

Behavioral Science Foundations of Organization Development: A Critique from the Islamic Perspective

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This article seeks to advance an Islamic perspective on Organization Development. Arguing that OD interventions not only seek to institute planned change within organizations, but also change individuals, cultures and societies, the authors suggest that OD interventions can become useful tools for bringing about comprehensive development in society. The authors advance an Islamic perspective on OD in the hope of transforming Muslim organizations and precipitate comprehensive development of Muslim societies.

This article addresses one of the most compelling questions facing organizations in Muslim countries: how to improve effectiveness without violating Shari'ah guidelines in rapidly changing contemporary environments. In particular, it examines whether the behavioral science foundations of organization development (OD) are relevant in the Islamic context.

The study is organized as follows: the first section briefly reviews Western literature on OD. This section presents the contributions of various behavioral sciences to the development of a coherent body of knowledge in the area of OD and provides a framework that can be used to critique it against the backdrop of the Islamic worldview.

The second section, "OD and Comprehensive Development of Society," highlights the significance of OD in bringing about comprehensive social

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development. Two main approaches are reviewed in this context. First, based on a systems approach, we argue that OD interventions seek to transform individuals, organizations, and indeed the entire society. The second — and in our view the most fruitful — approach to making use of OD for comprehensive development is to focus on all organizational factors that link social structure, economic ideology, political attitudes, and behavior.

The third section, “OD: A Critique from the Islamic Perspective,” attempts a critique of OD’s foundations in behavioral science from the Islamic perspective. It also describes the state of affairs in Muslim societies and highlights Islamic teachings that are most relevant for OD.

In the final section, “Islam and OD,” we suggest a strategy to transform the present organizational structures so as to make them conducive to bringing about a comprehensive development of Muslim societies.

Behavioral Science Foundations of OD: A Review

A remarkable transformation in prevailing views about how organizations can improve their effectiveness has occurred in recent decades. *Organization development* is defined as a top management-supported, long-range effort to improve an organization’s problem-solving renewal processes, particularly through more effective and collaborative diagnosis and management of organization culture, with special emphasis on formal work team, temporary work team, and intergroup culture — using the assistance of a consultant facilitator and the theory and technology of applied behavioral science, including action research.¹

Unlike many of the approaches of planned change for solving immediate and specific problems, OD is a longer term, more encompassing and complex approach to moving the organization to a higher level of functioning while greatly improving its members’ performance and well-being given changing problems and opportunities. Although OD frequently includes structural and technological changes, its primary focus is on changing people and the nature and quality of their working relationships. OD ought to be a top management-supported effort. Therefore, leaders’ awareness of change and renewal is necessary for its success. Subsequent to this felt need comes effective and collaborative diagnosis of management culture. Greater subordinate involvement in decision making toward effective teamwork is acknowledged as an important ingredient of modern participatory management.

OD has come to occupy commanding heights in behavioral science literature as theorists and practitioners appear to be unflinching in their zest to design strategies to improve organizational effectiveness in various parts of the world. Interestingly, OD now represents the finer points of applied behavioral sciences. In fact, the foundations of OD are an amalgam of interpretative contributions made by some of the best known behavioral scientists in areas like psychology, social anthropology, sociology, psychiatry, economics, and political science.

What makes OD distinct from other treatments of organizations is an interdisciplinary view of what transforms the organization in question. Three different approaches to the question of bringing about change in an organization are presented in this section, along with their respective contributions to OD: (1) the individual approach to change; (2) the T-Group, or laboratory training; and (3) the Survey Research and Feedback system. The approaches eventually get integrated into the OD techniques.

The Individual Approach to Change

At the individual level, OD change actions assume that individuals have a natural desire for personal development and growth and are able and willing to put in greater efforts for the organization's improvement. Therefore, OD practitioners attempt to overcome organizational factors that retard or prevent personal growth.

Economists were the first professional group to propound a specific theory of human behavior in economic organizations. The theory holds that individuals make "rational" decisions based on available information. They prefer choices that are likely to improve their well-being. This approach is widely known as *self-interest maximization*.

