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## UNIFYING AND INFUSING KNOWLEDGE WITH ISLAMIC VALUES: AN APPRAISAL OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND CIVILISATIONAL NECESSITY

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### Abstract

Islam is dynamic and broad to accommodate a variety of perspectives as it is concerned with the totality of truth and considers the pursuit of knowledge within the value framework of Islam. Islamisation of knowledge in the present intellectual adventure is developed as a new model of study, exploring and reconciling the epistemological viewpoint based on Islamic spirit in contradistinction with western secular studies. Islamisation of knowledge is viewed as an epistemological and civilisation necessity not only for the Muslim *Ummah*, but also for mankind at large. This paper examines the concept of Islamisation of knowledge and methods of achieving it. It argues that Muslim *Ummah* is uniquely qualified to reconstruct human knowledge through an integrative approach and comprehensive reading of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. It concludes that the overarching reason for Islamisation of knowledge is the deep depression of dualism, secularisation and blind imitation which Muslim societies had fallen into.

**Keywords:** Unifying, Infusing, Knowledge, Islamic, Value

### Introduction

Islamisation of Knowledge (IOK) is the discovering, piecing together, compiling, communication and publishing of intellectual activity based on the Islamic concept of the universe. It is also the process of relisting the corpus of human knowledge to conform with the basic tenets of Islam. Islamisation of knowledge covers everything within the realm of the true belief in the existence of Allah (SWT). It is concerned with the totality of truth and considers the pursuit of knowledge within the value framework of Islam. IOK is aimed at reshaping all branches of human knowledge, humanities, pure and applied sciences in accordance with Islamic view and reality. The idea of Islamisation of Knowledge also involves re-establishing the supremacy of Islam in all fields of knowledge, which is unifying and infusing



knowledge with Islamic values and principles in its broadest sense. IOK entails conducting and producing high-impact researches that may contribute immensely in addressing the critical needs of the *Ummah* who, as described by Kamal Hassan, is in "miserable conditions" throughout the world and is in dire need of "academic and intellectual reform (Mohammad Hassan Kamal, 2009)."

It needs be emphasised that Islamisation of knowledge is conceived as a means toward a political end victory of Islam in the current civilisation struggle to dominate the world. The champions of the Islamisation of knowledge project considered the essence of the Qur'anic concept of *khilafah* in their drive to actualise aims and objectives of the strategy. Importantly, the people who are involved and whose energies have to be mobilised for the purpose of achieving the task are the Muslims. Islamisation of knowledge is viewed as an epistemological and civilisation necessity not only for the Muslim *Ummah*, but also for mankind at large. The Muslim *Ummah* is uniquely qualified to reconstruct human knowledge through an integrative approach and comprehensive reading of the two books of Allah: revelation in Quran and *Sunnah*, and creation in the physical world.

#### **Early Efforts of Scholars on Islamisation of Knowledge**

Since the eighteenth century, the world of Islam had been abuzz with calls for revival and regeneration. Voices like that of Shah Waliullah (1699–1762) on the Indian subcontinent, Mohammad bin Ismaiel al-Amir (1688–1768) in Yemen, and Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab (1792–1803) on the Arabian peninsula called for a return to pure Islam of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* in order to regain their lost vigor – a loss that was making them vulnerable to domination by others. These calls were taken up in the nineteenth century by reformers like Mufti Mohammad Abduh (1849–1905) in Egypt and Amir Abdul Qadir (1807–1883) in Algeria. By the middle of twentieth century, men like Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1838–1897), and Shakib Arslan (1869–1946) had taken up the intellectual challenges posed by Islam's need to revitalise itself. Powerful Islamic movements led by Hasan al-Banna in Egypt, Syed Abul A'la Mawdudi in the Indian subcontinent, and Mohammad Natsir in Indonesia were raising hopes of Islam regaining political power. The move toward Islamisation of knowledge was an offshoot of these developments. By the middle of the last century, the colonial rulers over Muslim lands had started departing, leaving in place an educational system – which disparaged natives, their religion and culture, belittled their contributions to human civilisation, and left them wondering how to catch up with the West. The reformers who knew better rightfully gave top priority to reviving the self-esteem of their peoples, showing them a path to respectability and grandeur that projected their own traditions. Understandably, the educational agenda presented to Muslims was prefaced by a strong criticism of Western systems – exempting technology that it was argued, could be enrolled in the service of a revived Islam. Any ambiguity felt in relating to natural sciences, which lay at the base of modern technologies and faith,



and that was to guide the new educational agenda, was sought to be removed by the appeal to the epistemological unity between reason and faith.

