

THEORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE ISLAMIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the rigorous framework of Islamization of knowledge, in light of its discursive philosophy and history and deep debates of Islamization of present-day knowledge. It looks into classical role of its major proponents and institutions in articulating the ideas of Islamization of knowledge and the essence of tawhid in late 1970-80s and its impact in spearheading the movement for dynamic and modern Islamic worldview and renewed religious consciousness. This was consistently undertaken by IIUM and IIIT in promoting the idea of Islamization of human knowledge and integration of knowledge and value. The study was qualitative in nature in the form of integrative library research. Data was collected from primary and secondary sources and analyzed using certain inductive and deductive method. The finding shows that fundamental issues in Islamization of knowledge has been articulated consistently with principal debate relating to classical ideas of its methodology and workplan.

Keywords: Islamization of knowledge; science and religion; philosophy of science

INTRODUCTION

Among the main crises in higher education in the Islamic world is the secular educational basis that is rooted in educational practices derived from the legacy of colonizers who brought the dualism and dichotomy of knowledge. This system, which denies the knowledge of divinity and separates the notions of revelation and reason, moral values and morals, has caused fundamental chaos and confusion and resulted in a severe moral and intellectual crisis among the ummah. The deconstruction of values and the depravity of this system were discussed in the First World Conference on Islamic Education in Mecca in 1977 which formulated that the real crisis that shackles the ummah is an intellectual crisis. This educational crisis and problem has been attempted to be addressed by the consensus reached at the Conference to create an Islamic university. This was realized in 1983 with the establishment of Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM) which plays a role in upholding the values and philosophy of change and reforming the education system, through efforts to Islamize and integrate science and values.

Accordingly, this paper seeks to analyze the origins of the notion of Islamization of knowledge and its aspirations within the framework of philosophy and the intellectual history and tradition of contemporary Islamic thought. It specifically reviews the role and contribution of al-Faruqi and al-Attas and their pioneering work in conceptualizing, and developing integrative approaches, which have provided valuable reference material for young researchers and scholars who wish to develop a contemporary body of knowledge from an Islamic perspective. In the current context, these efforts are also related to the role of educational institutions such as UIAM and IIIT in leading the movement for change in education, focusing on the efforts of Islamicizing knowledge (Islamiyyat al-Ma'rifat) and

integrating science (Takamul al-Ma'rifi) that have been in motion since 1983. He explores the manhaj underlying this important initiative in theoretical and practical terms synthesized across all the Kulliyah. The study also highlights the development of integration efforts at IIUM and its relation to recent initiatives such as the relevance of revelatory sciences, Islamization, and Islamic input in secular sciences. The study also analyzes the aspects of integration such as the integration of knowledge and values, curriculum, scientific disciplines, science and charity and revelation and reason and looks at its contribution to the Islamicization of science and efforts to revive the turath and intellectual heritage, culture and thought and produce mutafannin people. This research is important to see the significant impression pioneered by UIAM and IIIT in raising the dignity and value of education in the Islamic world and awakening its tradition of thought and civilization.

This freelance study that discusses the idea and understanding of Islamization and integration of science at UIAM focuses a lot on manhaj and its operation in the curriculum, and scientific disciplines. Abu Baker Mohmed (2004) in his thesis which examines the principles and foundations put forward in the integration of science (takamul al-ma'rifi) in the Kulliyah of Revelation Science and Humanitarian Science (KIRKHS), UIAM formulates that the fikrah and philosophy of integration is an important foundation in the methods and instructions of learning in the Kulliyah in its theoretical and practical framework, and this experience has contributed to the development of ideas and manhaj as a model raised in Islamic higher education to overcome the crisis of education and civilization. This research is strengthened by Ibrahim Mohamed Zein (2011) in his paper highlighting the impact of al-Faruqi's writing ideas on UIAM, explaining that the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (KIRKHS) inspired by Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman, the second Chancellor was created to support efforts to integrate religious sciences and social sciences, and produce Muslim professionals who can realize the vision of Islam. According to him: "even some might argue that the best way to achieve that goal (to reform Islamic education and produce Muslim professionals) would be through integration of knowledge. This became the main principle around which the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences was set up to facilitate the goal of integrating social sciences with Islamic Revealed Knowledge" (2011: 57-58). This was also elaborated by Tan Sri Prof. Dr. Mohd. Kamal Hassan (2013) in his significant writing on the basis and aims and objectives of science integration at UIAM by providing a clear definition of the doctrine and idea of change and improvement (islah), renewal (tajdid), refreshment (ihya'), relevance, modification (tahdith) and integration (takamul ma'rifi), as well as intellectual and academic initiatives and efforts that are driven to realize the vision of the Islamicization of scientific knowledge and the integrative mission that was initiated: "the integration or incorporation of Divinely revealed values and norms/Islamic worldview/Islamic or Qur'anic perspectives/positive aspects of Muslim religious and intellectual legacy with the contemporary social sciences, human sciences, humanities, natural sciences, applied and professional sciences." This was attempted in a planned and strategic manner, by expanding and solidifying the initiative through limited integration efforts in the Kulliyah Sains dan Perubatan, as he states: "A form of limited integration called "Islamic Input" has been going on for some time now in the Kulliyah of Medicine."