This view stems from the works of Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham.² Smith articulated with great emphasis that man is motivated by self-interest in all of his actions. Bentham extended this theory and saw economic man as intelligently calculating and weighing the expected costs and benefits of every action.³

The writings of Smith, Bentham, and Mills paved the way for Jevons⁴ and Marshall⁵ in England, Menger⁶ in Austria, and Walras⁷ in Switzerland to almost simultaneously formulate the theory of marginal utility of value. It was Marshall, however, who elegantly consolidated the classical and neoclassical traditions in economics with the tendency to conclude that anything other than maximizing self-interest must be irrational. With the "measuring rod of money" being considered as an index of the intensity of

human psychological drives and desires in modern economics, it is not surprising that monetary factors have been given the role of supreme motivator of individual decision-making behavior. In reality, it is quite well known that monetary factors alone cannot explain the entire dynamics of human behavior. In fact, at managerial positions of high responsibility, economic factors (also known as hygiene factors) are not sufficient to motivate efforts toward excellence. According to Sen, "universal selfishness as actuality may be false, but universal selfishness as a requirement of rationality is patently absurd."⁸

While most economists have tended to interpret human behavior in utilitarian terms, psychologists have theorized in somewhat different directions. Pavlov, a famous Russian psychologist, constructed a behavioral model based on his observation of the behavior of his dog. He rang a bell each time he offered food to his dog. He found that the behavior of his dog was rhythmic. He thus concluded that learning was an associative process and that human behavior was largely conditioned in this manner. The Pavlovian learning model has been refined to emphasize the desirability of repetitive stimuli to influence human behavior.⁹ Today, a large number of advertising campaigns are based on the Pavlovian model.

The Freudian psychoanalytic model of man, though invalidated by current studies, has had a profound impact on Western thought and analysis in the twentieth century. Freud developed his model on the basis of instinctive needs that a child cannot gratify by himself. As he grows, his psyche also grows in complexity. The *id*, however, remains the basis of his strong drives and urges. The *ego* helps him plan outlets for his drives. The *super ego* defines his socially approved outlets to avoid the unpleasant feelings of guilt or shame.

While Freud was mainly concerned with instinctive needs, Thorstein Veblen tried to analyze human behavior under the influence of social anthropology. The Veblenian social-psychological model¹⁰ suggested that man was a "social animal" conforming to the norms of his larger culture and more specific norms of the subcultures to which his life is bound. Thus, his needs and wants are conditioned, to a great extent, by his social environment.

There has been virtual unanimity among behavioral scientists about the complexity of individual's behavior. Surely, his motivational factors are not obvious to a casual observer. Nevertheless, psychologists have been unflinching in their efforts to unfold the entire truth about human motivation. The

works of Maslow,¹¹ Herzberg,¹² Lauer,¹³ and Vroom¹⁴ are particularly interesting and oft-quoted.

Maslow constructed a five-level need model in a hierarchical manner as follows: physiological needs, safety and security needs, belongingness needs, esteem needs, and need for self-actualization. Herzberg carefully studied the hierarchy of the needs model and argued that Maslow's ego-related needs provide motivation on the job and that the lower order needs in the hierarchy reduce dissatisfaction among individuals. Interestingly, according to Herzberg, people's needs are associated with what he calls an escalation phenomenon: the more people get, the more they want.

The expectancy theory of Lauer and Vroom also helps one gain deep insights into human motivation. The theory is based on the following assumptions:

1. There is a direct correlation between people's behavior and the perceived outcomes of this behavior.
2. Outcomes have different values for different people.
3. People have a tendency to relate their behavior to the probability of success.

Thus, people are likely to perform at a level that will lead to the attainment of perceived rewards.

Hackman and Oldham¹⁵ synthesized the above-mentioned theories and produced a working model based on both need and expectancy theories. According to this model, meaningfulness of work, responsibility for the work and its outcomes, and knowledge of results are all likely to enhance job satisfaction. Thus, in order to bring about change in individual behavior, motivational factors must be carefully identified.

Since OD includes within its orbit management development programs, it is important to also focus on leadership. In fact, a formidable body of literature exists, explaining the mechanics and dynamics of leadership. The managerial grid suggested by Blake and Mouton¹⁶ emphasizes the theory of effectiveness with the help of leadership styles. Blake and Mouton chose a nine-point scale to rank a leader's degree of concern for production and people. Out of the eighty-one possible combinations, Blake and Mouton found 5.5 to be the predominant style of leadership in American organizations. OD consultants make use of the grid in their interventionist pro-

grams. In fact, thousands of organizations in various countries, including Malaysia have tried to improve organizational effectiveness by bringing about suitable changes in leadership styles. A very interesting grid has been developed by Holistic Organization Transformation (M) Sdn. Bhd., a Malaysian organization offering OD programs to large companies, some of which operate on the basis of Islamic norms.

