodiment of God's knowledge, and, therefore, is a viable indirect source of knowledge about God and His pattern in the universe. Revelation, on the other hand, is a condensed stock of God's knowledge about Himself and His created universe. The funda-

mental premises of knowledge about social reality must come from revelation, and through theoretical constructs to be applied to the study of empirical social events. Social reality will consist of facts resulting from actions emanating from both the '*dunya*' and '*akhirah*' alternatives in the MPC. Ontic knowledge thus derived from the study of social reality should integrate with the epistemic knowledge derived from Revelation to constitute the unified Islamic knowledge of social reality. Thus a dialectical relationship between the two sources of knowledge will ensue with the single purpose of an evolutionary unification of positive social reality with its normative image envisaged by normative theories derived from Revelation.

2. Content:

Since human action in the MPC is divided between that which is pleasing to God (*wagib, mandoob*) and that which is not (haram, makrooh) then knowledge of '*ahkam*' that enables us to study individual action and classify it accordingly suggests itself. Since human interaction generates social phenomena that go beyond individual action then knowledge of their causes (social science), and how they can be cured if bad or enhanced if good, is also necessary. Beyond this there is the knowledge of '*ayat Allah*', or divine wisdom behind events. Every social event, good or bad, is but a sign from God that must be carefully investigated and its message well understood. This knowledge essentially deals with divine laws that interact with human actions and the consequences that follow when they are activated, like the law of thankfulness. Later in this paper we will give an example of this mode of explanation that dominates the *Qur'an* when we deal with the phenomenon of Saba (Sheba).

If such knowledge is to be initiated from Revelation then, obviously, we need knowledge concerning how to interpret it and abstract further knowledge from its riches.⁶

3. Methodology:

A *Qur'anic* worldview that provides a cognitive description of the universe is the appropriate starting point for Islamic knowledge. The *Qur'anic* view of social reality will be part of this worldview. From the latter we should extract and well define the basic concepts that represent the building blocks of this view of social reality. The fundamental principles that describe human action should be abstracted and distilled into axioms. These axioms will provide the epistemic description of social reality in its totality, whether it is generated by the 'dunya' alternative or 'akhirah' alternative. Various theories that purport to explain a particular social phenomenon or recommend a certain course of action for policy makers or the Ummah will be constructed on the basis of these axioms. All such theories will have a valid claim to knowledge, but it will be a tentative claim until they pass all the filtering mechanisms of Islamic scientific corroboration of hypotheses. If they are normative theories of *ahkam* then the first filtering mechanism will be the *shuratic* process whereby the community of Muslim *ulama* freely and critically discuss in their academic platforms the available theories and recommend through consensus the most sound of theories to policy makers to put forward to the Muslim public. Since in Islam consensus (*igma*) is in general the right of the *Ummah* as a whole, and only in special circumstances entrusted to the *ulama*, then the second filtering mechanism will be the adoption by the public of those theories that provide the most appropriate application given the historical circumstances of the *Ummah*.⁵ The last filtering mechanism will be the degree of empirical success a theory will have in realizing the purposes (*maqasid*) of Shari'ah in the particular domain of application. Gradually some theories will die out as they fail to meet the challenge, others will survive, and undergo revisions either as a result of ontic knowledge about their consequences becoming available to scientists, or because of new challenges cre-

ated in the domain of social reality as a consequence of their application. This methodology assumes a sufficient amount of Islamic knowledge has been acquired by the public as to make them pass sound judgment on available theories.

If the theories developed are intended for explaining positive social phenomena then they should be subjected to empirical tests as a result of which some will be corroborated others falsified.

4. Acquirer:

To believe that the *Qur'an* is an authentic source of knowledge about universal truth, is to believe that it is from God. Beyond this, to derive deep knowledge from the *Qur'an* about the universe as laws (*Souman*) and wisdom (*ayat*), then piety (*taqwa*) and permanent company of Revelation (*Qur'an, Sunnah*) is a must. Of course piety is an evolutionary process of purification of the self from the properties of 'fujoor' in the domain of social action, and the cultivation of those of 'taqwa'. This is consistent with the evolutionary process of knowledge acquisition as an uphill struggle.

5. Purposes (Maqasid): From an Islamic perspective knowledge is a means to a single end, that of knowing the 'magasid' of God and fulfilling these 'magasid'. The rest of this paper deals extensively with these 'magasid'.

This brief account of the MPC will suffice for probing into its methodological implications for studying social reality from an Islamic perspective. The rest of this paper deals with these issues.

Towards an Islamic Theory of Action

The MPC as explained previously necessarily leads to the consideration of an Islamic theory of individual action as the logical foundation of any study of social phenomena from an Islamic perspective. Before proceeding to outline a possible theory of individual action it will serve our purpose to summarize the MPC in a chart form that will prove useful as an analytical framework.

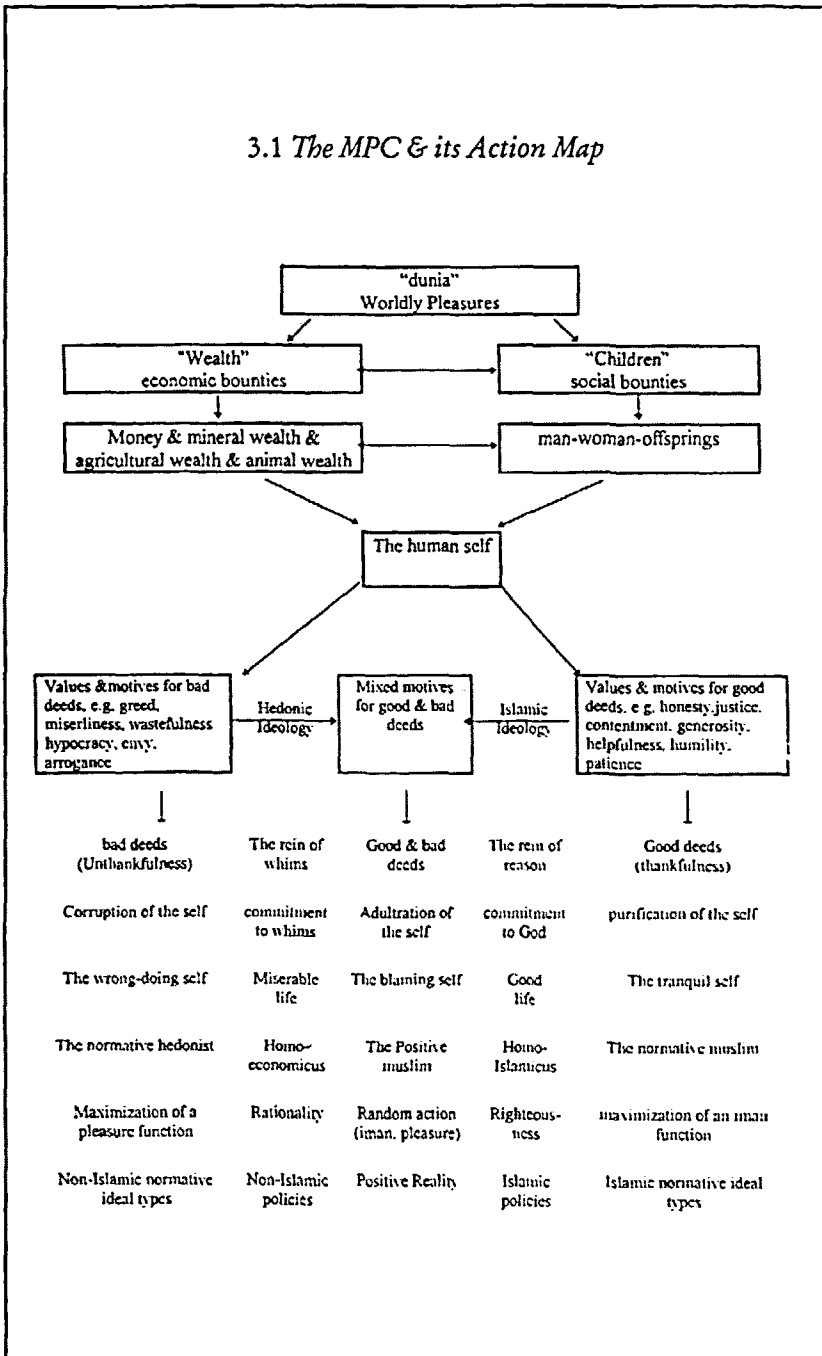
Figure 1 depicts the MPC and its action map, where the upper half of the chart summarizes the man-wealth and man-children relationships. The two boxes of 'wealth' and 'children' branch out of the 'dunya' box and link with the 'self' box. The lower half of the chart transforms the dynamics of the tripartite relationship of man-wealth-children into an epistemological map (EM) about human action.

