

# Western Empiricism and the Separation of Religion from Life

Faiq Najjah for Al-Waie Magazine Issue 436, December 2022

The West has obscured and misrepresented their history. They claim that their adoption of Western Empiricism and all that followed from it was simply a consequence of their desire for progress and enlightenment. But the ugly truth about the Western civilisation is that it has been built on a reckless compromise between the brutally opposed forces of Christianity and materialism. It was the Empiricist thinking method that enabled this misguided compromise to be forged by separating religion from life. This unstable compromise then became the imprudent foundation upon which the entire of the present Western civilisation was then established.

The West does not explain all this. The West has not been able to present an accurate picture of its Christian past, as this would require acknowledging its deep links to Islam.

Those ties, which were intensified in the period from the eleventh to the thirteenth century CE, can be discerned from cultural and scientific contact points in Sicily, Malta and Andalusia, along with the role of universities. Among the most prominent students were Leonardo Fibonacci, Adelard of Bath, Constantine the African and other European students, who moved to Islamic science institutes, to study medicine, philosophy, mathematics and other sciences. The influence was also through translations such as the works of Gerardo of Cremona's translation of the Islamic heritage in Toledo, after its occupation by the Spaniards, and heritage translations in Sicily, after the Muslims annexed the island in 965 CE, then the Normans regained it in 1091 CE.

A Norman-Arab culture was born, sponsored by rulers like Roger II of Sicily, who had Muslim soldiers, poets, and scholars in his court. The book "The Book of Pleasant Journeys into Faraway Lands" (نزهة المشتاق في اختراق الآفاق), also known as Tabula Rogeriana, written by al-Idrisi al-Marrakshi for King Roger II, is considered one of the greatest geographical manuscripts of the Middle Ages. In 1127 CE, Stephen Al-Bayzi translated an Arabic booklet on medical theory into Latin. Al-Khwarizmi developed a way to perform arithmetic operations using Arabic numerals in the ninth century CE, which Leonardo Fibonacci brought to Europe.

Robert from Chester also translated Al-Khwarizmi's "Compendious Book on Calculation by Completion and Balancing" (Arabic: كتاب المختصر في حساب الجبر والمقابلة Latin: Liber Algebræ et Almucabola) around the year 1145 CE amongst many others. The impact continued even in subsequent ages, as the French historian Gustave Le Bon says in his book "La Civilisation des Arabes (The Civilization of the Arabs)" that the most famous French general, Napoleon Bonaparte, upon his return to his country, France, returning from Egypt in the year 1801 CE, took with him a jurisprudential book from the Mazhab of Imam Malik bin Anas, called "Sharh al-Dardir on the Matan of Khalil شرح الدردير على متن خليل Maliki jurisprudence is considered the first Islamic jurisprudence that accompanied the Europeans. Consequently, the French law was one of the most important reasons for the renaissance of the state, especially in the matter of provisions, contracts and obligations. Thus, Islamic jurisprudence, especially Maliki, would have a great impact on French legislation, especially the code of civil jurisprudence known as the Napoleonic Code (French: Code Napoléon).

The similarity between the Maliki jurisprudence and the French law reached 90%, according to the results of studies and comparisons carried out by Muslim 'ulema and jurists, including Makhlof Al-Minawi, the judge during the reign of Khedive Ismail in Egypt, who made a comparison between the French law and the Maliki jurisprudence, Qadri Pasha, the Egyptian Minister of Justice in the late nineteenth century, and the al-Azhar 'aalim Sayyid Abdullah Ali Hussein, an expert in legislative comparisons. This is whilst the member of the Academy of International Law in The Hague, Professor Mikhail Alexandrovich Taube (Michel de Taube) pointed to the influence upon the human and moral spirit that Islam brought. It was embodied in Islam's jurisprudential philosophy, which prevailed over Europe in the Middle Ages, of which he

said, was a time humanity suffered misery and despair. He mentioned the influence of Islamic legislative principles on that, as well as their impact on the International Law.