Team Building (T-Group)

At the group level, OD practitioners assume that it is important for people to be accepted by their work group and that most members are willing and able to solve problems constructively if consulted. T-Groups are useful vehicles for individual change. The T-Group or laboratory training has been suggested by behavioral scientists to bring about change in organizations. This kind of training provides a useful platform for the participants to learn from their own interactions and the evolving group dynamics at the sessions. Behavioral scientists like Tannenbaum,¹⁷ McGregor,¹⁸ Shepard,¹⁹ and others have popularized T-group sessions in various parts of the world. These sessions have now come to be known as *team-building exercises*.

T-Groups, sensitivity training, and laboratory training sessions stimulate behavior of the group members, which becomes a source of information for learning. Participants receive feedback from each other in order to improve their effectiveness in work organizations. The same principle applies between groups. The organizational performance will only improve if there is synergy and a win-win relationship between groups.

Team building as a technique reviews and analyzes activities, resource allocation, and group relationships to improve its effectiveness. T-Groups aim at diagnosing barriers to effective team performance by improving relationships between members through supportive communication and task assignment.

Survey Feedback

For the entire organization, OD practitioners employ the total feedback approach by conducting attitude and other surveys, the results of which are reported to organizational members for their follow-up actions. With a view to bringing about change in an individual's behavior, organizational psychologists design questionnaires for diagnostic purposes. Rensis Likert²⁰ and Kurt Lewin²¹ in particular prepared useful scales for organizational diagnosis and group dynamics.

A cross-section of organizations in various parts of the world rely on survey feedback to assess morale and attitudes of personnel. A review of evidence suggests that OD consultants collect information with the help of questionnaires to find out how employees feel about the way their organizations are managed. Based on this information, they then prepare feedback and report it to those who responded to the questionnaires. In fact, all the participants in the organization are involved in this kind of exercise. Edgar Schein,²² an eminent psychologist, has suggested a survey feedback method in which the survey begins at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy and moves upward.

In an OD program, it is important to appreciate that the outcomes of diagnostic activities have important implications for designing change programs. The information collected with the aid of questionnaires must be used meticulously for change purposes. The data obtained are usually summarized and then used in group problem-solving activities. The leader of such meetings guides the group to interpret the data, makes plans for constructive change, and distributes the results to the entire organization.

Thus it is clear from a brief survey of OD literature presented above that modern behavioral sciences provide the foundation for OD. In fact, secular organizations in various parts of the world have been relying for their adjustment and development needs on an assortment of behavioral science interventions, whose purpose is assumed to be improvement of individuals and organizations. There is no one superior technique but all invariably deal with people on the assumption that they have a desire to grow and realize their potential, however defined. They all focus on treating individuals with dignity and respect, communicating openly, and not playing games. Equally important is the position that the change process requires proactive leadership. From the top, the change process encompasses the rest of the organization via groups or subsystems.

Admittedly, the survey presented in this section is rather sketchy and incomplete. Nevertheless, it does reveal broad currents in the area of OD. We now turn to examine the significance of OD in bringing about the comprehensive development of a society.

OD and Comprehensive Development of Society

OD has an important influence on the way development is planned, judged, managed, and assisted. In fact, some of the most effective OD

approaches have developed as a response to the question of bringing about comprehensive development of organizations and indeed the whole society. One such approach is the systems approach.²³ Open systems are continually in need of strategic and planned change to adopt to or even influence the environment. This interdependence pervades all such organizations as subsystems of the social, economic, and political system of societies. The social subsystems include people and all the interactions they engage in to perform tasks.²⁴ OD programs typically seek to transform people and culture so that they are able to organize themselves to attain the avowed objectives of their groups/organizations.

As most organizations are open systems that interact with society at large, OD interventions are bound to affect social, economic, and cultural patterns in a society and vice versa. Vanguard organizations are noted for their potential to be leaders in socioethical development and play the role of catalyst to bring about change in their communities. In fact, there is a growing consensus that OD is flourishing on the twin assumptions that planned change is strategically desirable and that widespread OD interventions can help to bring about innovation and the social, economic, and political development of a society. Since OD intervention encompasses concerns with changes in social, economic, technical, and power subsystems, the impact on society is quite obvious, especially in market dominated societies where private-led strategic decisions are invariably linked to sociopolitical structure, norms, and values in relation to participation in decision making. Studies conducted within the secular paradigm have shown that individual fulfillment of higher level needs is not compatible with autocratic, top-down, authoritarian, and directive leadership styles. By contrast, effective people-oriented, informal leadership styles put aside hierarchical authority structure and pave the way for subordinates to play a greater role in decision making.