It is the action map that is fundamental to our epistemological investigation, therefore a closer look at the nature of this map is necessary. The map classifies the MPC into three different action sets (ASs). Each of these ASs is defined over a subset of values that characterizes the attributes and motives (preferences) of the 'self'. The column of boxes on the r.h.s. of the chart is defined by the subset of the values of piety and summarized by the objective function of 'iman' (I). I is a function of good deeds (G). Deeds are good if and only if: (a) they serve the purposes of the Legislator (God) from legislating Shariah, and (b) considered by Him as legitimate means for those purposes (goals).⁷ Thus the most general form of this function is the following:

$$(1) I = F(G)$$

Later we will show that (G) is a function of wealth (W) and children (C), both of which are a function of Islamic knowledge (R). Let us call this action set the Iman Action Set (IAS). IAS is the action set of the normative Muslim whose actions are all good. The prophet (SAS) said that iman increases and decreases with deeds. The iman function summarizes the psychological state of the righteous Muslim - to be defined later - whose ultimate objective is to avoid hell and enter paradise in the hereafter: "Every human being is bound to taste death: but only on the Day of Resurrection will you be requited in full (for whatever you have done), whereupon he that shall be drawn away from the fire and brought into paradise will indeed have gained a triumph; for the life of this world is nothing but an enjoyment of self-delusion" (3:185). This implies a rigorous calculus of gains (*hasanat*) and losses (*suyy'at*), all based on man's temporal action: "On that Day will all men come forward cut off from one another, to be shown their (past) deeds. And so, he who shall have done an atom's weight of good, shall behold it, and he who shall have done an atom's

3.1 *The MPC & its Action Map*



weight of evil, shall behold it" (99:6-8), "On the Day of Resurrection, we shall set up just and accurate balances to that no one will be wronged in the least in any way; even if it be an act equal in weight to a grain of mustard seed, we shall bring it forth (to be weighed), and we suffice for reckoning" (21:47), "Then, he whose scales are heavy shall be in a state of bliss, and he whose scales are light shall have the deep pit for his dwelling, and what do you know what that is? A raging Fire" (101:9).

Therefore, within the iman function, a righteous Muslim always maximizes a *hasanat* (*h*) function, defined over good deeds, i.e. $(2) h = f(G)$

The *Qur'an* is emphatically clear about this maximization or simulation process depending on the meaning we attach to the *Qur'anic* concepts: "It is they who vie with one another in doing good works, and it is they who outrun (all others) in attaining to them" (23:61), "And if God has so willed, He could surely have made you all one single community: but (He willed it otherwise) in order to test you by means of what He has vouchsafed into you. Vie, then, with one another in doing good works" (5:48).

Because paradise itself is graded into ranks, the greater the *hasanat* one acquires from his deeds the higher the rank in paradise, as the *Qur'an* puts it: "Behold how we bestow (on earth) more bounty on some of them than on others: but (remember that) the life to come will be far higher in degree and far greater in merit and bounty" (17:21).

The normative IAS is the domain of action for the few elite believers headed by prophets. The *Qur'an* calls these elite believers 'forerunners' and 'close to God': "But the foremost shall be (they who in life were) the foremost (in faith and good works): "They who were (always) drawn close unto God." In gardens of bliss (will they dwell) - a good many of those of olden times, but a few of later times" (56:10-14). The prophet (SAS) has been the exemplar of those whose empirical life actualized the precepts of IAS. However, IAS will remain, like the equilibrium, the ideal state towards which the actions of an ordinary Muslim or society will always gravitate, or like the golden path along which the righteous Muslim or society will ascend in a steady state towards higher and higher states of iman through the

perfection of good deeds. Thus IAS is the benchmark for any Islamic theorizing on social reality.

The column of boxes on the I.h.s. of the chart is defined by the subset of the values of debauchery, and summarized by the objective function of worldly pleasure (U). U is a function of bad deeds (B). Deeds are bad if and only if they are undertaken with complete disregard to: (a) the purposes of the Legislator (God), and/or (b) His authorization of the action as a legitimate means for the purposes pursued. In other words, actions are good if they earn '*hasanat*' for the actor, and they are bad otherwise.

The most general form of this function is:

$$(3) U = F(B)$$

Later we will show that (B) itself is a function of (W) and (C), both of which are a function of whims or deknowledge for the pleasure action set. Following the *Qur'an* let us call this action set the action set of 'whims' (WAS). WAS is the action set of the non-believer (secularist) whose actions are all bad. The pleasure function (U) summarizes the psychological state of the secularist whose ultimate objective is to maximize worldly pleasure: "They say: Life is only this worldly life of ours. Here we shall die and live, and nothing but the change of time destroys us. In fact they have no knowledge concerning this. They merely guess." (45:24), "know you (all) that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying (in rivalry) among yourselves, wealth and children." (57:20), "what is life of this world but play and amusement?" (6:32).

Thus, it becomes obvious that, just as IAS (the *akhirah* alternative) is founded on a rigorous calculus of gains (*hasanat*) and losses (*suyy'at*), WAS (the *dunya* alternative), by virtue of man's predisposition to play and amusement manifesting the divine wisdom, is also based on the logic of gains (worldly pleasures) and losses (worldly pains). In other words, once the *dunya* alternative has been chosen then the attainment of maximum worldly pleasures is the fundamental purpose that govern all conscious and intentional actions, great or

small, directly pleasurable or painful, considered at the individual or social plain.

IAS and WAS represent the two extremes of the MPC, with one extreme based on complete submission to God, while the other is based on complete submission to whims. It is important to realize that both IAS and WAS are represented in the human self and coexist through the continuous interplay of the motives of piety and debauchery. This coexistence and interplay give rise to the more general case in the MPC as represented by the middle column of boxes in the epistemological map. This is the positive action set (PAS) representing the majority of ordinary Muslims whose daily actions are but a manifestation of the interplay of the forces of IAS and WAS. This fact may also be extended to humanity in general since most people have some form of belief in a metaphysical god related to the concepts of evil and good and the sanctions and rewards that go with it such that some of their actions may be thought of as to emanate from IAS even though they are pronounced adherents of WAS.

PAS is the union of IAS and WAS, therefore all of the elements of its subsets consist of combinations of the elements of their corresponding subsets. This explains the fact of observing good and bad deeds from the same Muslim. It also explains the coexistence of contradictory social phenomena in an Islamic society, some of which could only arise from actions germane to the dominance of WAS (dunya alternative). How close an individual or society is to the normative model of Islam depends on the degree of dominance the elements of each of IAS or WAS have over PAS.

In our view, PAS provides the foundation for a universal Islamic theory of action, since an explanation of purposeful human action is exhausted by explanations derived from IAS and/or WAS, of which PAS is but a union.

Having described in brief the general characteristics of the three action sets comprising the epistemological map of the MPC, we move next to examine their implied action theory, first in Western litera-

ture with respect to WAS, and an Islamic literature with respect to IAS.

From Rationality to Righteousness

Rationality

The pleasure action set (WAS) based on the negative values of debauchery (greed, miserliness, envy, arrogance etc.), is indeed the action set of individualism around which the mainstream Western theory of action has centered. The dominant theory of action through which Western social sciences attempted to understand the mechanics of individual and social action generated by WAS has been the theory of rational choice. In the editorial introduction to the first issue of *Rationality and Society* (R&S), James Coleman (1989) wrote: "There is one paradigm in social science that offers the promise of bringing a greater theoretical unity among disciplines than has existed until now. This is the paradigm of rational action. It is a paradigm on which economic theory rests. It is the basis for the expanding domain of public choice within political science. It is the paradigm of the burgeoning field of law and economics. Rationality as a base line from which derivations are discovered dominates the field of cognitive psychology. Social exchange theory is one of the manifestations of this paradigm in sociology."⁸

There are many brands of rational choice theory, extending from classical rationality to bounded rationality and game theory. The following brief account of the fundamental aspects of the most current form of rational choice theory may suffice as a springboard for our examination of an Islamic theory of righteous action:

From a set of feasible alternatives, persons choose that course of action that seems most likely to realize highly valued goals, given the structure of the decision situation. Subjective expectations about the assumed 'effectiveness' of actions and subjective evaluations of the possible 'outcomes' of actions are combined to weight the alternatives. These weights are compared in the selection process.

The selection process itself can be decomposed into three steps: cognition of the situation, evaluation of the consequences of certain

actions, and selection of a particular action on the basis of a specific rule.

The evaluation of alternative courses of action is done on the basis of the valuation of goals and the estimation of subjective probabilities that a particular action yields a certain outcome. It is assumed that there is such an evaluation for all alternatives. In this phase, a subjective expected utility for each alternative is 'calculated'.

The process of calculation forms the core of the theory. Every actor evaluates a set of goals on the basis of his own preferences. Let $U_1, U_2, U_j, \dots, U_n$ be the elements of the vector of evaluated goals, U . Denote the elements from the set of alternative actions by $A_1, A_2, \dots, A_i \dots A_m$. Goals and alternative actions are connected by the matrix $P = (P_{ij})$ in which P_{ij} represents the subjective probability estimate by an actor that action A_i yields goal U_j . Thus P models the actor's subjective knowledge. It is further assumed that every actor weights each alternative of action A_i concerning every goal U_j with the associated subjective probability P_{ij} . That is, he determines $P_{ij} U_j$. In the phase of evaluation, these products are determined for each behavioral alternative and each goal. The products associated with any particular alternative are then added up over the set of goals. The result is the total subjective expected utility of alternative A_i with respect to the set of goals under consideration:

$$SEU(i) = \sum_j P_{ij} U_j$$

There will be a SEU for each of the m alternatives. As a rule for the logic of selection, rational choice theory assumes that subjective expected utility is maximized. That is, the m 'calculated' SEUs are compared and the alternative with the highest SEU is chosen.⁹

Beliefs, desires and purposes (goals) of the individual are assumed to be given, in these models of RC. Whatever these desires and ends may be, one is rational if these are organized into a consistent plan or system of ends, the pursuit of which will lead to the maximum possible satisfaction of desires. The content of these desires and goals is not subject to examination. No questions arise about the sources of people's desires or about whether pursuit of their chosen ends is really in their interests. The rationale for this is that we do not want to decide what is good for people and then force that upon them

regardless of their wishes. Once persons have their desires and ends, who are we to say that these are not worthy of satisfaction, or are not in the interests of those who hold them?