Indeed, for all Muslims, the Almighty Allah is the source of all knowledge and He has granted two types of knowledge to man to wit; revealed and acquired. This means therefore that all knowledge is sacred and inconceivable without values. Nevertheless, even though knowledge is sacred, its application can sometimes be mixed with human error, prejudice, passion and self-interest. Islam, in essence sees the need to equip its believers with an understanding about the inter-relationship of knowledge with everything it encompasses. Furthermore, education in Muslim countries must aspire to bring forward learners who are morally and spiritually upright in their conduct as good citizens of their countries and who are highly intellectual and professional to contribute to the betterment of society and humanity at large.

It has been asserted that the overarching reason for Islamisation of knowledge is the deep depression which Muslim societies had fallen into, which is mostly the result of other principal causes namely, dualism, secularisation and blind following Al-Faruqi (1982: 1). In other words, Muslims are living now in a predominantly Western age with its thought-pattern, culture and civilisation and its intellectual structure and educational training. This age of our history can rightly be called an age of intellectual and social enslavement. The social enslavement and intellectual of the people in Muslim countries, which is preceded by an age of political and military suppression, is mostly the result of the long period of the imperialistic rule of the West over the Muslim world and more significantly the present educational and academic system which is developed after the Western fashions, based on Western concepts of education, curricula and sciences which are Western in their appearance, contents and spirit and being manned by men educated in Western tradition. Indeed, Al-Faruqi (1982: 1) clearly refers to this fact, i.e. the malaise of the Islamic nation, when he asserts that no other nation has been subjected to comparable defeats or humiliation as the Islamic nation has, to the extent that it stands at "the lowest rung of the ladder of nations." He maintains that "Muslims were massacred, defeated and robbed of their land and wealth. They were colonised, double-crossed and exploited, proselytized, forced or bribed into conversion to other faiths. They were westernised, secularised and de-Islamised by internal and external agents of their enemies." A characteristic of bribery occurs where Muslims were being given food to eat, cloth to wear and shelter to lay their head. These are aimed at creating an impression that their religion is concerned about them.

It is noteworthy that Abu Sulayman (1989) concurs and argues that there exists a crisis in the Islamic nation involving the weakness, the backwardness, the absence of *ijtihad* (sustained reasoning), the intellectual stagnation of the Islamic nation, cultural progress in the Islamic nation, as well as the nation's rupture from the basic norms of Islamic civilization. All these issues indicate the intellectual crisis prevailing in the Muslim world resulting in the decadence and impotence of the



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Islamic nation preventing it from contributing decisively or significantly to the culture and civilisation of the modern world. Accordingly, the removal of the misconceptions of the Muslims idea of contemporary knowledge through Islamisation of modern knowledge is essential for any effective reform, clarity of vision and redirection of the Islamic nation.

The Islamisation of Knowledge may be brought about by the combined readings of the two books and the establishment on the basis of their similarity and complementarity of a methodology for research and discovery. One of the readings is reading the unseen in which revelation is accompanied by the interpretation and the attempt to discover its universals and the ways these manifest themselves in nature. The other one is an objective reading of the real-existence in the light of the universals expounded in the verses of revelation. Thus, what is required in this new methodology is to identify and articulate the relationship between revelation and the real-existence. Accordingly, six (6) steps upon which the concept of the Islamisation of knowledge may proceed are as follows:

- 1- Methodology for dealing with the Qur'an
- 2- Methodology form dealing with Sunnah.
- 3- Articulating the Islamic Paradigm of Knowledge.
- 4- Developing Qur'anic methodology.
- 5- Reexamining the Islamic Intellectual Heritage.
- 6- Dealing with the Western Intellectual Heritage.