One cannot afford to ignore the fact that almost all contemporary organizations use technology. Surely, the efficiency of any organization depends, to a great extent, on the quality of its technology. However, the impact of technology on norms and values is not neutral. OD addresses the question of improving technology to bring about positive and comprehensive change in a society. Evidence from industrialized countries suggests that OD interventions seek to improve tools, techniques, procedures, skills, and all the technical devices used by personnel to perform their tasks efficiently. More importantly OD task-technology interventions emphasize redesigning the

jobs and the technical processes for the benefit of the people without jeopardizing their core values.

OD consultants argue that any work redesign exercise must optimize the social, religious, and technical demands of the work. The constraints of technology in interaction with the social subsystem can be done away with if job designers are sensitive to the personalities, attitudes, and social patterns of participants in the organization.

Over the past couple of decades, organizations in industrialized countries have given greater attention to the use of OD techniques to facilitate the process of change. This has certainly generated a new interest on the desirability of resorting to OD interventions in Muslim organizations that are trying to develop in line with national objectives. Will it be wise for Muslim organizations and societies to use OD methods for achieving sustainable comprehensive development? We address this question in the following section.

OD: A Critique from the Islamic Perspective

OD is a fascinating development. It draws upon the behavioral sciences to improve the effectiveness of individuals, groups, organizations, and indeed the entire society. Its greatest impact is likely to be on participatory democracy in government and corporations. However, Western skeptics rest their criticism of OD on three arguments. First, it is "preoccupied" with human beings and gives inadequate attention to the technical aspects of organizational life. Second, OD models are mainly concerned with the strategies of designing and implementing planned change. Third, it is quite expensive and yields only long-term results. Though relevant in certain cases, the general consensus is that these "limitations" are not serious enough to prevent the growing use of OD techniques in future organizations.

However, the validity of the same OD techniques and principles in those organizations that have Islamic orientation must also be questioned. Arguably, the most serious criticism of OD from the Islamic perspective lies in the assumptions that Western behavioral sciences make about human beings as individuals and groups in organizations. The West has meticulously dealt with human behavior as a psychological phenomenon devoid of spirituality. The behavior is like that of a higher animal, a social animal, to be studied objectively just like other worldly phenomena. For instance, the physical and instinctive aspects of behavior have been taken to explain

the rationality in decision making at the expense of the role of man as a servant of his Creator and his obligation to develop his personality to perfection and thereby get salvation from Allah. The man-centered or Aristotelian philosophy of Western social science is noted for being rich in means but lacking in higher ends. Pluralism of ends has not helped much in reducing the diversity of paradigms and dogma about man's quest for well-being. When a large number of things or goals are admissible as good in themselves, then everything becomes relative. As a result, there is nothing in Western science that can justify only one absolute; rather, there will be a large number of absolutes. Not only is wealth treated as intrinsically good, but so is change for its own sake. In short, there is no supreme good or value in terms of which everything else needs to justify itself. Scientism replaces wisdom and in the process denies divine guidance. The crisis of values, morals, and leadership is compounded by cultural secularism, wherein no values exist beyond those that can be linked to our senses. Hence, the dominant ethic is invariably man-centered, whether teleological, deontological, or utilitarian.

Although the agency theory²⁵ has qualified utility and well-being concepts in approach of welfarism and self-interest, the emphasis is exclusively relative and pluralistic. As a result, ethical principles can be chosen at the whim of the individual and as he deems fit for whatever is good for him. Respect for his beliefs or disbeliefs and his dignity as a person, no matter how low his level of existence, is the hallmark of organizations based on secular values. Indeed, there is a recognition that individuals must develop and grow with the organization. However, the self-actualization thus implied is a secular concept of self, devoid of spiritual reality as a manifestation of higher levels of being or existence.