Just as rationality, as a viable interpretation of the dynamics of WAS, has generated a vast literature from its proponents, it has also generated an equally vast literature from its critics. The main lines of criticism may be the following:

(1) The idea of egoistic individualism based on pleasure maximization is not a realistic description of human motivation. Economics and rational choice theory ignore the moral and emotional dimension of life. Motivational principles like 'commitment' cannot be dealt with in orthodoxy.

(2) In many areas of life - including the economic - people evidently behave irrationally, impulsive spending, panic hoarding, gullibility to advertising... etc.

(3) With respect to purposive behaviour, the model of rational calculation is psychologically unrealistic. Action in everyday life is based on the actor's ad hoc "knowledge at hand" and involves the constant process of the actor giving himself "in order to" accounts of his ongoing behaviour. Daily routines are characterized by conditions, taken-for-granted knowledge, uncertainty, subjective time, and constant juggling and adapting to different possible lines of conduct.

(4) The postulate of complete and objective information for the actor is false. Human abilities to gather and process information are limited.

(5) The economic motivation of acquisitiveness of modern business is institutional rather than motivational. This means that the proper conceptual status of a term such as 'rationality' is primarily social, not psychological. Thus economic motivation may be expected to be 'variable' from one social context to another, and, as a result, an economics based on the general psychological principle of the rational pursuit of economic self-interest cannot, as a matter of principle, be regarded as a universal science.

(6) The tradition of formal economics, based on the calculus of pleasure and pain, is ethnocentric, rooted in a historically specific

market system that emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries. Comparative historical and anthropological work reveals that the market, along with its expectations of rational calculation, is only one form of institutional embeddedness of economic life, and that allocative principles such as reciprocity, philanthropy, and political redistribution are also widespread as organizational and motivational foci of economic activity.¹⁰

Above I have tried to give a brief account of the dominant paradigm in Western social sciences that attempts to unravel the complexity of individual and social action in a culture where secularism - represented in the MPC by WAS - as a pervasive way of life is in constant friction with the residues of Christian ethics and morality - represented in the MPC by IAS. The classical theory of hedonic individualism has focused mainly on analyzing WAS, as if IAS does not exist. However, most of the criticism leveled at the postulate of hedonism assumes the coexistence of WAS and IAS, i.e. the critics assume the dominance of the positive action set PAS in real life situations.

However, looking only at WAS, from the *Qur'anic* perspective depicted in the MPC, the postulate of hedonic individualism based on the motives of debauchery (greed, miserliness, selfishness, arrogance, envy... etc.) is unassailable. This does not mean that the neoclassical conclusions about the functioning of the competitive market economy, which are flattering to capitalism, will ensue. On the contrary, if we add the other postulates derived from the *Qur'anic* description of WAS, then completely different conclusions to those of neoclassical economics would be expected to follow. The important point to make here is that we must - as Islamic social scientists - develop a rigorous theory of action based on the action set of whims (WAS). This theory must be based primarily on postulates derived from revelation. The *Qur'an* already gave us the general goal around which this action set revolves, and also the value subset that generates such a goal, the type of motives necessary for the actions appropriate to the achievement of such a goal, and the general conclusions we should expect from actualizing WAS empirically. The importance of this theorizing derives from the following:

Firstly, the core of WAS - maximization of worldly pleasure - has been the dominant feature of human civilization throughout history as the *Qur'an* tells us, with few exceptions where IAS dominated: "Say: Go about in the land and see what has been the end of those who lived before you. Most of them were mushriks (idolaters)" (42, 30). "And before them most people had gone astray though we had sent warners among them" (37, 71-72).

Secondly, the *Qur'an* also tells us that this trend of historical dominance of WAS is likely to continue for most of the rest of human life on earth: "However keen you are most people will not believe (in this revelation) although you do not ask of them any reward for it" (12, 103-104), "Now if you pay heed to the majority of mankind on earth they will but lead you astray from the path of god" (6, 116).

Thirdly, the psychological motives of WAS will always be present in ourselves as Muslims and are likely to dictate a considerable part of our goals in life and therefore our daily actions, thus generating socio-economic phenomena that cannot be explained by resorting to the precepts of IAS.

Fourthly, since the world is converging towards becoming a one village then a universal theory of action based on the precepts of both WAS and IAS becomes inevitable to study the 'Other' in relation to the 'I'.

I conclude this section by mentioning the fundamental criticisms leveled by the *Qur'an* at WAS: Firstly, that it is an action set founded on whims, and whims are synonymous with falsehood and opposite to truth: "Then have you ever considered the case of the person who made his Lust his god, and whom Allah has (there upon) let go astray knowing (that his mind is closed to all guidance) (45, 23), "Now, if they do not meet this demand of yours, you should know that they are in fact the followers of their own Lusts. And who could go farther astray than the one who follows his own Lusts without guidance from Allah" (28, 50), "And had the truth followed their Lusts the whole system of the heavens and the earth, and of all who dwell in them would have been corrupted" (23, 71), "And what would be expected of you, if you turn away from truth, but to spread corruption on earth and to sever your ties of kinship" (47, 22), "This, because

they who are bent on denying the truth pursue falsehood, whereas they who have attained to faith pursue the truth which has come from their lord" (47, 3).

Secondly, contradiction among individual preferences will be the norm, because whims are diverse and contradictory: "God sets forth a parable: A man who has for his masters several partners, all of them at variance with one another, and a man depending wholly on one person: Can these two be deemed equal as regards their condition" (39, 29).

Righteousness

The theory of rational choice as a theory of action has been the result of a philosophy of science steeped in the secular action set WAS. Our review of the theory in the previous section revealed the following essential elements of an action theory:

1. A set of beliefs and values which generates:
2. a set of ultimate goals which require for their implementation:
3. a feasible set of alternative intentional actions, the selection among which needs:
4. information about the situation, and:
5. information as to the probability that a particular outcome will ensue if a particular behaviour alternative is chosen. The processing of these information yields:
6. a set of expected outcomes of choice, from which, on the basis of an evaluation criterion, the one with the highest expected benefit is selected.

The set of goals is determined by the actor and the core of the theory concerns the calculation by the actor of the expected outcomes of his actions. The choice of particular actions that are supposed to reflect the preference orderings of the actor depends on these subjective calculations.

In what follows I will use the above framework to introduce, in brief, the Islamic theory of action as developed by classical Muslim scholars culminating in al Shatibi's momentous work of *'al*

Muwafaqat, particularly volumes one and two. My personal contribution here is to cast the theory within the framework of the MPC, and to show how the iman function, $I = F(G)$, developed within that framework, is a true mathematical summary of that classical Islamic theory of action.

The theory focuses mainly on the normative iman action set IAS. A substantial difference of approach will be seen to emerge, with, I believe, important consequences for theorizing about Islamic social sciences. All along I will talk about the righteous actor as against the concept of the rational actor in Western action theory, promising to give a rigorous definition of this concept at the end of the exposition.

Contrary to the Western theory of action, within the Islamic framework the set of beliefs and values and hence the set of goals are exogenously determined for the normative Muslim (righteous actor). The two fundamental axioms of belief characterizing IAS are: (a) Unicity of Allah, and (b) Man as servant and vicegerent of the One on earth. The only set of values consistent with this relationship is that of piety, consisting of fundamental elements like: patience, honesty, truthfulness, modesty, justice, mercy, asceticism, generosity, forgiveness... etc.

We have concluded that the maximization of iman (I) through the maximization of good deeds (G) $I = F(G)$, is the fundamental goal generated by the subset of beliefs and values in IAS. Iman (thankfulness) is the output that should be generated, maintained, and systematically increased by the righteous actor, through the interaction of the three inputs of the MPC, i.e. self(S), wealth(W), and children(C).

In classical Islamic literature the objective function, I, breaks down into a theory of goals grounded on its four variables, I, W, S, C, together with a fifth variable representing the cognitive faculties of the self, i.e. mind(R), and a theory of good (righteous) actions(G) resulting from the interaction of the goal variables. Thus for the sake of exposition we may reformulate the generalized iman function as follows:

$$(4) I = F(S, R, C, W)$$

Goals: Imam al Shatibi considers two types of goals; the goals of Allah (Legislator) from legislating the Shari'ah, and the goals of the righteous actor. Just as the maintenance of a certain level of any output requires the maintenance of a certain level of its inputs, so the maintenance of iman (I) requires the maintenance of its four inputs, S, R, C, W.