### **Methods of Islamisation of Knowledge**

Islam calls all Muslims to seek knowledge and considers the acquisition of knowledge to be of enormous importance for everyone. The Qur'an in numerous verses attaches paramount importance to acquiring knowledge and enjoins its believers to make search of knowledge as their sacred duty (*al-Hajj*: 54). Allah says:

And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it (this Qur'an) is the truth from your Lord, and that they may believe therein, and their hearts may submit to it with humility. And verily, Allah is the Guide of those who believe, to the Straight Path.

Learning and teaching in Islam is an old human phenomenon. It came to existence since Adam, the father of all humans (peace of Allah be upon him) was created. He was created differently and unlike other creatures in life before him, in that that he was created for specific reasons and for certain goals and therefore endowed with assisting faculties and capacities that enabled him to become a different creature. He was created with the ability to learn and to teach. Allah (SWT) after creating Adam as his vicegerent on earth (bearing in mind the facts that angels had objected to his creation for fear of corruption on earth) taught him the names of all things. The Qur'an documents this fact when the Almighty Allah says:



And He (Allah) taught Adam all the names (of everything), then He showed them to the angels and said: Tell Me the names of these if you are truthful. They (angels) said: Glory be to You, we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Verily, it is You, the All-Knower, the All-Wise. (*al-Baqarah*: 31-32).

Knowledge and education no doubt are inseparable from religion and the Qur'an and *Sunnah* are replete with many provisions and sayings that clearly show that education, knowledge, learning and men of learning occupy an important place. The Almighty Allah has honored and extolled the people who possess knowledge and raised their status high. Allah, the Most Exalted, reminds us of the very high status He is bestowing upon them saying:

Allah exalts the believers [among you] in proportion, as well as the ones endowed with knowledge, and Allah is all-aware of what you do. (*al-Mujadalah*: 11).

The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, emphasised the value of knowledge and highlighted the importance of acquiring knowledge for both Muslim men and women when he made seeking knowledge a duty i.e., an obligation on every Muslim. The noble prophet explained that the superiority of the one who has knowledge over the one who merely worships is like the superiority of the moon over every other heavenly body. He said that the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets and that the Prophets did not leave behind dinars or dirhams (i.e. money), rather their inheritance was knowledge, so whoever acquires it has gained a great share (*al-Tirmidhi*: 2682, *Abu Dawood*: 3641, and others) and that: "Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make a path to Paradise easy for him", (*al-Bukhari, Kitab al-'Ilm*: 10). The prophet of Allah was reported to often frequently said, "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave," and "Seek knowledge even though it be in China."

It has been observed that the present-day or contemporary knowledge needs to be Islamised because it has certain characteristics that do not conform to the Islamic worldview. Such characteristics inter alia:

- a. the adherence to the validity of dualistic vision of reality and truth;
- b. the reliance upon the powers of human reason alone to guide man through life so that the other means of acquiring knowledge such as intuition (which includes Revelation) is not acceptable;
- c. the affirmation and projection of a secular worldview; and
- d. the espousal of the doctrine of humanism.

Therefore, Islamisation of contemporary knowledge is the deliverance of knowledge from its interpretations based on secular ideology and from meanings and expressions of the secular. According to Al-Attas, the aim and objective of

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Islamisation of contemporary knowledge is to protect Muslims from corrupted knowledge that misguides and leads to confusion and skepticism of Muslim minds. It is also to produce true knowledge that can develop and mould Muslim minds and bring them to proper acknowledgement and recognition of God. Knowledge, which is in conformity with its true purpose, fitrah (way) and the Islamic worldview, will bring salvation to man in this world (*Al-Diniyah*) and hereafter (*Al-Haera*). Islamisation of contemporary knowledge will result in goodness, peace and justice and strengthening of the faith. It was also pointed out that two interrelated steps are involved in the process of Islamisation of present-day knowledge. First, the isolation process of Western elements and concepts from the body of knowledge and second, the infusion process of Islamic elements and key concepts into the body of knowledge. In other words, knowledge must be imbued with Islamic elements and key concepts after the foreign elements and key concepts are isolated from its every branch. Indeed, the Islamic elements and key concepts which, in view of their fundamental nature as defining the fitrah (way) imbue the knowledge with the quality of its natural function and purpose and thus makes it true knowledge. This isolation-infusion methodology to the concept of education is the aim of Islamic education which is to produce a good man and not a good citizen as it is understood in the West.