Some historical sources say that Alphonse IX, King of Castile, wrote the first legal code in Europe, which was published with Latin comments in three volumes. He derived it in particular from the “Law of the Wilayaat (Provinces)” in Muslim Andalusia dating back to the year 679 AH corresponding to the year 1289 CE. In addition, Frederick II, King of Sicily and Emperor of Germania, derived his laws in the year 1250 CE from Islamic jurisprudence. From that, he laid down direct and indirect taxes, military structures, customs duties, and the state’s monopoly on minerals and some goods, which were known in Islamic law, since the Ninth and Tenth centuries. However, it became a model for all of Europe to follow.

Thus, the West have not been able to present an accurate picture of their Christian past, as this would require acknowledging their deep links to Islam. Similarly, the West was not able to truthfully explain the severity of the materialist challenge they have faced for fear of giving materialism further importance. Nevertheless, this dark history needs to be exposed in order to be able to fully appreciate the significance of Western Empiricism and the reason for the West’s separation of religion from life.

### **Europe’s Christian Civilisation and Struggle with Materialist Thought**

The only way to properly comprehend Europe’s Christian civilisation is to recognise that it developed in the shadow of Islamic civilisation; Europe developed as a Christian copy of Islam. The West falsely portray their rise as a continuation of the legacy of ancient Greece and Rome. The Islamic Khilafah (Caliphate) State was the dominant global power for more than a thousand years; its civilisation represented the summit of human achievement in its age, and the practical manifestation of high erudition, sophistication, luxury, and virtue. The unparalleled civilizational success of Islam was a consequence of the comprehensive implementation of the unique Islamic ideology that provides solutions for the entire of life’s affairs. The fruits of Islamic civilisation were not confined to Muslims only but were enjoyed to some extent by the entire world during that period. The West in particular modelled the totality of their Christian civilisation on Islam, copying not only our mathematics, science and technology, and our arts, crafts, commerce and literature but also our systems and thoughts about life.

Italian-American philosopher, Giorgio Diaz de Santillana, Professor of the History of Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), spoke of how Arab law guided the West to details in commercial law, such as limited liability companies. He gives many examples of commercial laws taken from Islamic legislation. And the English writer and critique of Islam, HG Wells, wrote in “The Outline of History” that, “At Cordoba in particular there were great numbers of Christian students, and the influence of Arab philosophy -coming by way of Spain upon the universities of Paris, Oxford, and North Italy and upon Western European thought generally, was very considerable indeed.”

Here it is necessary to draw attention to an important issue regarding the issue of Napoleon taking the Maliki jurisprudence and drafting French laws on its basis. We are against promoting Western laws, so it is not to be understood that we say to the West, “Bring your laws. These are our goods that are returned to us.” So attention should be drawn here to the difference between constitutional jurisprudence and the constitution. The West did not take anything from Islam in the strict constitutional aspect. Instead, their system is a secular liberal democratic system. The constitution determines the form of the state and its institutions, including the choice of the ruler and so on. All this, they did not take from Islam. As for the private laws that regulate the lives of individuals, the stances on trade, social relations, and others, this is what Napoleon took from what is related to trade and companies, especially in the matter of rulings, contracts, obligations and ownership, from the Maliki jurisprudence. All this does not change the form of the secular state, but only some of its detailed laws!

It is also necessary to draw attention to the fact that what is important is to link the laws with Revelation in order for them to become Islamic. France’s adoption of legal laws does not mean that they govern by Shariah. Instead, it means that France approved laws that regulate

trade. So, when France adopted them, separated from Revelation, and thus from the origin from which they emanated, they became laws like other secular laws. It is not permissible for us to take laws separate from the Revelation and its sources. So, Muslims must take the legislation from the Revelation directly. Muslims must look at the West with a look of superiority over it because they could not organize their own laws. So the West was compelled to take them from Muslims and build their laws upon them. Indeed, the legislation of our Lord, Allah (swt), is the only guarantor for us Muslims are to revive, arise, obey our Lord, and excel over all other peoples.