According to al Shatibi the maintenance of the generalized iman function, $I = F(S, R, C, W)$, is the fundamental goal of Allah (Legislator) from legislating Shari'ah. The Legislator also wants the righteous actor (normative Muslim) to make the maintenance of the iman function his fundamental goal in life. Imam al Shatibi calls the five variables, I, S, R, C, W, the 'five necessities' and calls their maintenance the 'original goal' of the Legislator from which all His other goals are derived. They are necessary because they represent the foundation of life on earth. Thus, for example, the extinction of any of the four inputs (S, R, C, W) means the extinction of life which renders the MPC nil and void. The extinction of iman (I) will necessarily lead to chaos in life on earth, and bring the wrath of God both in this world and in the hereafter. Hence the five wholes should be preserved, on the negative side, from extinction, and on the positive side, by erecting them on solid foundation.

Imam al Shatibi distinguishes three levels of goals by the Legislator:

1. The goals of necessities
2. The goals of needs
3. The goals of niceties

The goals of needs and niceties are derivative from the necessary goals. Because the latter serve absolute and most public interests the Legislator has not considered the immediate self-interest of the actor in setting them. The actor must fulfill the necessary goals regardless of his self-interest. On the other hand, the goals of needs and niceties are set to cater for the actor's immediate Lawful needs and ease of life. The goals of needs enable the actor to cater for those needs which, if unsatisfied, will in general make life hard and stressful, but the harm is not comparable to that due to the violation of the necessary goals. The goal of niceties calls for the actor to acquire and satisfy all the

good manners associated with righteousness in all domains of life. Thus, the goals of needs and niceties are complementary to those of necessities.

The necessary goals are of two types:

1. Those private goals whose liability is on the actor himself. Thus each actor must preserve his iman, his life, mind, children and wealth. If he opts for anything that contradicts the fulfillment of these necessities, then he should be prevented by Law. That is the meaning of saying that the immediate personal desires of the actor have been disregarded by the Legislator when setting these goals. However, such self-interest might be fulfilled as a by-product.
2. Those necessary goals of public nature whose liability falls on the community at large and which, if not fulfilled, life will come to a standstill and the private necessary goals will not be fulfilled.

Another important classification of the necessary goals considered by al Shatibi is according to the actor's immediate self-interest. They are of two types:

1. Those necessities, private or public, in which the actor has powerful immediate and Legitimate self-interest. Private necessities include providing for the biological needs of himself and his family, in addition to whatever is necessary as a means, e.g. work, buying and selling... etc. Public necessities include public office, judiciary... etc. The realization of such necessities is left by the Legislator to the personal drive of the individual, hence no emphasis on their fulfillment by Him. On the contrary, since there are no personal counter motives that halt the acquisitive tendencies of the actor towards those necessities, and therefore, excesses from his part may occur resulting in injury to himself and to others, it has been necessary for the Legislator to provide external deterrents against such excesses, in the form of penalties in this world and promise of hell fire in the hereafter. Yet they remain necessities and their satisfaction in essence is a must.

2. Those necessities, private or public, where the actor has no immediate self-interest, e.g. prayer, fasting, zakah... etc. Where there are private necessities in which the actor has no immediate motivation to carry them, the Legislator emphasized their

implementation as a must. Imam al Shatibi, then makes an important postulate on the basis of which he distinguishes between three ideal types of righteous actors. The postulate is the following: All the goals in which there are legitimate immediate benefits for the actor, e.g. consumption, production, sex... etc., can be cleared of these immediate self interests and the actions based on them can be purely for the sake of Allah (SWT). If these benefits are based on permission from Allah then the actor simply accepts the permission intending to take the benefits as a gift from Allah to His servant. If these benefits are based on a command, then the righteous actor simply obeys the command without an eye on the benefits ensuring from obeying the command. In both cases the righteous actor disregards his immediate personal interests.

Let us assume that a righteous actor, on the basis of the above postulate worked hard and acquired a considerable amount of wealth. The question then arises as to whether he is entitled to enjoy the legitimate personal benefits obtainable from his wealth? To answer this question Al Shatibi gave the position of three ideal types of righteous actors, with the first ranked higher in righteousness, followed by the second and third.

Ideal type (1): In this rank the righteous actor does not take anything resulting from his efforts for himself. In our example he considers all the wealth he acquired by his labor as the right of others. For, though his labor was the necessary means for the acquisition of wealth, still he sees such a wealth as purely a favor to him by Allah (SWT) and he is no more than an agent for distributing that wealth to its owners, without any particular benefits ensuing to him. According to al Shatibi this is the highest rank in which the actor saves nothing for himself. This is either because he disregards his self-interest so much so that he even forgets that he has a stake in that wealth, or, because of his absolute faith in the catering of Allah (SWT) for him, or simply because he disdains paying attention to his self-interest beside the right of his Lord. About these righteous actors Allah (SWT) said: "They love those who have migrated to them and entertain no desire in their hearts for what is given to them and prefer others above themselves even though they be needy themselves. The fact is that

those who are saved from the greed of their own hearts, are truly successful. (9, 59).

Ideal type (2): Here the righteous actor considers himself equivalent to the caretaker of an orphan's wealth, if he is in need he will spend from that wealth what is necessary to satisfy that need, but no more. If he is not in need he stops short of taking anything, obeying the injunctions of the Legislator in this regard. Otherwise, he manages his wealth just as the caretaker should manage the wealth in the interests of the orphan, spends where he should and withholds where he should withhold.

As in case (1) the righteous actor here too has dropped his self-interest and equated himself with the rest of his fellow Muslims, otherwise he would have favored himself in the use of his wealth, but he did not. According to al Shatibi in these two cases self-interest as a constraint has been removed, where in case (1) the actor gave priority to the interest of others over his, and in the second case the actor equated his self-interest with that of others. Such actors when they trade with others as sellers they go for the minimum profit or rent making the deal a gain for the customer rather than for themselves. Such actors, as sellers, give more than the necessary advice and information about commodities to their customers, because they consider themselves as agents for others not for themselves. In fact they see it as cheating to favor themselves over their customers.

Ideal type (3): Here, the righteous actor accepts the permission of the Legislator and takes the benefits allowed to him in his wealth, and shuns what is not allowed. He spends only on his necessities and needs.

Such an actor, compared to the first two, is acting on self-interest, but only because it has been allowed by the Legislator, not dictated by whims. His rank is lower than the other two, but still his actions satisfy the condition of good deeds, because they were in response to the permission of the Legislator and not to impulsive whims.

Imam al Shatibi moves on to make the following important *conclusion from which further important conclusions were derived:*

If an action is based on the goals of Shari'ah then it is either founded on the original necessary goals, i.e. preservation of iman, self, mind, children and wealth, or on other derivative goals.

If the righteous actor acted with the intention of serving all or some of the five wholes, his action is, no doubt, a good action whether he disregards or considers his self-interest. This is because the objectives of the actor are identical with the objectives of the Legislator.

The following principles of action then follow:

1. Aiming at the original goals in action makes these actions sincere worship, and distant from self-interest which tends to perturb pure worship. The upshot is that while the actor is simply acting upon the permission or command of the Legislator and fulfilling the original goals of His, he loses nothing of his mere self interest. As a matter of fact this is the best way of obtaining all the benefits which the Legislator considered in that action, benefits the actor knows and others he does not know.

Suppose that the righteous actor earned an income with the purpose of preserving human life as commanded in the original goals. The Legislator has made his own life his priority over other lives, so his self-interest is preserved in that income. The actor himself might have limited his purpose to preserving only his own life, or may be his family's life, but according to al Shatibi he would be better off if he extended his objective to include all lives that Allah (SWT) want to save. This is because by limiting himself to the narrower objective, he may miss many things intended by the Legislator, and he may spend his income where he has never intended, e.g. someone other than himself or his family. However, by intending the more general purpose of saving life, he has intended to save an uncountable number of lives with his limited income, and would have put his action and resources in the hands of the Omnipotent. This is a more sure worship and the rewards (hasn't) are far greater, and yet he misses none of his self-interest.

This is different from basing actions on the derivative goals, e.g. satisfying the actor's hunger or enjoying a permissible pleasure. For,

though such purposes are permissible, they are not worship and in general they are limited to immediate worldly self-interest.

2. Basing actions on the original goals transfers them in general to the domain of *wagib*, because the original goals revolve around the *wagib*, being concerned with the preservation of the five necessities. Thus such actions will be concerned with serving the general purposes of society, instead of being limited to private ones.

3. The actor by aiming at an original goal, he is in fact, directly or indirectly, aiming at all the consequences which the Legislator wanted from that action, getting utilities or avoiding disutilities. Since the purpose of the Legislator is the most general and most original and purely for the benefit of the actor, by so doing the actor is in fact maximizing his returns from his action.

4. Acting upon the original goals makes the rewards for obedience greater, and the penalties for disobedience equally greater. This is because the actor upon original goals is serving the interest of all God's creatures, while the actor whose actions are opposing the original goals is acting to bring general corruption.

In considering the goals of the righteous actor al Shatibi asserted that: Actions depend on intentions, and purposes are considered in human behaviour, being it '*ibadat*' or '*aadat*'. If an action is purposeful then Shari'ah injunctions are attached to it, otherwise not. Ordinary actions are not considered as a form of worship, nor will they be rewarded unless they are intended to obey the Legislator, otherwise they are bad deeds.