A Muslim, as a decision maker and vicegerent to his Creator, cannot comprehend setting plurality of higher ends that can at least be theoretically separable from his well-being simply because the very essence of his *din* subsumes absolute loyalty and congruence of his well-being with pleasing his Creator. Otherwise, he is in a state of loss (*khusr*). Therefore, it follows that, from an Islamic point of view, it is through spiritual fulfillment along with the development of the intellect that human behavior can be shaped for attaining a high degree of self-control. This remarkable ability would inevitably help an individual play his role as a microcosm as part of the macrocosm. It would also help him develop his full potential as a vicegerent of Allah and in the process play a meaningful role in the devel-

opment of his organization. This goal or purpose of his existence is embodied in the fulfillment of a primordial contract with Allah in which his role as vicegerent on earth directs his natural desires toward truth, justice, and reform.²⁶

Therefore, Islamic organizations cannot imitate secular models, no matter how "scientific," without falling into the same situation as depicted in the hadith about the parable of the monitor lizard. The development of man toward his potential demands a worldview that is *tawhidic*. The process of this development requires desecularization of the social science worldview that has been pervasive in Muslim organizations and societies. In other words, to be effective, intervention in Islamic organizations and societies ought to be based on the Islamic value system. Techniques such as individual development, feedback or team building, or any combination of them are acceptable as they are merely means for achieving the goals of Islamic organizations. For this reason, in the *din* of Islam, the inculcation of Islamic values in private and public organizations and the practice of *tazkiyah* are given high priority alongside the long-term strategy of education.

State of Affairs in Muslim Organizations

Despite the rich insights that Islam provides for comprehensive development, Muslim organizations and societies have lagged behind others in development. Among the main reasons for this state of affairs are confusion and error in knowledge. This confusion is analyzed and elaborated by Al-Attas and AbuSulayman, albeit from different perspectives.²⁷

According to Al-Attas the general dilemma of the Muslim is the confusion and error of knowledge, defined as "the recognition of the proper places of things in the order of creation, such that it leads to the recognition of the proper place of God in the order of being and existence."²⁸ This confusion and error have led to the continued existence of unqualified leaders and the injustice (*zulm*) wrought by such leadership. According to Al-Attas, the role of education in Islam is to progressively instill in the *human being* (and not the State) the recognition and acknowledgment of this knowledge, since the purpose of seeking knowledge in Islam is to become a good human being and to reflect the universal or perfect human being (*al-insān al-kāmil*). The education referred to above has to be implemented in the context of Islamization, which Al-Attas defines as "the liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural tradition, and then from secular control over his reason and his language."²⁹ This secular

control emanates from the Western concept of dualism in its vision of reality and truth, incorporating rationalism, empiricism, and humanism. Therefore, Islamization in education must isolate these dualistic influences from Islamic intellectual and rational discourse at all levels, including OD interventions.

AbuSulayman further expounds on this process by defining the methodology of thought using the contemporary *asalah* approach.³⁰ According to AbuSulayman, this approach is the basis of change and development in Muslim societies. It implies the ability to be proactive in handling change through the complete understanding of, and concentration on, the higher purposes of the Shari'ah and its general principles, values, and fundamental teachings. In his view, political factors have contributed to diversion from the *asalah* methodology. Failure to understand the higher purpose of the Shari'ah has led Muslim communities to become retarded in managing change. According to AbuSulayman, the prohibition of innovation with respect to faith has inadvertently prohibited the required change for comprehensive development in Muslim societies. As a result of this, Muslims have tended either to adopt without discretion the practices of the early Muslim period to deal with contemporary issues, or to resort blindly to the adoption of Western methods, even at the expense of ignoring the very purpose of the Shari'ah. Moreover, Muslim intellectuals have not developed Islamic social science and consequently have failed to adopt dynamic approaches to respond to the challenges of our time. Consequently, no systematic OD efforts based on the precepts of Islam have taken place in Muslim societies.

In fact, the closing of the door of *ijtihad* has been a manifestation of this crisis in thought and the ensuing decline of commitment to Islam from the political leadership.

According to Fazlur Rahman,³¹ if one looks at the Muslim world, one sees military dictators, autocratic rulers, and religious autocrats. One thing conspicuously absent in the majority of Muslim countries is *shura* (mutual consultations in arriving at truth). He asserts that the Qur'an has been submerged under historical developments to the point that the Muslims, especially the leadership, do not want to be aware of the teaching of the Qur'an. As a result, the members of the community are treated as though they are incapable of thinking and deciding for themselves and therefore have to be told from above how to think or to conduct themselves. He puts the entire responsibility of managing Muslim societies, organization, and groups in

the hands of unrepresented and usually unqualified leaders who cannot give the average Muslim an adequate idea of what kind of society the Qur'an wants to create.³²

The above depiction of the state of Muslim societies certainly creates a need to understand the message of the Qur'an that guides individuals, groups, organizations, and societies to grow and develop into ethical agents striving for truth and justice. We now look at some of the concepts in the teachings of Islam that can make OD serve the goals of the Ummah.