Europe was fully Christian; its rulers derived their authority and their legitimacy from their role as Christian princes, governing over Europe in conjunction with the Roman Church. But Christianity was a narrow and fractured religion that lacked intrinsic ideological power and could not organically develop a mature indigenous civilisation entirely of its own making. So instead they imitated Islam, modifying and transforming what they took from us to accord with their Christian basis, thus creating a Christian replica of Islamic civilisation in Europe. The present West has denigrated this history, referring to these centuries as their dark ages. Yet, in truth the harmonious way of life that Europe enjoyed then was superior to present conditions in the West. Yes, the West today has superior technology but scientific advancement is not a useful measure for comparing civilisations from different historical ages. Western life today is a non-stop pursuit of selfish material interests to the near exclusion of all else. The Christian civilisation was able to much better balance material endeavours with ethical, humanitarian and spiritual concerns; honour, dignity, family and community still had meaning and significance. However, at the same time, nascent traits of material exploitation can be seen in the Christian ruling classes even before the advent of Capitalism. Popes and Kings collaborated in vastly enriching themselves at the expense of their oppressed peoples, monopolising wealth, power and even knowledge for themselves. This same exploitative mentality can then also be seen in Christian Europe's early imperialist engagements abroad, such as in the Crusades or on the American continent. Capitalism only further nurtured the evil seeds germinating within the Christian elite. Capitalism's ideological power propelled the Western ruling classes into domination of the entire world.

The introduction of materialist thought into the West was also a consequence of contact with the Islamic civilisation. Muslims first came into contact with materialist thinking when Islam expanded into lands previously dominated by Hellenic culture and some individuals did become affected by alien thoughts. Philosophers, like Ibn Sina, came to believe in false ideas such as the eternity of the world, in clear contradiction to the Islamic creed, which is explicit in affirming that only the Creator is eternal and that the world is simply temporal creation that Allah (swt) chose to originate. The Islamic scholarship in the third and fourth centuries Hijri was still in its golden age, and the ulema moved forcefully to refute this foreign thinking. Finally, at the end of the fifth century Hijri, Imam Ghazali (r.a.) comprehensively disproved their arguments in his book, 'The Incoherence of the Philosophers'. Ibn Rushd came after him and tried to counter the book of Imam Ghazali. Ibn Rushd was from a prestigious family of Andalusian scholars and he followed his father and grandfather in becoming chief qadi in Cordoba. But when the Ummah discovered the degeneracy of Ibn Rushd's thinking, he was tried in court and exiled, and this was a powerful indication of the victory of the Islamic ulema over the philosophers. Materialist thinking was vanquished in the Muslim World but escaped into Europe through Latin translations of the works of Ibn Rushd. There, in the seventh century Hijri, a section of the Christian clergy became attracted to materialist thought and came to be known as Averroists, named after Ibn Rushd who was known as Averroes in the Latin language. Materialist thinking is as much repugnant to Christianity as it is to Islam; the Roman Church fought against the Averroists just as the ulema had fought the philosophers. Yet, the Church was only able to do this by employing arguments taken from Imam Ghazali (r.a.), known in Latin as Algazel. It can be seen even from this episode how much Europe lived within the shadow of the Islamic civilisation and how deeply Europe was affected by the intellectual currents within Muslims. Despite these efforts, however, materialism did not end here. It seems that the Church had depended more upon its political power than its ability to convince intellectually. Some of the

later Christian ruling elite even played with fire, dabbling in elements of materialist thought to support their authority and provide a counterweight in their infighting against the Church. Materialist thought had not been convincingly defeated but merely driven underground.

In contrast to Islam, European Christianity had two basic flaws, a political and an intellectual, and it was these that materialism exploited. Christian Europe's foremost political flaw was the lack of unity in its ruling, resulting in persistent infighting and conflict. Governance was divided between church and state; this was a legacy of the later Roman Emperors who had adopted Christianity but continued to implement Roman Law, restricting the clergy to supervising only narrow 'religious' affairs. The Christians on their part also readily accepted this division.