In the framework of its theory and conception, this idea was also studied by W. Mohd Azam Mohd Amin (2014) in his article which highlighted the principles and principles of epistemology that gave birth to the concept of integration of science from the great works of classical Islamic fuqaha



and philosophers such as Imam Muhammad Idris al-Shafi'i (w. 204/820) in *Jima' al-'Ilm*, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111) in *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, Ibn Khaldun (d. 806/1406) in *'Ilm al-Sana'i*, and al-Dihlawi in *al-Funun*. It is the convincing understanding and terminology of science in these works that shows that the basic framework on the integration of science has been developed by those who emphasized on the concept of *ruh, ma'rifah* and its practical aspects. This principle was developed in the modern framework by recent Islamic thinkers who expressed the terms Islamization (*Aslamat al-ma'rifah*), Islamicization (*Islamiyyat al-ma'rifat*) and integration of the sciences (*al-takamul*) to continue the Islamization efforts that were founded.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method of this study is based on the method of literature review and field data, both qualitative and quantitative literature. An extensive review of theory, philosophy, and integrative *manhaj* (*takamul al-ma'rifi*) which is then implemented in formulating ideas and views based on inductive (*istiqra'*) and deductive (*istinbat*) methods that are objective and scientific.

Our field data was obtained based on interviews with the highest leaders of the University who were responsible for launching the foundation paper on the establishment of an Islamic university, and became the initial designers who laid the foundation for the Islamization and integration of science and became the backbone and important architects to the idea of Islamicizing science (*Islamiyyat al-Ma'rifat*), such as Prof. Emeritus Dato' Dr. Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman (1936-18 August 2021), Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Mohamed Zein, and others.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper looks at the basic principles of the notion of Islamization of knowledge and the idea of integration of knowledge and values. This line of thought is analyzed from a broad historical and philosophical framework that is consistently developed and strengthened in the modern context in order to realize the goals of Islamization (*Aslamat al-ma'rifah*), Islamicization (*Islamiyyat al-ma'rifat*) and comprehensive integration of the sciences (*al-takamul*). Basically, this study discusses the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK), as a project that represents the response of Muslim intellectuals to modernity. This intellectual response began in the late 1960s and became an important feature of scholarly debates and discussions in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This paper attempts to offer a comprehensive overview of IOK, discussing the views of its main pioneers as well as its critics and summarizing issues related to the meaning, rationale, and process of Islamization of knowledge itself.

The Islamization of Science (IOS) can be considered one of the most important intellectual movements of the 20th century, and it turns out to be one of the most reliable and enduring counter-responses of current Islamic intellectuals to modernity, if we take the late 1960s as its starting point. It is important to note that like most scholars discussed in this paper, IOK should be seen primarily as an epistemological and methodological problem. After almost 30 years, there are a great many studies that try to discuss and analyze the IOK project. However, the works are usually limited to the ideas of certain individuals or institutions and if comparisons are made, these are rather limited in scope and number.



IOK advocates see the root cause of the problem as science as it has been interpreted through the Western worldview and its epistemological foundations. It is important at this point to state that all scholars who claim to advance the IOK agenda must, by definition, support interaction with modern knowledge rather than taking a rejectionist stance. By definition, IOK envisioned supporting the stance that solutions to contemporary problems demanded a synthesis between Islamic heritage and contemporary knowledge (Fazlur Rahman, 1965:75-76). While the latter half of the 1970s and early 1980s saw the introduction and initial growth of the concept of Islamization, the late 1980s and early 1990s can be seen as a decade of "excitement" and "active assertion" and attempts towards "product development" i.e., "Islamic textbooks." However, towards the second half of the 1990s, many began to question the "Islamic product" put forward, and instead questioned the whole project. What are the strengths, weaknesses and can the IOK project survive another decade.