Shura

One of the central theoretical and practical rationales behind *shura* is promoting participation and involvement in decision making within the ambit of revealed knowledge, laws of nature, and the changing environment facing the Ummah. When the Qur'an established the Community of Believers and required it to work through mutual cooperation, it also provided the basic procedures and principles to regulate the process of decision making in its affairs.

Consider the following verses in the Qur'an:

And those who answer the call of their Lord and establish worship whose affairs are a matter of counsel, and who spend of what we have bestowed on them. (42:38)

So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs. And when thou art resolved, then get their trust in Allah. Lo! Allah loveth those who put their trust (in Him). (3:159)

It was also reported that the Prophet replied as follows to a question by Sayyidna 'Ali as to what should be done after his demise if the Muslims are confronted with a problem about which they cannot find anything in the Qur'an or his sunnah. "From among my followers gather the obedient [to Allah and His Law] and place the matter before them for consultation. Do not make divisions on the basis of the opinions of any single person."³³ It is also reported from him: "The man who gives counsel to his brother knowing full well that it is not right, does most surely betray his trust."³⁴

Fazlur Rahman posits that

shura in the view of the Qur'an does not mean that a single person seeks advice from a certain number of people he deems fit for the purpose of consultation, and then he may or may not accept the advice. Obviously, the Qur'an is thinking first of all in terms of the commu-

nity's affairs or business (*amruhum*), not in terms of the business of a single person or elite. Rule is the community's joint affair.³⁵

In addition, the reference to mutual consultation (*shura bainahum*) implies consulting those who represent the community by being appointed or elected by them. In other words, each Muslim has some say in the decision-making process.

The concept of *shura* is in line with the *tawhidic* worldview and is referred to in the Qur'an as the practice of the rightly guided believers. Therefore, it refers to decisions arrived at within the confines of the Shari'ah in order to avoid *fasad* and injustice while at the same time encouraging commitment to established missions, group cohesiveness, and supportive interpersonal relationships. In effect, *shura* reinforces the ummatic personality of its members while at the same time strengthening their submission to Allah and His commandments and prohibitions. Unlike the secular concept of democracy, the purpose of *shura* is to arrive at the right decision in the right path, away from error and confusion characteristic of pure reason. In the secular context, majority decisions are binding, regardless of the direction they may take. Considering that the pluralistic ethical principles applied are man-made and fallible, majority rule is necessary but not sufficient for *shura*. *Shura* must be practiced within the fundamentals of Islamic methodology and thought via *tauhid*, vicegerancy, and responsibility, as will be further elaborated below.

Within the direction of the *tawhidic* worldview, *shura* and the ensuing involvement in the goal-setting process can be an added force in fostering commitment to goal attainment. Inevitably, such involvement helps the organization to overcome resistance to change and development.

The effectiveness of *shura* for OD in Islamic organizations also depends on the readiness of followers to take responsibility in the change process. Willingness to strive for the better (*ikhtiyar*) would fit well with *shura* and its two-way communication and collaboration. Without proactive and responsible followers and a culture that promotes these qualities, OD cannot be effectively achieved. Autocratic systems, even with transformational leaders, have proved to be workable only when the members of its organizations are passive and insecure; however, this mode of management cannot be expected to promote sustained development, whether for the individual, the organizations, or the society at large.

Ikhtiyar (Choice)

Al-Attas³⁶ has quite convincingly articulated the concept of *ikhtiyar*. He says that contrary to the popular perception, *ikhtiyar* is a choice for the good. In other words, a so-called "choice" of bad things is not a choice in the real sense. In Islam, choice is preceded by knowledge of what is good and what is evil. This knowledge is revealed to man by Allah through His Prophets.

Thus, in Islamic organizations, OD efforts ought to be influenced by the concept of *ikhtiyar*. All OD interventions should, therefore, seek positive results with the help of rational choices based on *ikhtiyar*. It explicitly follows from *ikhtiyar* that "change," "development," and "progress" refer to the conscious effort to change according to the essence of Islam as enunciated by the Holy Prophet, his noble companions and their followers, and the faith and practice of genuine Muslims after them. The term "development" is the process that follows this straight and true path.