It needs to be emphasised that Islamisation of contemporary knowledge is only achievable through requisite understanding of the field in question. To this end, there is need to improve on the education of Muslims and this probably in the most powerful single instrument of change that needs to be employed. Although the term "Islamisation" was initially used in the context of knowledge, i.e. Islamisation of knowledge, it has been steadily extended to be applied to general categories of sciences, as in the case of Islamisation of the social sciences, or the Islamisation of single disciplines within the social sciences as in Islamisation of sociology or psychology, or even Islamisation of curricula of such individual disciplines and Islamisation of Engineering. It could be said that the Islamic education movement started as a reaction to the secularisation of education in Muslim countries and the subsequent marginalisation of the traditional Islamic sciences based on the Qur'an and *Sunnah*.

Islamisation of knowledge as a methodological foundation for cultural and social reform brings the Muslim world and Muslim intellectuals and political leaders to the step of second-stage of effective and comprehensive reforms to rebuild the *Ummah's* life and institutions. At this stage, the central question is where to begin rebuilding in the economic, political, scientific, or military sectors? It is like saying the obvious that in education indeed lies the answer and hence, Muslims should coordinate their efforts and establish their priorities and make education to come at the top. The more Muslims give to the cause of education and development at this stage to create sound Muslim mentality and psychology, the more Muslims acquire higher capabilities in all other fields.



Generally speaking, the method for the Islamisation of knowledge depends largely on the approaches to its implementation nationally and internationally. According to Al-Faruqi, to achieve IOK, there is need to master the modern disciplines, to master the Islamic legacy, to establish the specific relevance of Islam to each area of modern knowledge, to seek ways of creative synthesis between the legacy and the modern knowledge; to launch Islamic thought on the trajectory which leads it to fulfillment of the divine patterns of Allah (SWT). However, to achieve its objectives, the followings have been taken into account:

- i. Stratification of the primary concept- This means that the concepts generated by the shari'a paradigm should be stratified in a way that produces a higher conceivable unit. Hence, the conceivable higher unit remains associated with the primary concept. The understanding and ability of a researcher to identify a system, gather the relevant data, evaluate and interpret appropriately in accordance with the world around him through stratification is one of panaceas to the concept. It is against this backdrop that Fazhur Rahman submitted that Islamisation of knowledge is achievable only by examination of Islamic tradition (Quran and *Hadith*) (Fazhur Rahman: 1988.11).
- ii. Liberation of people from the western world view in a way that they strive toward the state of perfection. To know one-self is to know how one is different from others, not in material needs or utilitarian realities, but in terms of view of the world, spiritual hope and sound moral judgment. Today, to be modern is to be conscious of the nature of one's civilisation heritage. In essence, the conscious would produce its various manifestations, distinction from other streams of civilisation history and direction for the future. It is evidence that without such knowledge one cannot be the master of his own fate and certainly one cannot survive in this world. Unlike the past, the civilisation forces contending in this century can reach and overtake anyone without invasion or military occupation of one's land. They can subvert the mind, convert one's world view, neutralise and maintain one as a puppet whether he is aware of it or not. Certainly these forces are contending with one another to dominate the world, hence it is the decision of Muslims today whether or not Islam will be the victor tomorrow; and Muslims will be the subjects of history or merely its objects.
- iii. Prevention of regimentation in disciplines and programs of Islamisation of Knowledge. Therefore, IOK should follow area of specialisation on a particular field by specialists in that field. The paradigm shift would rest on the formulation and implementation of a unique methodology.

It should be pointed out that Muslim thinkers, reformists, intellectuals and renewalists have expressed their deep reservations and anxiety during the period of

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Western imperialism and colonialism concerning the negative aspects of secular Western civilisation and culture. They have argued that Islamic intellectual and cultural values offered more wholesome alternatives for modern man and society. This is because they were grounded in a worldview of the inherent harmony and complementarities between divine revelation and human reason. However, those Islamic renewal and reformist discourse was arrogantly and ignorantly dismissed by the Western intellectual establishment as anti-modern, apologetic and backward. With the exposure of the failure of secular modernity to deliver the promises of positivism, rationalism, humanism and scientism by Western post-modernist thinkers themselves in the 70s and 80s, the moral hazard of secular democracy and liberal capitalism has reached threatening proportions with severe global consequences. In their frantic search for the panacea to the crisis of global depression, some Western economists and financial experts are now willing to allow the Islamic financial system and banking industry to play a more active role as one of the possible solutions to alleviate the current ailments as a result of the highly speculative and exploitative free-market forces which had created a crisis of deviant economics and enthroned the religion of market idolatry. This no doubt plunged the world into the Age of Turbulence.