The honourable Messenger of Allah Isa (a.s.) brought the revelation in truth to the Bani Israeel. But Christians argued that the detailed rules regarding life's affairs conveyed by Isa (a.s.) only applied to Jews, and that non-Jews were free to obey worldly kings instead. Furthermore, Christian doctrine became affected by the prevalent philosophy of the separation of matter from spirit. Christians came to consider it the purpose of the clergy only to supervise the religious and the spiritual, leaving the rulers to govern the temporal and the material. When Europe rebuilt itself after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, then the Roman Church continued on the same model, limiting itself to spiritual affairs and abandoning responsibility for material affairs to Europe's kings. Furthermore, although the clergy had a single pope as head during Europe's early history, Europe's lands remained divided amongst a number of rival ambitious kings who were almost constantly at war with each other.

Moreover, although the clergy had a single "Pope as head during Europe's early history, the lands of Europe remained divided between a number of ambitious, struggling monarchs who were constantly at war with each other. As for the Church, it confiscated the entire human mind, forcing man to derive his conception of existence through its monopolistic interpretations of the Bible. The Church focused on the "outward man," who confessed his guilt, made atonement for it, volunteered his body, gave alms, and revered the Church, so it granted him the instrument of forgiveness. However, it did not pay attention to his spirituality and the "inward man," which prompted Martin Luther (1483-1546 CE), the founder of the Protestant Reform movement, to search for the "inward man" with his moral depth, so that his progress would be the one that determines the status of the social person. Then, Luther theorized that within the dual nature for man, the inner, spiritual, is more important than the outer, the bodily. He postulated that the purification of the inner soul is what expresses free choice, through which a deed wins divine love. And with this Martin Luther undermined, in one stroke, the *raison d'être* of the Catholic Church, asserting that is no longer needed. Instead, the Church stands as a barrier between a person who desires the satisfaction of his Lord, in harmony with the world around him, and his endeavor to do so. Therefore, there is no authority for the clergy over a person and his inwardness, his purification of himself, his vision of the world around him, or his connection with his Lord.

This intellectual transformation was revolutionary, opening the minds of thinkers to ideas that had not occurred to them. So they proceeded from distinguishing between the inward and outward of man as two separate domains. The strength of the inner space is its liberation, focusing on its individuality, and striving to achieve the transcendent, pragmatic and rational self. The external world is the sensory world that carries all its secrets, concepts and mechanisms of understanding within itself, without the need for any overriding unseen metaphysical construct.

Then, in the tenth century Hijri, the kings of northern Europe rebelled against the authority of Rome in the name of newly-founded Protestant sects, while the kings of southern Europe continued to remain Catholic, loyal to the Roman Church. The subsequent settlements that became known as the Peace of Westphalia prompted Europe's devolution into different countries and sects. By the twelfth century Hijri, Christian Europe wholly lacked a powerful central authority that could counter the materialist uprising. Moreover, the hypocrisy of the Christian ruling elite had become fully exposed, pointing to their corruption, rapaciousness,

oppression and exploitation, in complete contradiction to their professed Christianity. The political agenda of the materialist insurgency resonated deeply with Europe's peoples.

Meanwhile, Christian Europe's key intellectual flaw was to adopt the erroneous thinking method of Greek Rationalism and to falsely employ its method of syllogistic logic to provide intellectual justification for the Christian creed. Syllogistic logic is a valid style of thinking but not in creedal matters as it is only capable of producing speculative (*Arabic: dhanni*) results in regards to thoughts about life. The creed must be established firmly, only on what is definitive (*Arabic: qat'i*), as it must form a permanent, indisputable and unchanging basis on which to build culture, lifestyle and civilisation. Using syllogistic logic, Christians developed a number of so-called 'proofs' for their most fundamental creedal issue, the existence of the Creator.

Meanwhile, using the same technique of syllogistic logic, materialist thinkers issued their own 'proofs' of the world as self-sustaining and eternal and not in need of a Creator. They took, for example, arguments developed by the rejected philosophers amongst Muslims who alleged that creation of something temporal by something eternal is a logical impossibility. It did not occur to them that such a claim only really made sense within the framework of a Greek pantheistic notion of divinity as a mechanical first mover in a deterministic universe. Materialists try to portray themselves as 'atheists', far above religious belief. But in fact, they follow the worst of religions, the most vulgar polytheism that attributes the divine qualities of eternity and self-subsistence to this earthly material creation. The polytheists of Makkah who falsely associated gods with Allah (swt) were superior to these pagan materialists; at least the disbelievers of Makkah believed in a Creator.