There have been quite a few works on IOK released over the last twenty years. There have been proponents of IOK with their various approaches and views on what it involves; there have been critics of IOK; a number of authors have tried to review the writings of individuals or institutions; while others have attempted to make comparisons between scholars and their ideas. The experience of IOK, both positive and negative over the past twenty years, especially since the early 1980s saw the establishment of institutions such as the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM), and Institut Pemikiran dan Tamadun Islam Antarabangsa (ISTAC) that were established to expand the work of IOK. These institutions are critical in that they have been the physical places where IOK efforts have flourished since the last two decades.

The main writings on IOK were initiated by two main figures. The first is Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, whose main works are books and monographs published in the second half of the 1970s, mostly by Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) and later published by the Institut Pemikiran dan Tamadun Islam Antarabangsa (ISTAC), founded in 1987, of which he is the founder-director. Another major figure or group of individuals are those associated with the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) based in Herndon, Virginia and established in 1981. Major authors of the IIIT include the late Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, Taha Jabir al-Alwani, all Presidents of the IIIT at various times, who through their writings have raised the "IIIT School of Thought" to its present state. (Mohamed Aslam Haneef, 2005).

With political independence came Muslim pressure on their respective governments for greater "indigenous solutions" to their political, social and economic problems. The perceived failures of the capitalist and socialist systems for Muslims, combined with the newfound wealth in oil-rich Islamic countries also led to a greater call for Islamic solutions and alternatives. On the intellectual front, Islamic economics was the first beneficiary of the newfound wealth and intellectual awakening that resulted in the First International Conference on Islamic Economics held in Mecca in 1976. The following year, the First World Conference on Islamic Education was also held in Mecca, and discussed among other things the need for reform in the education system in Muslim countries as well as the idea of IOK. Although this conference led to the establishment of specialized "Islamic" universities, one in Islamabad (1981) and the other in Kuala Lumpur (1983), the idea of IOK can probably be traced back to the mid-sixties. (Louay Safi, 1996, 5).

The two main proponents of IOK, namely al-Attas and al-Faruqi/IIIT, cite two reasons that



provide a rationale for IOK, albeit with different emphases and qualifiers. The first reason that can be considered as an external reason is the political, social and economic situation of Muslims. Al-Faruqi, in particular, mentions in the section titled 'Problems' in his 1982 framework, the "lethargy of the ummah," i.e. the backwardness and low condition of the contemporary ummah in all fields (Al-Faruqi, 1982:1-6), political (divided, disunited, military rule), economic (undeveloped, dependent on the West, illiterate despite the vast oil wealth just discovered) and religio-cultural (westernized, alienated from Islam and its culture).

While all these manifestations may be true facts in the Islamic world, Umar Hassan (1988) in his short response to the IOK project warned of al-Faruqi's overemphasis on these external factors and what he saw as a continuous identification with the West, fearing it could lead to entrapment in the Western framework, a theme that many critics such as Ziauddin Sardar, Nasim Butt and Yasien Mohamed (1993) have also raised. The main cause of the malaise is seen to lie in the current state of education in the Islamic world and the lack of vision on the part of Muslims. To be fair to al-Faruqi, these are internal causes and are recognized by him. The former is a problem because it is shackled by two forms of systems, one secular and modern, the other religious and traditional. The latter is not given sufficient attention by al-Faruqi. Referring to the education system, he laments that the absence of this Islamic vision has denied the education system to truly reflect Islamic ideals and has instead created a state of mediocrity among teachers and students who are unable to oppose the foreign ideologies faced in universities.

Abu Sulayman (1994: 2), who took over from al-Faruqi as President of the IIIT, sees the main cause of the malaise as the ummah's misconception of science that created a "crisis of thought" that has made Muslims poor converts to the West. Both Abu Sulayman and al-Alwani (1989), the third President of the IIIT, add to what they call the "historical division" of science into the shari'ah sciences and other sciences, leading to over-concentration and narrow specialization in the former and neglect in the latter. The other sciences, which include the social sciences and humanities, were abandoned to the modern/secular systems of the West. For Abu Sulayman, there is an urgent need to correct this "revelation-sense" relationship, redefine the scope of science and establish Islamic educational infrastructure (including systems).