### **International Approach**

Although the debate on the arrival of the Islamisation of knowledge (IOK) concept continues among today's scholars, giving it a practical framework is generally credited to the Ismail Raji al Faruqi, a Palestinian-American scholar and a founding member of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). The crusade of Islamisation of Knowledge was said to have started around 1977 after a series of conference held in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. During this conference, the following were identified as the main objectives of education:

- i. Education should aim at a balanced growth of the personality through training of the spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses of man. The training imparted to a Muslim must be such that faith is infused in the whole personality and creates in him an emotional attachment to Islam and enables him to follow the Qur'an and Sunnah and be governed by the Islamic system of values, willingly and joyfully, so that he may proceed to the realisation of his status as Khalifah to whom Allah has promised the authority of the universe. Education should therefore, cater for the growth of man in all aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively and motivate these aspects towards goodness and attainment of perfection. The ultimate aim of education in Islam is realisation of the individual's complete harmony with the Will of Allah at the personal, communal and human levels.



- ii. The education system in the Muslim world must be so shaped that it facilitates social mobility. All barriers must be removed to provide equal opportunity to all Muslims to attain the highest qualifications as far as their intellect could allow them.
- iii. Education should promote in man the creative impulse to rule himself and the universe as a true servant of Allah, not by opposing and coming into conflict with nature but, by understanding its laws and harnessing its forces for the growth of a personality that is in harmony with it.
- iv. Education by precept and example should instill piety and encourage self-purification and self-discipline as a means of penetrating into the mysteries of the universe and opening the heart to the fear and love of Allah. It should be for the purpose of seeking knowledge and indeed education in Islam is to produce a good man rather than a good citizen.

Prior to the 1977 conference period, there were agitations for education reform from Muslim scholars. Personal efforts were made by Muslim scholars like Sayyid Jamaluddin Al-Afhgani (d.1897), Rashid Rida (1935), Hassan Al- Banna (d.1949), Sayyid Quth (1966), etc. In the spirit of continuing this role, the first International Conference on Harmonisation of *Shari'ah* and Civil Law was held at the Legend Hotel in November 2003. Being the first conference of its kind, the papers discussed very general approaches to the harmonisation of *Shari'ah* and Civil laws in many fields. For this second conference, the organising committee decided to focus on the methodology for harmonisation. The objectives of this conference were:

1. to articulate methodological guidelines towards the harmonization of the *Shari'ah* and Civil law.
2. to identify the *modus operandi* towards achieving harmonisation of *Shari'ah* and Civil law.
3. to further refine the existing methodologies in achieving harmonisation of the *Shar'iah* and civil law.

#### *Strategies for Islamisation of Knowledge*

- a. Establishment of Islamic Universities like Islamic University of Kuthsia Bangladesh, Islamic University Pakistan, Islamic University Uganda, Islamic University Turkey, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Nigeria, Crescent University Abeokuta, Nigeria, etc. The idea that introducing Islamic concepts and precepts into modern knowledge created mainly by the West – coupled with a fresh approach to knowledge revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) aided by a critical assimilation of Muslim contributions during the past – will lead to re-emergence of Muslims as world leaders attracted a lot of attention. Some institutions tried to bring together traditional *'Ulama* (Muslim scholars) and modern-educated Muslim faculty under the same roof, in order to raise a new crop of Muslim students equipped with both kinds of