### **The Western Compromise with Materialism**

Unable to intellectually defeat the materialist threat, Christian thinkers turned instead to a defensive approach that would function as a compromise between Christianity and materialism. In the Twelfth Century Hijri, Christian thinkers replaced Greek Rationalism with Western Empiricism, which rigidly limits what can be known with certainty to sense perception alone. This eliminated religious discussion from the intellectual domain. Christian thinkers did this not to bring any harm to their religion but to only secure it from intellectual attacks by the materialists. They considered belief in the Creator to be an obvious and intuitive matter that the intellectualisations of the materialists had needlessly confused. Western Empiricism did succeed in ending the public debate over the existence of the Creator. But the further consequence of this compromise was that it also resulted in the separation of religion from life. The West had effectively replaced Christianity with a new creed. According to this new Western creed, only the life of this world can be known with certainty; that which is beyond this world should not be given any consideration when organising man's affairs in this world. The understanding of what lies beyond this world is left to every person to determine for themselves individually.

Amongst the Westerners, there are those who elaborate upon the stages that Western thought passed through, such as Will Durant in his "The Story of Civilization," and Roland N. Stromberg in his book "European Intellectual History Since 1789," in which Stromberg divided the stages into the Middle Ages, the renaissance period, the reformation period and the Baroque period. According to Stromberg, the philosophy of the Baroque period is that of the post-renaissance era, or from another perspective, it is the era of the post-religious reformation movement, beginning in approximately on the year 1570 CE and continued beyond 1650 CE. Stromberg then highlights the Seventeenth Century as an age of reasoning, "Battered by the terrific crisis of the Reformation, Europe came up with the scientific and intellectual renaissance of the seventeenth century." Stromberg cites Galileo, Newton, Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke and Leibniz to assert that the Seventeenth Century CE was the age of reasoning. Stromberg enthuses then of "that extraordinary chapter of intellectual history, the eighteenth century Enlightenment," before speaking of the ideological character of the Nineteenth Century CE.

Europe began to sense the path of its renaissance by its emancipation from the Church's control over life and knowledge since the sixteenth and seventeenth Centuries CE. Thinkers and philosophers, who were characterized by "the Enlightenment," laid intellectual foundations for this renaissance, based on the secular principle of separating the state, as well as life in all its details, from religion and moral values. In many cases, these thinkers were themselves the ones laying the foundations of the experimental scientific method, such as Francis Bacon (died 1626 CE), René Descartes (died 1650 CE) and Blaise Pascal (died 1662 CE), amongst others. Therefore, it was natural to see a confluence between the scientific method and secularism, which directed the compass of science in a certain direction. At the same time, the West took science as a single tool and method of knowledge, so that it dominated all other sciences and human knowledge. So there was a mutual exchange of service between science and secularism, that generated a situation where are great question marks and doubts about the scientific value of many scientific postulate, such as Darwin's theory. They also directed the compass of science to become confined to the worldly materialistic aspect, as its only field, nature, as the domain of human knowledge. Its method of interaction with it is the sensory empirical approach. The declared goal is what benefits man. Therefore, it was necessary to discard the "ancient" philosophical knowledge and ideas that they saw as non-utilitarian, like formal logic and analogy that does nothing but reach outcomes. Moreover, it rejects the unseen, both as a whole and in detail. It has complete estrangement with everything that sense does not fall on. So utilitarianism has become a goal of science and philosophy together, whilst materialism is science's field. This is a stark convergence with the secular ideology. It is a clear management of science within the process of utilitarianism. So what scientific theorists see as worldly materialistic utilitarian ideas can be harnessed and seized upon. Thus, science was captive to the spirit of the era and its intellectual tendencies, and secularism as a whole, whilst secularism used science for its purposes. This is the mutual exchange of services between secularism and the experimental, sensory scientific method.