The Legislator wants the actor to make his purposes identical or consistent with His in making legislation. This is because Shari'ah has been legislated for the pure and most general benefits of humans, so the actor should seek his benefits from within its injunctions, and should not seek any goals other than those derivable from it. Furthermore, the actor has been created to worship God, and that could only mean obeying *Shari'ah* legislations. Also the Legislator is purposing to preserve the original necessities and what complements them from needs and niceties, and that is the essence of worship, so the actor must make them his goals.

Imam al Shatibi makes the following important principle from which further principles are derived:

Whoever seeks in *Shari'ah* injunctions other than what they have been legislated for, he has contradicted *Shari'ah*. Whoever contradicts *Shari'ah* his actions are nil and void.

An actor who carries or leaves an action has four conditions with respect to the purposes of the Legislator:

1. Both action and goal are consistent with those considered by the Legislator. In this case the deed is 'good'.
2. Both action and goal are inconsistent with those considered by the Legislator. In this case the deed is 'bad'.
3. The action is consistent with that prescribed by the Legislator, but the purpose of the actor from his action is intentionally different from that of the Legislator. This position branches into two different cases:

(a) He does not know that his action is consistent with that prescribed by the Legislator. Suppose that he decided to acquire money by stealing, only to discover that the stolen money was in fact his own money. As far as the actor's own right no harm was done and no benefits were missed. However, he faulted with respect to the rights of the Legislator with respect to his purpose, but not with respect to the action. Therefore he receives no rewards for that action, i.e. his iman function will not register any improvement.

(b) He knows that his action is consistent with that prescribed by the Legislator yet his purpose is different, e.g. he gives charity for the sake of manipulating the receiver. Such an actor has made the injunctions of *Shari'ah* a means to unlawful ends. Therefore the entire deed is bad and his iman function registers a negative effect.

4. The action is inconsistent but the purpose is consistent with the purpose of the Legislator. This also branches out into two cases:

(a) The actor knows that his action is inconsistent, which is the case of invention. Such a deed is also bad but of a lesser degree than in case (3), because of the possibility of good intentions from the part of the actor.

(b) The actor does not know that his action is inconsistent. Here, the dominant view is that not all his deed is bad in its totality, because deeds are based on intentions. This actor has the right purpose but his ignorance of the right action is the cause of disobedience, but it is an unintended disobedience. Therefore, he cannot be equal in disobedience with the other cases.

Another important proposition with important consequences is the following: A process of getting a legitimate utility or avoiding pain is of two types:

1. It does not result in injury to others. No problem arises with this action and it is permitted by the Legislator.
2. It will result in injury to others. This case has two aspects:

(a) The actor intends to inflict injury on others, e.g. lowering the price of his commodity to achieve greater sales, but also to drive other competitors out of the market.

The intention to harm others is not allowed, so if it is possible to find an alternative course of action to get the intended benefits without harming others, the actor should be prevented from his action since the only justification for it will be the desire to harm. If there is no alternative course of action then he should carry the action, but should not intend the injury for others, though the injury will take place. This is because, according to al Shatibi, the rights of the actor to secure his legitimate benefits or to fend injury has priority.

(b) He does not intend to harm others. Two situations emerge:

1. The injury is global, e.g. monopolizing a necessity and refusing to sell when the public is in need of it.

Two possible outcomes to this problem. He may be prevented but only by inflicting on him an injury which cannot be compensated for, e.g. loss of life or a limb. In this case his right should have absolute priority. However, if it is possible to compensate him for his injury then the public welfare should have priority. In this case the actor should be prevented from his intended action.

2. The injury is private, and also of two types:

(a) The actor knows that his action will bring injury to another person but he himself will be harmed if he doesn't act, e.g. buying a necessity knowing that by so doing somebody else will be deprived of it, but if others have it the actor will suffer.

In this case there are two perspectives, one on the assumption of affirming individual self-interest, the other by dropping it. On the basis of the first assumption the greater of legitimate benefits or fender of harm has priority over others even if his action will bring injury to them, because getting a benefit or fending a harm is a purpose for the Legislator. Hence, if the actor is the first to act then his rights over what he gets are established.

On the assumption that the actor drops his self-interest, then we have two cases, the first case is when the actor equates his self-interest with that of others. This kind of attitude is highly praised Islamically (the prophet's praise for the Asha'rites). In this case the actor sees his injury equal or less than that which will befall others from his action. So he will tolerate the injury to himself in return for fending it from others. This point of view is firmly grounded on Islamic ethics, where all the Muslims are one and the same: "The 'moumin' for the moumin is like a firm brick wall supporting each other," "The moumins are like a single body, if any part of it is ill the whole body collapses with fever in response," "The moumin loves for his moumin brother what he loves for himself" (all authentic Hadiths). Here 'moumin' = believer.

Such Islamic ethics will be meaningless unless actors have the above attitude with respect to self-interest. And, how could they be like a single body unless worldly benefits accrue to them on equal footing, just like the body, where each part takes from nourishment that amount necessary for it to function properly and in harmony with the rest of the body. This is an equitable distribution based on the need of each part, but not necessarily equal in amount.

The second case is that of altruism, where the actor trades his self-interest for that of others, relying on Allah (SWT), and bearing difficulties for the sake of helping a brother in faith. This is a type of highly praised and purified action which had been characteristic of the prophet (SAS), and also his companions. The *Qur'an* says about them: "And who feed, out of love for Allah, the poor and the orphan

and the captive” (76:8), “And prefer other above themselves even though they be needy themselves” (59:9).

Altruism is based on dropping immediate worldly pleasures, and the tolerance for the consequent harm is allowed unless it threatens any of the original goals (iman, self, mind, children, wealth). If the latter is a real possibility then the action is no longer a good one.

(b) He suffers no injury, and it is also of three different types:

1. Where the injury to others is certain. In this case the actor should be prevented, and if he carries his action he should be treated as transgressor and should compensate for the injury. However, he will not be considered as purposing to harm, unless there is conclusive evidence.

2. Where the injury is rare in occurrence. This action remains permissible since the Legislator does not consider a rare disutility against a dominant utility even if the actor knows the possibility of injury.

3. Where the injury is frequent in occurrence. The issue depends on the probability of occurrence, but the general conclusion of al Shatibi seems to be that since the actor intends no harm then he should be permitted to pursue his interest if the probability of injury is relatively low, and should be prevented if it is relatively high.

How do we know the goals of the Legislator? Imam al Shatibi concluded his theory of goals by trying to give criteria by which to know the goals of the Legislator. These are the following:

1. The primarily declared imperative of ‘do’ and ‘don’t’. Where the Legislator gives a clear imperative of ‘do’, then it is known that He intends that action to be carried into effect. The same is true with respect to the imperative ‘don’t’.

2. Consideration of the reason behind the imperatives. The reasons either known or unknown. If it is known then it should be followed, for wherever it is found the imperative holds. On the other hand if it is not known, then we should stop from imputing any goals to the Legislator.

3. The Legislator has original goals and others derived from the former. The derivative goals complement and help to realize the

original ones. Some of these secondary goals are clearly stated and known, others are not. Thus we draw the general conclusion that whatever helps to realize the original goals falls within the purposes of the Legislator.

4. The silence of the Legislator over an issue when there is a reason for legislating. This silence of two types:

a. Silence due to the fact that the issue for which legislation is due was nonexistent during the lifetime of the prophet (SAS). In this case it is for Muslim ulama to see where the issue fits within the general purposes of Shari'ah.

b. If an issue was outstanding during revelation but the Legislator was silent about it, then we should understand that He wants it to be treated as it used to be treated, no more no less.

Action: All purposeful human action has implications for the immediate worldly utility and disutility of the actor, as well as his postponed utility and disutility of the hereafter. There is no one to one correspondence between these two calculi of gains and losses. All such purposeful action can be analyzed, therefore, at either of these two levels, i.e. either in terms of worldly utility function, or in terms of the iman function - the calculus of 'hasanat' and 'saiy'at'.

The first approach is the one adopted by the Western theory of action, the latter has invariably been the approach of the Muslim scholars dealing with the Islamic approach to human action. The Islamic approach, given the nature of the MPC, is superior to the Western methodology, for the following reasons:

Firstly, the welfare of the actor in the hereafter (akhirah), like his worldly welfare, is a direct function of his worldly actions. But the welfare of 'akhirah' must always take precedence over the welfare of this world. Since the effects of worldly actions on 'akhirah' welfare depends on the amount of 'hasant' and 'saiy'at' earned by the actor on his actions, it follows that the iman function is the appropriate tool of analysis for an Islamic theory of action.

Secondly, an action undertaken according to the imperatives or permission of the Legislator does not deprive the actor from getting his legitimate mundane utility from that action. On the contrary, as al Shatibi stated, this is the best way for the actor to ensure the

maximum utility from his action. In general, this is because *Shari'ah* 'ahkam' are designed to bring the benefits of both worlds to the actor, and fend of him their harm. Therefore, analyzing action through the iman function may enable us to handle the welfare of the individual in both worlds simultaneously. On the other hand, the analysis of action in terms of the utility function ignores the implications of those actions for the welfare of the individual in the hereafter. The Qur'an puts these contrasting epistemes in the following manner: "whosoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, provided that he is a believer, we will surely make him live a good life in this world, and in the hereafter we will reward such people according to their best deeds" (97:16), "Leave them alone to eat, drink and be merry and to be deluded by false hopes. They will soon realize it" (15:3).