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- knowledge, modern and traditional. Some institutions dedicated to research in special disciplines – but manned by scholars with knowledge of Islamic sciences like *tafsīr*, *hadith*, and *Siddiqi* also came into being. International Islamic universities, especially those at Islamabad and Kuala Lumpur, have been under the management of the very people who authored the Islamisation agenda. A critical appraisal of what has been done over the quarter century since the agenda's inception will be instructive.
- b. Establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) - This institute was established in 1981 in the United States of America for the purpose of championing the cause of Islamisation of knowledge project. The Institute is an intellectual forum working on educational, academic and societal issues from an Islamic perspective to promote and support research projects, organise intellectual and cultural meetings, publish scholarly works and engage in teaching and training. It has established a distinct intellectual trend in Islamic thought which relates to the vivid legacy of the *Ummah* (Muslim nation) and its continuous efforts of intellectual and methodological reform, principally in the field of education, classical knowledge and social science. This involves a large number of researchers and scholars from various parts of the world. The IIIT also establishes offices in many countries of the world to champion its cause.
  - c. Establishment of the World Centre for Islamic Education in Makkah under the umbrella of Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1981. Since its inception on 25 September 1969, the OIC has acquired a rich experience in the international scene and more precisely within multilateral institutions. Representing 57 member States, the OIC has a considerable weight within these institutions where it makes others listen to the voice of the Islamic *Umma* and presents the image of moderate Islam, tolerant, open to dialogue and bearing the message of peace, harmony and solidarity between men. It is on this note that the OIC works towards the promotion of human rights, cooperation between States and peoples and access to modernity for the *Umma* with regard to their cultural and civilisation values.
  - d. Establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Science and Technology (IIIST) in Washington D.C in 1987 with the aim of promoting and professionalizing Islamic science and technology.
  - e. Establishment of the Institute of Education and Research in Bangladesh in 1981.
  - f. Establishment of the International Board of Educational Research and Resources (IBERR) in South African in 1993.
  - g. Establishment of Islamic Trust of Nigeria and Nigerian Association of Model Islamic Schools (NAMIS). NAMIS is a conglomerate of all registered private Islamic schools in Nigeria.



- h. Establishment of Islamic Model Primary School Minna, Nigeria by the Islamic Education Trust in 1984 with a view to teaching the secular subject like Health Science, Agricultural Science, Social Studies and General Science from the Islamic perspective. IET has successfully implemented the Islamisation of knowledge programme in the IET pre-primary and primary schools. It started by selling the idea to other private Islamic schools in the country by compiling the list of the schools and inviting them to a national seminar on Islamisation of knowledge since 1994.
- i. Islamisation of curriculum- Curricula of the traditional *madrasah* were adjusted to accommodate subjects like mathematics, history, science and geography. Nigeria, Bangladesh, etc. are good examples where this had been in vogue.

#### Malaysian Approach

In 1981, Mathair Mohammad became the Malaysian Prime Minister and was later re-elected again on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2018. Also, in 1982, the opposition Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) was taken over by a new leadership with a total commitment of setting up an Islamic state and rejecting nationalism and ethnic politics. The administration of Mahatir openly supported Islamic reform in Malaysia, hence Islam became a source of values of development. This resulted in establishment of Islamic universities, Islamic bank, Institute for Islamic Understanding, National Education Philosophy, among others.

#### i. Establishment of Islamic Universities

One of the universities established by the Malaysian government to achieve the objectives of Islamisation of knowledge is International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The main goal of this school was to disseminate Islamic knowledge based on epistemological foundations of revelation and reason and Islamisation of knowledge. IIUM was opened in 1983 with 180 students with two faculties, namely Law and Economics.

The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) has been playing an important and active role in contributing towards the process of Islamisation in all fields of knowledge in Malaysia. IIUM was originally set up as a university whose primary function was to impart integrated knowledge and skills in the true spirit of Islam as espoused in the Quran and Hadith. Consequently, IIUM has come to realise that teaching alone is insufficient to achieve its aim for educational and comprehensive excellence. Today the IIUM fully recognises the fact that research and development (R&D) are not merely complementary to teaching, but they are also vital to its gradual progress towards comprehensive excellence.

Further, with a specific effort aimed at promoting the conduct of quality Islamic-based research by IIUM's academic staff especially the classification of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* according to different disciplines as the basis for Islamisation of



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knowledge, the IIUM management established Research Management Centre (RMC) and appointed an economist, Abulhasan M. Sadiq, a Professor of Economics as the first Dean of the Centre. The appointment of Abulhasan was to ensure the usage of appropriate methodology and ability to relate Islamic norms to human behaviours and to social sciences.