Al-Attas asserts that a choice enslaved to what is bad is not a choice; it merely allows people to be enslaved to lust and desires (*hawa*). A choice for the better, however, is an exercise of freedom. It presupposes knowledge of good and evil and right and wrong with respect to the course of action man should take so that he might strive to attain his destiny. This knowledge is attained by comprehension through man's faculty of right vision. As a vicegerent of Allah, man is expected to be ruled by a self that chooses to develop and progress toward the "perfect model" as exemplified by the Holy Prophet within whom the permanent human and spiritual values necessary for man's guidance in life are placed.³⁷ At the same time, the purpose and end of ethics underlying this *ikhtiyar* are ultimately for man's own salvation as indicated to him by his God and His Messenger. If man strives (*ikhtiyar*) for the good of the organization, it is because the organization comprises individuals with the same mission and with the same model to emulate.

Implied from the above is that OD as based on the secular concept of respect for individual actions and conduct and the right that accompanies it cannot be accepted from Islam's point of view because it ignores prior knowledge of truth that would have given a different meaning to the concept of freedom. From the Islamic perspective, man was created with the natural inclination (*fitrah*) to submit to his Creator as exemplified by his covenant with Him. It is this submission that typifies the concept of freedom of choice and the responsibility that goes with it.

Accountability and Responsibility

Allah created humans in the best of forms and gave them sustenance from His bounty so that they may be thankful to Him and submit to Him by choosing the right path through their *ikhtiyar*. In effect, Allah prescribed to man the freedom to make the right choice or refuse it. He prescribed responsibility and accountability in accordance with His Design and Creation. Thus, whether in man's capacity as a leader or member of an organization, his effective leadership or his cooperation with the leadership in team work will eventually lead to the realization of his own good. Although the basic sense of accountability is individualistic, man is not permitted to show traces of selfishness in his character. In fact, his quest for happiness, in the permanent sense, even entails sacrificing his interests for the sake of others, as well as for his organization or community. The Islamic perspective of OD will be effective if this motive is successfully inculcated in the organization's individual and team work programs. Supported by *shura* and the ensuing participation, the gamut of group solidarity should be a strong point for organizational effectiveness. Consider the following Qur'an verse:

If any one does a righteous deed, it ensures the benefit of his own soul; if he does evil it works against it. In the end you will be brought back to your Lord. (45:15)

The right deed or wrong deed is defined within the principle that everything is lawful (*halāl*) except that which has been expressly forbidden in the clear texts of *wahy*, or that which is determined to go against the basic interest of society. The responsibility and accountability to carry out the right deed and forbid the wrong (*al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*) is enjoined through the use of man's intellect and *fitrah*, in accordance with Allah's will and His natural laws.

A further extension of this principle involves change and creativity for development as the responsibility of individuals and society alike. How the laws of nature are understood and used will reflect the success of Muslims in achieving their role as vicegerents of Allah. This, according to AbuSulayman, "should explain the success of the Holy Prophet's methodology: jihad, ijtihad, organization, thought, and respect for the laws of nature."³⁸ The early generations of Muslims understood this, and the result was that they were successful.

In summary, one of the prerequisites for OD in Muslim organizations is effective thought. Combined with a clear understanding of the *din* of Islam,

the potential for change and development is great as can be seen during the first generation of Muslims. Arising from this effective thought is the true meaning of responsibility and accountability often heard but generally misunderstood. The inculcation of this value into Muslim organizations is one development strategy that Muslim societies can adopt.

Thus it is clear from the above description that Islamic teachings can enrich OD interventions. In the following section, we suggest a simple conceptual OD model based on Shari'ah guidelines.

Islam and OD

The review of OD literature attempted in the first section of this paper suggests that the Islamic worldview is often not directly captured in OD interventions. In this section, we make a modest attempt to argue that an OD model based on the Shari'ah is indeed plausible.

Profound structural changes, such as growing industrialization, urbanization, and social transformation are afoot in Muslim countries. Some Muslim countries have taken important steps to transform their economies in line with the precepts of Islam. It is high time Muslim organizations design suitable OD strategies to bring about comprehensive development.