Thirdly, since (1) is defined over good deeds (G) in everyday worldly affairs, it is always possible to identify worldly goals in different domains of life implied by the level of the iman function, e.g. the goal of minimum profit for ideal types (1) and (2) as sellers in al Shatibi's theory of goals mentioned earlier. Or the goal of satisfying basic needs as the ceiling of consumption demand for all three ideal types of al Shatibi as righteous consumers.

All purposeful human action whether on the domain of 'ibadat' or 'adiat' (worldly affairs) is subject to Shari'ah 'ahkam'. The imperative ahkam of Shari'ah are five: 'wagib', 'mandoob', 'mubah', 'makrooh' and 'haram'. The actions associated with these ahkam result from the interaction of the three inputs of the MPC that define the iman function, i.e. self (S), wealth (W) and children (C). The human self can be subdivided into its two fundamental Quranic components, namely, reason and whims. The concept reason in the Qur'an over and above the mere cognitive faculties of the self, describes the ability of the self to observe, listen, understand and assimilate the message of God from revelation and from the universe (W, C), and as a consequence its actions are accordingly harnessed. Thus, we can redefine the iman function as:

$$(5) \quad 1 - F\{S(R), W(R), C(R), R\}$$

Where (R) stands for reason or knowledge. In the initial stage (R) represents the epistemic knowledge of the Qur'an and therefore it is

exogenous. However, when the righteous Muslim experiences the world from the domain of (R), (W) and (C) will become a source of ontic knowledge which enhances R in a circular causation interaction. Thus we have:

$$(6) R = F\{W(R), C(R)\}, F_w > 0, F_c > 0$$

The human self (S) is a function of (R) and (H), where (H) stands for whims or de-knowledge.

$$(7) S = F\{R, H\}, F_R > 0, F_H < 0$$

The effect of an increase in (H) on (S) is always negative, in the sense of drawing it away from good deeds, and hence away from the iman action set (IAS), and towards bad deeds, and hence towards the pleasure action set (WAS), i.e.

$$\frac{ds}{dH} \rightarrow U,$$

The effect of an increase in (R) on (S) is always positive in the opposite sense to that of (H), i.e. $\frac{ds}{dR} \rightarrow 1$, Thus we have $\frac{ds}{dR} > 0$.

The variable (H) stands for the degree by which the self (S) is drawn to worldly pleasures (W,C). The greater the indulgence of the self on worldly pleasures the greater will be its attachment to the allurements of this world. Thus we have:

$$(8) H = F\{W, C\}, F_w > 0, F_c > 0$$

Since we have redefined the objective function $1 - F(G)$ of IAS let us redefine the objective function of WAS which is $U = F(B)$ as follows:

$$(9) U = F\{S(H), W(H), C(H), H\}$$

The variable (R) and (H) define the functional form of the objective functions I and U. Thus when (S) interacts with (W) and (C) from the perspective of (R) the resulting actions are called "wagib" and "mandoob." Only wagib and mandoob are good deeds because they are the only actions for which the Legislator rewards 'hasanat' to the actor. This is so because they are the only actions which realize the three-level goals of the Legislator, i.e. necessities, needs and niceties. Since the subset of actions in IAS consists entirely of good

deeds, it follows that it consists entirely of *wagib* and *mandooob* only. The function $I(G)$ registers a positive effect from the actions of *wagib* and *mandooob*.

When the interaction of S , W and C , takes place from the perspective of H , the resulting actions are called *makrooh* and *haram*. They are the only bad deeds because the Legislator either reward the actor no *hasanat* or give *sayy'at* for them. *Makrooh* and *haram* are the only actions responsible for undermining the three-level goal of the Legislator. Since the subset of actions in the whimsical action set (WAS) consists only of bad deeds, it follows that it consists of *makrooh* and *haram* only. This leaves us with the problem of *mubah*, i.e. to which action set does it belong? Since it does not belong to either IAS or WAS, there remains only the positive action set (PAS). But we have already defined PAS as the union of IAS and WAS, so it consists only of their elements which do not include *mubah*. Leaving this problem for a moment, if we define a *sayy'at* function as the negative of the *hasanat* function, then the *iman* function will register a negative effect from the *makrooh* and *haram* actions. These positive and negative effects on I are confirmed by the *Qur'an* and authentic hadith that *iman* increases with good deeds and decreases with bad deeds.

The problem of *mubah*, as stated above, has been solved by Imam al Shatibi in a penetrating analyses that divided 'mubah' into partial and total. According to al Shatibi *mubah* by itself is an action about which the Legislator is neutral, i.e. He neither persuades nor dissuades an actor from doing it. Hence 'mubah' is an action that earns no *hasanat* or *sayy'at* for the actor, and he is free to do it or not to do it. However, the actor will have to account for whether he has met the conditions of thankfulness for undertaking a bounty of God.

The claim that righteous Muslims in the past used to give up 'mubah' in order to be rewarded for that by the Legislator had been disputed by al Shatibi. He did not dispute the fact that they used to give up 'mubah', but whether they used to do so because it is 'mubah'. He attributed this abstention to external factors, particularly the high opportunity cost of undertaking it in terms of the many good deeds that could be undertaken in its place. Also, because 'mubah' is never neutral regarding the good or bad deeds a Muslim undertakes, so some

people give up *mubah* because of its negative influence on their ability to perform good deeds. Furthermore, some righteous Muslims drop their self-interest and transform *mubah* into 'mandoob' or 'wagib' for the sake of worship, e.g. if one desires an apple then he will wait until it becomes necessary for him to eat to gather strength for worship, then he eats the apple, where his eating turns into 'ibadah'.

According to al Shatibi *mubah* is of two types; one, the *mubah* that serve the three-level goals of the Legislator (necessaries, needs, niceties). In this case *mubah* will only be partially so, but at the aggregate it will be either *wagib* or *mandoob*, e.g. eating from the lawful and good is partially *mubah* but in general it is *wagib* since it serves the preservation of life which is a necessary.

The other type of *mubah* is that which undermines the three-level goals, e.g. divorce, or play and amusement and pure leisure, which though partially *mubah* but in general they are *makrooh*.

Thus, according to al Shatibi, every *mubah* is only partially so, but in aggregate it is either required to be done as *wagib* and 'mandoob' or forbidden as *makrooh* or *haram*. Only in the first type of *mubah* that the Legislator has given true optionality to the actor. As for the second type, according to al Shatibi, there is not a single statement in *Shari'ah* that implies optionality for the actor. Either the Legislator is silent about it, or gives a statement that clearly indicates its non-optionality, e.g. calling this world (*dunya*) play and amusement as a sign of disdain, which implies that play and amusement is not optional for the actor. However, when such actions take place the Legislator says there is no blame or hardship upon the actor. Thus if the Legislator said about a committed action no blame or hardship, we should not deduce that this action is *mubah*, for it may be so, and it may be *makrooh*, from which blame is also removed if it took place.

According to al Shatibi, since an optional action is but a *mubah* that serve the goals of the Legislator then it should be associated with *wagib* and *mandoob* even though the actor may be considering only his immediate self-interest, e.g. eating from the lawful and good, love between spouses. In all these *mubah* actions the Legislator rewards *hasanat* to the actor, which, according to our definitions, are rewarded either as *wagib* or *mandoob*. Hence they turn into good

deeds and therefore belong to the iman set (IAS). For our purpose, we consider all actions which are partially mubah but in totality are either makrooh or haram as bad deeds and belong to the whimsical action set (WAS). About such actions the Legislator is either discouraging or silent, and only out of sheer whims that an actor undertakes them.

Action and Outcomes: In our review of the rational choice perspective we have seen how central the calculation of the expected outcomes of actions are to the choice of actions. It is also true that the most difficult part of the process relates to the abilities of actors to gather the appropriate information about the situation and about future course of events, and the ability to process this information such that the diverse expected outcomes of each action are calculated. The actor's full attention concentrates on these expected outcomes and their effect on his present choices and on his future preferences.

In what follows we will consider how the Muslim scholars, represented by al Shatibi, viewed the relationship between actions and their outcomes. I will give only a brief summary of the most outstanding issues because they reveal an opposite approach to that adopted by Western scholars in RCT.

Imam al Shatibi discusses the issue of actions and their outcomes within the general framework of cause and effect. Causes are so because of the consequences that follow from them. Actions as causes generate outcomes consequent upon them. Intending an action means intending its outcomes. 'Shari'ah ahkam' are put by the Legislator to bring benefits and fend harm from the actor which are the outcomes of these 'ahkam'. Thus, by putting these 'ahkam' the Legislator has as a purpose their outcomes.

However, outcomes in relation to their causes (actions) are of two types:

1. Outcomes which it is known or conjectured that the actions generated them have been legislated by Allah (SWT) as legitimate causes for their acquisition. These outcomes concern either the original goals of Shari'ah or the secondary goals. In this case it is legitimate for the actor to undertake these actions as means to these outcomes.

2. Outcomes which it is known or conjectured that the actions generated them have not been put by the Legislator as legitimate means for them. These outcomes concern benefits that sometimes follow from actions in violation of the imperative 'don't' of the Legislator, and harm that sometimes follow from obeying. His imperative 'do'. Neither of these benefits or harm are intended by the Legislator and the actor should not use these actions as means to these outcomes. In fact these benefits and harm are consequences for causes other than the actions they seem to follow from.