The rapid adoption of this new compromise was facilitated by Christianity itself. The notion of a division between religious matters and worldly matters, between the spiritual and the material, already existed within Christianity since Roman times, as has been explained in the section above. Because of the innate division within Christianity itself in regards to religious and worldly affairs, the separation of religion from life brought little practical change at first. Europe was Christian. Its people believed in the Christian creed and followed Christian teachings. They would continue to follow their religion in their personal lives. Also, the European ruling class was Christian, and would continue to rule in accordance with whatever guidance their religion provided for life's affairs. Over centuries of Christian civilisation, the peoples of Europe followed a theory of natural law by which they came to view their thoughts about life's affairs as valid both religiously as well as rationally. Even if religion were separated, they would continue to practice the same solutions for rational reasons. Christians were rationally convinced, on the basis of natural law, that authority must be delegated to a single ruler, that adultery was a crime, and that lands designated as the 'commons' must be supervised by the state as public property for all people to use. These thoughts did not change immediately after religion was separated. However, later, over decades and centuries, most of their thoughts about life did change. The Christian creed was no longer available to anchor public Western thinking about life, and, of course, the Islamic civilisation ceased to provide a model for the West to continue to copy. With public life stripped of the spiritual, the West's materialist drive only intensified. The theory of natural law came to be overshadowed by the theory of utilitarianism that had its roots in materialist philosophy. Man's goal in life was reduced to the seeking of material pleasures in this world alone.

Meanwhile, the compromise solution had left materialism undefeated. Materialists were only blocked from creedal discussions and so instead pressed on with non-creedal thoughts, such as the pagan political ideals of freedom and democracy. The French Revolution of the twelfth century Hijri was in fact a materialist-backed insurgency in which only freedom and democracy were publicly apparent. The revolution failed politically due to sabotage by Britain but the new political thoughts it introduced gained widespread intellectual acceptance in France and across

the West. And, in the thirteenth century Hijri, after Greek Rationalism had been completely buried, materialists returned once more to the subject of their creed. Karl Marx presented his scientific materialism within the Empiricist framework and even defined thinking itself in Empiricist terms by stating that it was no more than the reflection of reality on the brain. Fearful of revolutions sweeping across Europe, the West undertook their second compromise. The West devised modified individualist and voluntarist versions of freedom and democracy that accorded with the Western creed and did not constitute a threat to the established Western order. By adding these political thoughts to the creed of the separation of religion from life, the Western Capitalist ideology was now complete and Christian civilisation fully ended. The compromises that the West undertook saved them from the totalitarian horrors of materialist thought; the collectivist and determinist Communist ideology with its original materialist versions of freedom and democracy came to dominate a large part of the world in the fourteenth century Hijri. But it is the Western Capitalist ideology that has remained supreme in the world and is responsible for most of the evil that exists today. The new Capitalist ideology elevated thinking in the West, turning them from imitators and emulators to innovators and leaders. But they became innovators and leaders shaped by a false ideology that only exploits mankind both within Western society as well as across the world. Freedom and democracy, even in their softened forms, are disasters for all of humanity. Capitalism has fully unleashed the sinister rapacious excesses of the former Christian princes of the West. Truly it is now that the dark ages are upon us.

### **Both Greek Rationalism and Western Empiricism must be Rejected**

Christian thinkers were correct to finally reject the deeply flawed philosophy of Greek Rationalism. Syllogistic logic is simply a formal technique for derivation from basic premises. For abstract ideas, as in mathematics, logic or grammar, the premises are self-evident. The ignorant Greeks assumed that premises about the real world would be self-evident also. They conjured up vast systems of thought about the world without providing any evidence from reality. Syllogistic logic has two further limitations. Firstly, if a premise is speculative, then its derived result can also only be speculative. Secondly, it's easy to make mistakes in derivation; so even definitive premises give speculative results. The Greeks however were so confident of their syllogistic logic that they considered it superior to direct experience. If syllogistic logic produced a result that differed from reality, the Greeks assumed that it was their perception of reality that had deceived them. The ancient Greeks resorted to philosophical contemplation even in the empirical sciences; they had little need or patience for careful empirical observation and experimentation. Of course, initially, the Christians found syllogistic logic to be a wondrous tool for substantiating some of the more irrational aspects of the Christian creed. But syllogistic logic was even more useful in the hands of the materialists, who needed to justify their nonsensical claim that the material universe could exist without being created. Finally, Christian thinkers saw in Empiricism a way out from Greek Rationalism. By isolating religion from intellectual debate, Christians not only checked materialist attacks but also saved themselves from having to intellectually defend the irrational aspects of the Christian creed. Like most other developments, Empiricism was also inspired by earlier discussions in the Muslim world, in this case debate about the 'tabula rasa' theory of the mind as a blank slate that develops only through contact with reality. Christian thinkers seized on Empiricism as a timely alternate to Greek Rationalism.