Mohd Kamal Hassan, the IIUM's third rector, had stressed the importance of the IIUM making its mark in research when he said:

...the IIUM must strive to restore [its] wisdom, strengths, and dignity . . . university community should strive hard to make [the] IIUM a leading international center for educational excellence and research based on Tawhidic paradigm." With a similar competitive drive, the IIUM holds to the motto "Garden of Knowledge and Virtue.

Accordingly, the IIUM has been positioning itself as an institution that promotes the concept of Islamisation of human knowledge in teaching, research, consultancy, dissemination of knowledge and development of academic excellence in the university.

It was the expressed desire of the founding fathers of the IIUM that its graduates function as agents of Islamisation both locally and internationally. The IIUM fosters the idea of its founding fathers through the establishment of International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) with the objectives of promoting and understanding serious research in Islamic philosophy, science and civilization issue. It is important to mention that apart from IIUM, other Islamic institutions established to achieve Islamisation of knowledge in Malaysia include Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Islamic Academy of University of Malaya, etc.

#### ii. **Establishment of the Institute for Islamic Understanding (IKIM)**

This institute was established under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Department with the objectives of providing proper understanding of Islam to all Malaysians especially the non-Muslims. IKIM in its efforts on Islamisation of knowledge has entered into agreement with many organisations like Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO), International Islamic Call Society (IICS), the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO), etc. ISESCO for example, is a specialised institution of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. The Cooperation Agreement signed by IKIM and ISESCO which formalises the working relations and cooperation between the two bodies paved way for more intensive and exchanges of ideas toward Islamisation of knowledge and joint activities in future. The two bodies agreed to cooperate in research and studies; to publish books and references dealing with Islam, its history, civilisation and culture; to hold symposia and lectures; to organise exhibitions and



cultural gatherings/meetings; to study the Islamic heritage by scientific and scholarly means and disseminate the results of these studies with the aim of better introducing the riches of Islamic civilization.

Realising the threats towards the environment and wildlife species, IKIM has recently produced handbook as a result of the Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U) between World Wide Fund (WWF) Malaysia and IKIM that was signed in December 2011. In relation to this, both parties have collaborated in introducing and enhancing the understanding and appreciation of the masses towards the conservation of Species according to the teachings of Islam. WWF-Malaysia is a national conservation trust affiliated to the WWF global network. This agency is working to promote harmony between human beings and nature for about four decades now. The organisation to date runs more than 90 projects covering a diverse range of environmental protection and nature conservation work in Malaysia. WWF-Malaysia has come a long way since its coming into being on the 13th of January 1972. In its early days, it had solely focused on wildlife conservation such as saving endangered species like the tigers and turtles. Today, its work has extended to encompass marine and forest conservation as well and protecting highlands and forests, rivers and seas.

### iii. Introduction of National Education Philosophy

This is another method introduced towards ensuring Islamisation of knowledge in Malaysia. The 1996 Education Act which is an amendment of 1961 Act was enacted to provide pupils interalia; emotionally and spiritually balanced. To this end, the National Religious Secondary School was established where Quran, *Sunnah*, *Sharia* and Arabic language are made compulsory to enable the students possess sound and moral standard to appreciate knowledge in the Islamic perspective.

Prior to the British colonisation of Malaysia, education was informal and limited to acquiring skills that are critical for survival. These include fishing and farming for boys and cooking and weaving for girls. For example, if a student wanted to go further in his educational career, he would devote his time as an apprentice, live with a guru and learn various skills from the latter. A more advanced type of education during that period came in the form of the pondok or hut schools and education that was based on Islamic studies. Students would study the Qur'an under the tutelage of a Haji or Khatib in a hut set up by the scholar, either at his home, a surau or mosque. Although there were in fact, Christian missionary schools which were established during the Portuguese and Dutch occupation, they did not garner much response from the Malay community, whose feared were that their children would be influenced by Christianity. During the British occupation of Malaya, there was no clear policy on education. The British were contented to let the various types of schools which were already in existence during the period under consideration to carry on with their activities. In experimenting their divide and rule policy, the British did not establish rapport or affinity between the different races in Malaya through a standardised education system.



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The National Education System of Malaysia has gone through many reviews from time to time to ensure that it will be in line with the progress and needs of the country, achieve racial unity, to restructure the society and achieve the aim of the Vision 2020, where Malaysia will not only be developed in terms of science, economy and technology by the year 2020, but also in terms of moral and ethical values.