According to al Shatibi, though it is an inductive truth that consequences follow from their causes, it is also true that this relationship may break down and consequences never follow from their causes. This is because God, the Creator of both cause and effect has the power to neutralize the impact of the cause on the effect. Thus the outcomes of an action are under the control of the Legislator not the actor. The actor is capable only of bringing his action into existence because it is under his control and is empowered by God to do so, but he has no power to make the outcomes of his action materialize.

Thus the imperatives of the Legislator in terms of 'do' and 'don't' are limited to the actions of the actor, and do not extend to their outcomes. The righteous actor in obeying the imperatives of the Legislator need not consider the outcomes of his actions, nor purposing them. What is expected of him is to act according to 'Shari'ah ahkam', no more. This is so because of the following reasons:

1. Outcomes of action are not within the reach of the actor, therefore concentrating on what is within his reach (his action) is the right thing to do, and what is required of him.

2. Some necessities of 'Shari'ah' (public office) include immediate self-interest for the actor, and paying attention to these outcomes by the actor nullifies his quest for them: (We do not give responsibility for this matter to someone who asks for it) (hadith). Even mubah like wealth becomes not so if in acquiring it the actor's attention is drawn to the worldly pleasures he expects to gain from such wealth.

The point here is that paying attention to the outcomes of action may even cause harm to the actor, so it is better not to pay attention to them. After all their materialization is not to him but to God.

3. True worshippers of Islam have always worked hard to clear their actions from personal self-interest, and considered the liking of the self for some good deeds as some of its pitfalls. Accordingly, they made a general rule of choice between competing good deeds, which is to choose that action cause on the effect. Thus the outcomes of an action are under the control of the Legislator not the actor. The actor is capable only of bringing his action into existence because it is under his control and is empowered by God to do so, but he has no power to make the outcomes of his action materialize.

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is to choose that action in which the self has no interest, or the one which is heavier for the self to carry.

According to al Shatibi these people are the authority of Islam when it comes to action, therefore, their attitude is an evidence against consideration of outcomes in action. The actor who knows that the outcomes of his action are beyond his reach, so he concentrates his attention to perfecting his action as a means to those expected outcomes, will be closer to sincerity and reliance on the One in whose hands those outcomes are. The following points are reasoned by al Shatibi to support his argument.

Firstly, an actor who obeys the imperatives of the Legislator in his actions without paying attention to anything else, is disregarding his self-interest, and is fully attending to the rights of his Lord, and standing before Him in servitude. This is different from if his attention is fully drawn to the outcomes of his action, where his relationship with Allah (SWT) comes through the cause and its effects.

Secondly, the actor who knows that the outcomes of his action are beyond his reach will always look with his heart to the One in whose hands the means and results. This is a state of reliance and delegation whether in 'ibadat' or worldly affairs. This is different from if he is in waiting for the outcome to follow from his action, for, being in haste for the outcome he may not complete the action, thus undermining his entire enterprise.

Thirdly, the actor who limits his attention to perfecting his actions as a form of worship, knowing that he is under constant surveillance from Allah (SWT), cannot afford but to wait in patience within the imperatives of the Legislator. If the outcomes materialized he will be the most thankful because he sees no significant relationship between his action and the outcome. This is different from if his attention is fully drawn towards the outcome to follow from his action. For, if the outcome followed he would be happy, if it did not he would not feel pleased with Allah (SWT), and he might despair and give up the means.

Fourthly, the actor who disregards the outcome concentrates on perfecting his action as the Legislator wants it to be. If, however, he

acted with an eye on the outcome he may not do justice to the action as a means and as a form of worship. He may neglect some aspects of it without being aware of that, or he may be aware but headless, and this is the origin, according to al Shatibi, of all bad deeds, e.g. cheating in trade in haste for profit, or for clearance of his stock of goods ... etc.

Fifthly, the actor who limits his attention to his action, leaving the outcome to Allah (SWT), is at peace with himself, his heart is empty of worldly troubles, and always aiming at one direction. On the contrary, if outcomes are always in attendance, then he will have to look into all possible consequences of each of his actions, which is tiring and distracting. Furthermore, since consequences may or may not follow, and if they follow they may not be exactly as expected, and may even be opposite to what is expected, the actor will be in constant distress and ill at heart about his actions and whether they have been good enough.

Though, in discussing the relationship between actions and outcomes, al Shatibi is strongly in favor of the actor not to consider or even pay attention to the outcomes of his actions, yet in his theory of goals he stated that the Legislator wants the actor to make his goals identical with His. This means the Legislator wants the actor to consider and pay attention to these goals as outcomes when undertaking an action. This seeming conflict is resolved when we realize that al Shatibi distinguishes between those outcomes that serve the worldly pleasures of the actor and outcomes that serve the purposes of the Legislator, particularly the original goals (necessaries). Concentrating attention on the first type of outcomes will undermine the second type of outcomes, the latter being more fundamental for the welfare of the actor in this world and in the hereafter.

In general, people who pay attention to outcomes enter actions as means from the following three perspectives, the third being highest in rank:

1. Action as the sole cause of its consequences. This is a state of shirk.
2. Action is not the cause of outcomes, but by inductive association, such outcomes are expected to be found whenever these

actions take place. Both action and outcome are the result of Allah's power, and He can separate them if He wishes. This position, though acceptable, however, there is the fear that too much attention might be given to the action as the cause of the outcome until the Original Cause is forgotten. According to al Shatibi this is the general state of humanity in entering actions.

3. Outcomes as resulting truly from Allah (SWT), and no attention is paid to actions as causes.

According to al Shatibi the actor may regard those outcomes, that serve his worldly interests in the following broad manner: For example, you are asked why do you work? You answer, because I want to provide for my family's needs. Such general worldly purposes are acceptable as outcomes to be considered in undertaking an action, because they are consistent with the goals of the Legislator. The actor is simply undertaking an action in the hope that Allah (SWT) will reward his efforts by an income that will enable him to cater for his needs, not attributing such income to his action.

An ideal state described by al Shatibi which combines the best of those who pay attention and those who disregard outcomes is one in which the actor enters into actions as legitimate means and permitted by the Legislator, and have outcomes the realization of which is in His hands. These actions are but a test for the actor to see his deeds. He intends from his actions the outcomes intended by the Legislator, both the ones he knows and those which he does not know.

Imam al Shatibi gives weight to considering those outcomes that affect the actor's iman function. These are *ex post* and *ex ante* outcomes. *Ex ante* consideration of outcomes is needed in order for the actor to assess the consequences of his deeds in terms of their return from 'hasanat' and 'sayyat'. *Ex post* consideration is necessary to see if the outcome is as expected from the action, given the fact that actions put by the Legislator as causes are expected to generate their intended effects. If the outcome turns out to be different from the one intended by the Legislator, this means that something is wrong with the action. According to al Shatibi this is a golden rule to gauge whether actions are consistent with 'Shari'ah ahkam' or not.

Finally, and remembering that the analyses are carried throughout according to 'good' and 'bad' action in relation to the goals of Shari'ah, al Shatibi gives the following rule to judge the situations in which paying attention to the outcome is positive and those in which paying attention is negative:

If paying attention to the outcome strengthens the action and encourages the actor to complete and perfect it, then it is positive. If, on the other hand, paying attention weakens the action, nullifies it, or makes the actor heedless then it is negative.

Who Is The Righteous Actor?

Having presented an Islamic theory of action for the righteous actor in the iman action set IAS, we are in a position now to suggest a definition for the righteous actor as against a rational actor.

An actor is righteous if and only if:

1. His fundamental goals in life are identical to the original goals of Shari'ah.

2. His actions are considered by the Legislator as legitimate and most appropriate as means for the realization of his fundamental goals.

The mathematical condition is: $\frac{ds}{dH} = 0$

The space and time for this paper do not allow us to elaborate on the various implications of this definition, but we invite other scholars to investigate the viability of this concept of righteousness as a benchmark for the normative Muslim, and if any further axioms need to be added to the above ones.

It is obvious that our righteous actor is either a maximizer or simulator - depending on the meaning of the Qur'anic concepts of of

$$I = F\{S(R), C(R), W(R), R\}$$

On the other hand, the rational actor in WAS is either a maximizer or simulator - depending on the meaning we attach to the Qur'anic concept of (Takathur) - of:

$$U = F\{S(H), C(H), W(H), H\}$$

In the initial stage of interaction, the variable of whims (H) is exogenous to both (W) and (C) since its essence is innate to the human self according to the Qur'an. However, once the interaction starts, (H) becomes a function of (C) and (W), and a circular causation interaction ensues between these three variables.

To complete the model we specify the two functions of (C) and (W) as follows:

$$(10) C = F\{R, H, W\}, F_R > 0, F_{RR'} < 0, F_H > 0, F_{HH} > 0, \\ F_W > 0, F_{WW} > 0$$

The effects of the knowledge variable (R) on the worldly pleasures represented by (C) is to increase the demand up to the level of needs, but beyond that the demand will taper off, partly because wisdom requires so and partly because of Shari'ah constraints.

The secularizing effects of both (W) and (H) are so overpowering as to justify the positive sign of the second derivative.

$$(11) W = F\{R, H\} F_R > 0, F_{RR} < 0, F_H > 0, F_{HH} > 0.$$

The justification given for the signs of the derivatives in equation (10) is applicable in this equation too.