In any OD model applied to an Islamic organization, the purposes or *maqasid* of interventions must be made clear at the outset. For instance, a program targeting personnel change must emphasize the dignity of the worker as *ins*, innovativeness, trust, team building — all based on the *din* of Islam and the ultimate purpose of the Shari'ah. Techniques of *tazkiyah* must be the hallmark of OD programs of Muslim organizations. They include individual groups as well as organizational aspects of OD. Most importantly, they emphasize the training of family members via reinforcement of role models of Islamic leadership. OD practitioners must be aware of these techniques and their significance in order to provide effective OD interventions in any Muslim organization. For example, group techniques in the *tazkiyah* process should strive to provide the most suitable environment for the development of Islamic character, leadership qualities, bonds of brotherhood, and strong discipline vital for the Ummah.³⁹ Islamic study circles and *usrah* are practical concepts that can be incorporated into typical group dynamics. A case in point is Malaysia's Johor State Economic Development Corporation, which has neatly defined its corporate mission as "maximization of productivity through people, and encouragement of creative ideas from the work force." This organization has brought about

positive changes by introducing an Islamic value system and the effective application of the concepts and processes explained earlier in the article.

Some Specific Directions for New Research

Admittedly, theoretical and empirical work is needed on OD in Islamic organizations to enrich existing literature. Analytical and empirical studies of the differences in Western and Islamic interventions in the area of OD are also needed to determine what strategies will ensure comprehensive development of Muslim societies.

In a world of conflicting perceptions about development methodologies, research on OD could help Muslim countries improve their policies and strategies and define the role of OD in a manner consistent with the precepts of Islam. Some Muslim countries are actively involved in the process of Islamization of knowledge and institutions.

Research is also needed to facilitate this process. Muslim countries cannot afford simply to copy systems and strategies operating elsewhere; they need to design their own OD interventions based on Islamic social sciences.

Notes

1. For a discussion of the concept and theory of organization development, consult Wendell L. French and Cecil H. Bell, Jr., *Organization Development* (Englewood: Prentice Hall, 1984).
2. See Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907).
3. See A. Sen, *On Ethics and Economics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).
4. See William S. Jevons, *The Theory of Political Economy* (New York: Macmillan, 1871).
5. See Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics* (London: Macmillan, 1927).
6. See Karl Menger, *Principles of Economics* (Illinois: Free Press, 1950).
7. Consult Leon Walras, *Elements of Pure Economics* (Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, 1954).
8. Sen, *On Ethics and Economics*, 14–15.
9. See John B. Watson, *Behaviorism* (New York: The People's Institute, 1925).
10. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Macmillan, 1899).
11. Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954).
12. F. Herzberg, *Work and the Nature of Man* (Cleveland: World Press, 1966).
13. E.E. Lauer, *Motivation in Work Organizations* (California: Brooks Cole, 1973).
14. V. Vroom, *Work and Motivation* (New York: Wiley, 1965).
15. J.R. Hackman and G.R. Oldham, "Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 60 (1975): 159–70.
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17. Robert Tannenbaum, V. Kallajian, and I.R. Weschler, "Training Managers for Leadership," *Personnel* 30 (January 1956).
18. Douglas McGregor, *The Professional Manager* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967).
19. H.A. Shepard, "Explorations in Observant Participation," in Bradford, Gibb, and Benne (eds.), *T-Group Theory* (December 1978): 382–83.
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21. K. Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951). See also his "Group Decision and Social Change," in *Readings in Social Psychology*, edited by E.E. Maccoby, T.M. Newcomb, and E.L. Hartley (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1958), pp. 197–211.
22. Edgar Schein, *Organizational Psychology* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1980). See also his *Process Consultation* (Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1987).
23. E. Trist, *Socio-technical Systems* (London: Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, 1960).
24. A.K. Rice, *Productivity and Social Organizations: The Ahmedabad Experiment* (London: Tavistock, 1958).
25. Sen, *On Ethics and Economics*, 40.
26. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1990).
27. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: ABIM, 1978), 82–90; and Abdul Hamid Ahmad AbuSulayman, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind* (Washington, D.C.: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993).
28. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1991), 19.
29. *Ibid.*, 45.
30. AbuSulayman, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*, 18–19.
31. Fazlur Rahman, "Islamic Resurgence and its 'Neglected Duty,'" (address submitted to the Conference on Modernization in Islamic Perspective, University of Southern California, February 1987), 18–20.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Afzalur Rahman, *Islam Ideology and the Way of Life* (London: The Muslim Schools Trust, 1980), 312.
34. *Ibid.*
35. Fazlur Rahman, "Islamic Resurgence and its 'Neglected Duty'."
36. Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul*, 3–4.
- 37.
38. AbuSulayman, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*.
39. See Mohammed Yunus, *Manual of Tazkiya* (I.C.N.A., 1987), 31–45.