The Christian West had already begun to embrace the empirical method in what is called the West's 'scientific revolution' of the Eleventh Century Hijri through repetition of observations and experimentation carried out centuries earlier by Muslim scientists. It is this empirical method that the Empiricists then falsely extended to all thoughts about the world. The empirical method is a valid style of thinking; but its purpose is only to study the nature of things as they exist, in the here and now. It requires repeatedly subjecting things to controlled predetermined conditions to study their response. The application of the empirical method can tell us with certainty that, under one atmosphere of pressure, water boils at 100°C, or that light travels at a constant velocity of 299,792,458 metres per second in a vacuum. But the empirical method can

tell us nothing about phenomena that cannot be repeated under controlled conditions, such as historical events, or the non-mechanical responses of living creatures. It is not possible for subjects such as politics and psychology to be studied empirically, no matter how popular 'data driven' approaches are today. Even within the empirical sciences themselves, it is necessary to move beyond the empirical method in order to theorise scientific explanations. The empirical method alone cannot give us Boyle's Law or Einstein's theory of general relativity. Scientific hypotheses, theories, and even laws are speculative generalisations that extrapolate from and expand upon finite sets of data. Newtonian mechanics was good theory for its time and benefitted mankind, but when it failed to explain newly available empirical data it was superseded by Einsteinian relativity. Today it is known that relativity too is deficient; it is inadequate in explaining quantum effects but physicists have yet to agree on a theory that can surpass it. Scientific theories employ induction, which moves from the specific to the general, as opposed to deduction, which moves from the general to the specific. Induction is necessarily speculative, since assumptions inevitably have to be made when generalising from limited data. The empirical method can give us definitive results but the scope of the empirical method is very narrow indeed.

Western Empiricism responds to the concern about its limitations by asking man to content himself with definitive knowledge of only his immediate sense perception. But routine daily experience shows that we can be certain of much more than simply that which we can see for ourselves. I can be certain about conclusions that I arrive at as long as they are specific and no generalisation is involved. If I find a hot cup of tea on the table in my room, then I know without any doubt that someone placed this there, even if I hadn't seen anyone doing that. I can be certain because I am moving from a specific known reality to a specific sound conclusion without generalisation. I am not advocating a general theory about all possible cups of tea in all possible rooms in all conceivable ages. I am only discussing this specific hot cup of tea that I find in front of me at this particular time, and regarding this, fully aware as I am of the circumstances at hand, it is possible for me to reach a definitive specific intellectual conclusion, free of any doubt. I can know something with complete certainty even if I have not directly seen it. The existence of the Creator can also be known with full confidence, as long as we move from specific sensed reality to specific conclusion without the intermediation of any generalisations about the world; in other words, without using either induction or deduction in thought concerning reality. It is, in fact, exactly this approach that man intuitively follows when he observes something magnificent in creation and realises that it could not make itself and nor could anything else in this world have made it. We must come to recognise this intuitive approach as legitimate intellectual reasoning.

Greek Rationalism and Western Empiricism were both wrong about the acquisition of knowledge because they failed to correctly define the thinking process in man. Thinking about the world requires four elements: the reality, the senses, the mind and previous information. If any of these four is absent then thinking cannot occur. Man cannot originate previous information but if some initial information is communicated to him, then he is able to develop and extend it; this increases his capacity for interpretation and he is able to in turn communicate a greater body of information to others. The thinking process in man is as follows: the sensation of reality is transferred through the senses to the mind where it is interpreted in accordance with relevant previous information. This is the rational method of thinking. It is necessary to distinguish style from method; syllogistic logic and the empirical method are both valid styles of thinking, but their application is limited. The rational method of thinking is general to all thinking about the world because it describes thinking itself.