Methodological Implications for Islamic Economics

The previous analyses showed the possibility of constructing a universal Islamic economic science founded on the *Qur'anic* view of social reality. The pillars of this universality will be the two distinct action sets, IAS, which stands for truth and knowledge, and WAS, which stands for falsehood and ignorance. IAS will give rise to a theory of economics grounded on the values of piety (taqwa) and its empirical justification is grounded on economic phenomena resulting from actions whose motives emanate from the domain of taqwa in the human self. WAS, on the other hand, will give rise to a theory of economics grounded on the values of debauchery (fujoor) and its empirical justification is grounded on economic phenomena resulting from actions whose motives emanate from the domain of fujoor in the human self.

It is obvious that in developing a normative economic theory based on the precepts of IAS all the key behavioral variables must represent behaviour which is either wagib or mandoob. On the basis

of this methodology, elsewhere¹¹, the present author subjected the behaviour of personal saving, which is a key variable in Western economic theory, to a rigorous analysis on the basis of the theory of action developed in the previous section. The conclusion has been that personal saving is at best partially *mubah* but in totality, i.e. if the individual all his life saves whatever income in excess of his consumption, or all members of an Islamic society save of their incomes what is in excess of their consumption, either *haram* or *makrooh*. This conclusion is based on examining the action of personal saving both from the perspective of Islamic ethics and from examining the effects of personal saving on a full employment economy. It has been found that usury would hardly exist in the absence of personal saving, and that every money usurer is necessarily a saver, though the opposite is not true. This means that, if these conclusions are accepted, personal saving could not be a key variable in any normative Islamic economic theory, nor could it be a good action in an Islamic economic system, which means no financial institutions should be based on it, or erected to promote it.

In real-life situations both IAS and WAS will always be in action in an Islamic economy, and their forces are so intertwined within the individual actor or society as to make it extremely difficult, except in the most obvious cases, to distinguish between the economic phenomena emanating from each one of them. For example, if we see a prosperous Islamic society, then we may ask whether this prosperity is due to the 'good' deeds the economic agents have been doing so that Allah (SWT) has rewarded them for being thankful: "If you be thankful I will increase my favors on you" (14, 7), or is it a trap set by Him for their 'bad' deeds and their ingratitude: "Do they think that, by continuing to provide them with wealth and children, We are solicitous for their welfare? Nay, they do not understand the reality of the matter" (23, 56). Inflation could result from the greed of Muslim businessmen, or consumerism of Muslim households. Shortage of food supply could result from the greed of Muslim producers who smuggle goods, across the borders where prices are higher. All such phenomena in an Islamic economy could not be explained by any economic theory premised on the precepts of IAS. The same businessman may be observed giving charity and *zakah*, building schools and hospitals, but also giving bribes to civil servants

for commercial favors, and hoarding a necessary to raise its price. If all or most of businessmen in the society are doing the same then we will observe macro phenomena that need to be explained by resorting to theories derived from IAS and WAS.

The above reasoning establishes the importance of the positive action set PAS as the focus of theorizing because it is the union of IAS and WAS. We may formulate the general function (Q) that describes the actions of the ordinary (positive) Muslim, represented by PAS, as follows:

$$(12) Q = F\{S(R,H), C(R,H,W), W(R,H), R,H\}$$

This is in fact, according to our understanding of the *Qur'an*, the general function that explains all the conscious action of man.

The fact that PAS consists of inconsistent elements which are responsible, in real-life situation, for opposing psychological tendencies within the individual and opposing social forces within the society, should draw our attention to the usefulness of developing a methodology of conflict based on the notions of truth and falsehood as represented by IAS and WAS respectively. The soundness of this dialectical methodology may be seen from the following:

Firstly, the challenge for Islamic socio-economic development is going to be how could IAS assert itself over WAS as the framework for such development, i.e. how could IAS dominate the positive action set PAS as against WAS. The internal forces of the dynamics of social change in an Islamic society will be the pull secularizing forces of WAS exerted upon PAS as against the push spiritualizing forces of IAS. The most powerful secularizing pull force is "wealth" through its corrosive effect on the pure spirit of religion. This is exactly the irony of the MPC where the very goal of "wealth" which we struggle to create and preserve as a religious duty bears its antithesis of becoming a religious nightmare resulting into a synthesis of secularism rather than spiritualism. I am afraid that throughout history, as the *Qur'an* tells us, the secularizing pull forces of "wealth" and "children" have always had the upper hand over their spiritualizing push forces, with few exceptions of course. Even within the experience of Islam the reign of IAS was short-lived and has been superseded by the reign of WAS until this day. The form of religion

remained but the spirit disappeared almost completely. Why should our methodology and theory then concentrate solely on the forces of harmony within IAS, when the latter itself is the exception rather than the norm. I think a good deal of attention should be given to the dialectics between IAS and WAS.

Secondly, the external secularizing effects that tend to have a strong drag on the dynamics of positive change towards IAS come from those socio-economic systems that have been completely founded on the precepts of WAS, e.g. Western capitalism. The challenge of WAS to IAS here is almost completely played on the economic plain. The colossal economic success of WAS through capitalism and the unavoidable relationship between these economies and any economic system to be erected on the precepts of IAS in modern times, makes it important to study the nature of this dialectical relationship so as to neutralize if not to reverse the domineering negative effects these economies will have on an economy of IAS. The problem is that the external and internal pull forces of WAS tend to strengthen each other, so it is an uphill struggle for IAS.

Another methodological issue, not far removed from the above, concerns the knowledge of Shari'ah imputed to the economic agent in IAS. IAS is a set of complete knowledge and total commitment from the part of the actor to Shari'ah tenets, i.e. all its economic agents are learned and righteous. However, the real-world Muslim in the market as represented by PAS, is more or less ignorant of this necessary knowledge. How then are we going to transmit this necessary knowledge from IAS to PAS such that a process of transformation towards IAS or upwards within it can take place, given the above mentioned dialectical relationship between the pull and push forces of WAS and IAS? These issues might be conveniently discussed within the framework of the theory of political economy suggested by Professor Choudhury.¹²

Further Methodological Complications

A methodological complication, which we cannot ignore, results from the way the Qu'ran and Sunnah explain the good and bad fortunes that befall man. Invariably revelation explains such social phenomena in terms of thankfulness and unthankfulness of man in

the use of Allah's (SWT) bounties on earth. The general law that govern this mode of explanation is the following: "If you be thankful I will increase My favors on you, and if you be unthankful my chastisement is severe indeed" (14, 7).

The best example to make our point comes from the Qur'an in the Chapter, of Saba (34, 15-17): "For Saba there was a sign in their own dwelling place: two gardens, on the right and on the left. Eat of the provisions of your Lord and be thankful to Him: Pure and pleasant is the land and Forgiving the Lord. But they turned away. Consequently, we sent upon them a flood due to bursting of the dam and replaced their two gardens by two other gardens producing bitter fruits and tamarisks and a few lote bushes. That was our retribution for their unthankfulness, and we recompense none with such retribution except the ungrateful.

And We had made between them and the habitations, which we had blessed, (other) conspicuous habitations and set between them their travelling distances: "Travel on these ways night and day in complete security." But they said, "Our Lord, make our journey longer." They wronged their own selves. Consequently, we made them mere legends, and scattered them utterly. Surely there are Signs in this for every patient and grateful person."

The phenomena these verses cover extend from ecological and agricultural changes to economic and demographic disasters. They are all contemporary phenomena that besiege our world, but the explanation of the Qur'an for their causes is very different from any explanation could be offered by a contemporary methodology of science. Thus after all that could be said and done by scientists, physical and social, the Qur'an tells us that unless the conditions for thankfulness are being met, we should not expect these disasters to disappear, or for a good life on earth to be realized.

The methodological question is that the methodology of Revelation gives us a mode of explanation in which many of these metaphysical laws are permanently intertwined with human action, and their positive or negative effects span all aspects of social phenomena, and unless we recognize them, our explanation of these phenomena will be permanently flawed. How are we going to

integrate this Qur'anic metaphysical mode of explanation with that of economics, which is basically physical.¹³

Notes

1. I am greatly indebted to Professor M. Choudhury for a thorough comments on the first draft of this paper which proved most valuable for this revised version.

2. See Biraima, M. (1991).

3. See Ibn al Gay'im at Gawziah: Madarig al Salikeen.

4. See the author's book in Arabic: knowledge between the Islamic and Secular Model: A Critical Comparative Study (1995-a).

5. For some guiding principles see Dr Louay Safi, The Foundation of Knowledge, IIIT & IIUM (1996).

6. For the Shuratic methodology in knowledge formation see Dr Hasan al Turabi, "Tagdeed al Fikr al Islami" in Ghadaya al Tagdeed; Nahwa Minhag Isuli, Institute for Research and Social Studies, Khartoum (1995). See also Choudhury, M. (1992, 1995).

7. See al Shatibi: al Muwafagat.

8. See Coleman, J. (1989).

9. See Esser, H. (1993).

10. See Smelser, N. (1992).

11. See Biraima, M. (1995-b) and (1996) in arabic.

12. See Choudhury, M. (1990).

13. See Biraima, M. (1995-a).

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