#### **AIKOL Approach**

Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws (AIKOL) is directly involved in the process of Islamisation of Knowledge in the field of law. The Harmonisation and Shari'ah Law Unit (HSLU) was established in AIKOL in 2002 to enhance the Shari'ah content of civil law and to take a reformist approach to the Shari'ah itself. In its bid to achieve the idea of Islamisation of knowledge, AIKOL offers degree courses to wit; Diploma, Administration of Islamic Judiciary, Master of Comparative Law and Doctor of Philosophy, Diploma in Sharia law and Practice and Bachelor of Laws programme. According to Kamal Hassan, a former Rector of IIUM, the first phase of IOK happened during the Rectorship of Muhammad AbdulRauf (1983-1988) which culminated in to the establishment of Centre for Fundamental Knowledge. The objective of the centre was to cater for the need for Islamic understanding and Islamic world view.

In the like manner, AIKOL in its efforts to achieve the IOK, established Harun M. Hashim Law Centre. The centre has been in the forefront of organising conferences and offering courses with the aims of achieving the goals of IOK. For example, the centre organised International Conference on Islamic Banking and Finance-Cross Border and Litigation in Collaboration with the University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA in June, 2010. The center is also offering training leading to the award of certificates in Islamic law like Executive Diploma in Islamic Banking, Master of Laws in Banking, etc. This is apart from the collaborative efforts of the centre with banks like Maybank, Central bank, Standard Chartered, Public bank, etc. which has been yielding positive results of entrenching Islamic principles in their day to day transactions with their customers through the graduates of the centre employed by various banks to meet the greater demands of the Islamic Banking system.

It is no doubt that AIKOL is playing a major role at ensuring the IOK. This position is fortified having regard to the introduction of Islamic perspective virtually in all the courses available under the common law. The courses on Islamic perspective include Islamic law of Contract, Islamic law of Crime and Torts, Islamic Family law, Islamic Constitutional law, to mention but a few. This idea is also crystal in the efforts of the academic staff researching on Islamic perspective in their area of interest e.g. the position of Islamic law on Environmental law and other area of interests.



It is crystal also from the postgraduate researches which have been concluded at AIKOL that the idea and spirit of Islamisation of knowledge is yielding a positive results going by the number and quality of the turn out since the conceptualization and integration of the idea in AIKOL. This is in addition to the number of scholarly articles in the area of IOK written by the member of the academic staff of the Kulliyah.

### **Challenges**

Some people may feel that Islamisation of Knowledge may lead to the spread of religious fanaticism or extremism or fundamentalism in our societies. They ignore the fact that fanaticism or extremism comes out of ignorance, not from knowledge. Only ignorance combined with passion and emotion causes fanaticism. The more a Muslim knows about Islamic teachings the more he or she becomes restrained and governed by rule of Islam, not by his emotion. The followings have been identified as the problems of IOK globally:

- i. Acceptability
- ii. Resources
- iii. Enlightenment
- iv. Government patronage, etc.

### **Conclusion**

Islamisation of Knowledge in the present intellectual adventure is developed as a new model of study, exploring and reconciling the epistemological viewpoint based on Islamic spirit in contradistinction with western secular studies. Islam, beyond peradventure is dynamic and broad to accommodate a variety of perspectives. Therefore, this paradigm of accommodating varieties of human endeavour in the light of the existing Islamic spirit, is the hallmark of Islamisation of knowledge. Modernisation in the secular studies can be redefined in the Islamic perspective by showing that there is plausible solution through the Islamisation of Knowledge. Generally speaking, IOK is not a new phenomenon but it had been in existence during the time of Prophet (SAW) to bring the entire domain of knowledge under Islamic axis. Al-Faruqi identified twelve points for the implementation of the IOK. The mastery of the modern disciplines, the mastery of Islamic legacy, the establishment of the specific relevance of Islam to each discipline among others are some of the work plans. Therefore, Muslims should coordinate their efforts and establish their priorities and make education to come at the top. The more Muslims give to the cause of education and development at this stage to create sound Muslim mentality and psychology, the more Muslims acquire higher capabilities in all other fields.



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