The ancient disbelieving Greeks and the present disbelieving West both sought the origin of knowledge in other than Allah (swt). The Greeks considered the mind itself to be the source of knowledge; they imagined that the truth about any subject could be known simply through mental contemplation. Judgements just needed to be internally consistent; no external evidence was required. The philosophy of Rationalism gave the foolish Greeks license to deliberate upon anything and everything that caught their interest or captivated their imagination and led them to construct fantastical intellectual paradigms exhibiting the most astonishing delusions about the



reality of the world. They concocted solutions to life's affairs that have fomented untold misery for mankind, such as the idea of the abolishment of the family that materialists even today strive for. But in seeking to reign in the intellect, Western Empiricism went to the opposite extreme. Whereas for the Greeks the source of knowledge was the mind, for the Empiricists the source of knowledge became reality. Only that which was directly perceived could be known with certainty. The empirical sciences gained an exaggerated position in their culture and were stretched to judge upon matters far beyond their legitimate scope, such as in regards to the creation of man. The methodology of the empirical sciences was erroneously deployed through the philosophy of positivism into the so-called 'social sciences' to develop detailed solutions about life. In doing so, Western Empiricism confused the positive with the normative; it confused what is with what should be. It used the study of man's existing circumstances to extract solutions for those same circumstances, providing no higher thought by which man can navigate his way out of present predicaments. The Empiricists failed to realise that reality on its own is incapable of generating thought; it must be interpreted, and such interpretation requires that the mind combine the sense perception transferred to it from reality with previous information that is relative to the matter at hand. In truth, the source of knowledge is neither the mind nor the reality of this world. The source of knowledge is Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala. It is Allah (swt) that has placed before us this world and equipped us with senses and the mind; it is also Allah (swt) who provided the initial previous information that enabled the first man to begin interpreting what he perceived of the world, enabling him to accumulate knowledge that he could then transfer to the rest of mankind.

### **Life cannot be Separated from Religion**

The separation of religion from life must end. Goals in public life need to be aligned with goals in private life. The correct philosophy for life is not the separation of spirit from matter but the mixture of the spiritual with the material. Man must engage fully in life's affairs not for a material goal but for a transcendent spiritual goal giving due importance not only to the material but also the ethical, humanitarian and spiritual value in life. Man's true destiny is not in this world but in the next.

Man must build his life and civilisation on a sound and comprehensive intellectual basis that solves his greatest questions regarding the life of this world and what lies beyond. The question of the existence of the Creator pertains to the very essence of man's being and purpose in the life of this world. It is a question that cannot be relegated to the private life of the individual; upon its answer must depend the entire basis and structure of man's society, state and civilisation. Furthermore, it is a matter that most definitely can be known with complete intellectual certainty. Everything I perceive directly in this world exists, and yet it is clear that none of this is capable of existence in itself; everything is limited and dependent. When the mind is applied to interpret this reality, then the only possible explanation it can devise is that all this was created by a Creator who is beyond man's immediate perception. This conclusion is definitive because it employs definite sensed reality to reach a specific intellectual result without the intermediation of any generalised assumptions about the world. The reason that this conclusion has been obscured is not because man is incapable of reaching it but because he has been misled into supposing that his natural and intuitive thinking is somehow not rationally valid.

The Islamic creed provides a comprehensive intellectual solution to the question of man's existence and purpose in life, built on the correct and pure understanding of this world and what lies beyond. Man must take his goal in life and his solutions to life's problems from his Creator, through the revelation conveyed by His last Messenger Muhammad (saw) in the form of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. It is this that life and civilisation must be established upon. The Khilafah State achieved this in the past, and it shall soon achieve this again. The West has failed. With the permission of Allah (swt), the re-establishment of Islam is near at hand.