In contrast, another major contributor to the IOK discourse, namely al-Attas, while acknowledging that the problems faced by Islamic societies cannot be separated from external factors, specifically historical encounters with Western culture and civilization and the consequences of colonialism, suggests the main cause of this backwardness stems from internal causes, more specifically from what he termed the "loss of adab" within Muslims themselves. By adab, al-Attas is referring to the discipline of body, mind and soul that has resulted in a loss of justice, which exposes the internal fallacies of knowledge. This error of knowledge is due to the inability of Muslims to distinguish "true knowledge" from knowledge that has been absorbed with a Western vision. The internal dimension or reason for the call to IOK comes from the basic premise that current science is not neutral. This requires some explanation, as there are differing views on this, though one can see the issue as a matter of definition and the scope of what is referred to when IOK is mentioned. In al-Attas' work that spans between 1978-1996, he focuses primarily on the interrelationship between the Islamic vision/worldview and science and makes relatively in-depth comparisons with Western (specifically Christian) philosophical and theological foundations.



Both al-Attas and al-Faruqi refer to the worldview/framework in which current science is interpreted and presented within. While al-Faruqi and the IIIT (1982, 1989) mention the "two forms of educational systems," one religious and the other modern, as targets for reform and unification, there is insufficient consideration of the issue of science. Their focus was rather on the various disciplines found in modern universities. Al-Attas, however is quite clear in what he sees as the problem in the following statement:

Our real challenge is the problem of the destruction of knowledge. This is due to our own mistakes as well as to the influences coming from the philosophies, sciences, and ideologies of Western culture and civilization (1995, 15) I dare state that the greatest challenge that has surreptitiously arisen in our time is the challenge to science, in fact, not to ignorance; but to science as understood and spread around the world by Western civilization.... I think it is important to emphasize that science is not neutral...but its interpretation through the prism, as it were, of the worldview, intellectual insights and psychological perceptions of the civilization which now plays a key role in its formulation and dissemination (1978, 127).

Al-Faruqi (1981, 1982) also discussed internal factors but not in as much detail as al-Attas. He sees Western social science as "incomplete" because it ignores revelation as a source of knowledge; "necessarily Western" or rather, eurocentric, because it developed in the Western European experience over the past three centuries; and finally, the rejection of revelation violates a crucial requirement of Islamic methodology, precisely the need for IOK. Al-Alwani (1995) supports this with his view that modern science has become "positivistic," a "one-book" reading (nature only), therefore inadequate from an Islamic perspective that demands a "two-book reading" (revelation and nature). In an earlier paper (1989), he acknowledged that the current social and humanitarian sciences are products of Western thought and have methodologies, content, results, objectives, explanations of human behavior and views on life and nature that are contrary to the Islamic perspective. Only a "reading of the two books" will provide a balanced understanding of reality. Failure to do so will not produce a truly educated society but only "clerks and employees" (1989, 233).

In considering and analyzing the various opinions on IOK, a proper definition of the phrase needs to be put forward. Some scholars pay more attention to the need for a definition, others are content with a "working definition" while many either do not see it as important or take one of the definitions given by other scholars. IIIT seems to have taken the latter view as stated by al-Alwani (1995, 83) that:

Scholars of our schools of thought have not attempted to provide truly inclusive and exclusive definitions in the classical way. He adds that the IOK agenda should not be limited to hard and fast boundaries of definitions. This paper argues that at least a working definition is necessary so that Islamization efforts have a goal and a focus. Having a definition also identifies the scope of Islamization and enables the determination of the priority of the effort. In this regard, al-Attas stands out from others for his insistence on precise definitions of terms and concepts used in scholarship. Generally, Islamization is defined by al-Attas (1978) as:

...the liberation of man first from magical, mythical, animistic, national-cultural traditions (which are contrary to Islam), then from secular control over his mind and language.

With regard to science, especially modern or contemporary science, as stated in the previous section, it is not value-free. It should reflect the interpretation and framework of the civilization in which it develops. Thus, Islamization in this context is meaningful:

The liberation of science from its interpretation based on secular ideologies; and from secular meanings and expressions. A very important part of this liberation and release is the concept of natural view which al-Attas (1995) defines as: "the view of nature and truth that appears before our mind's eye revealing the true nature of existence," represented by the phrase *ru'yat al-islam li al-wujud*. This Islamic vision of nature and truth, which is a metaphysical overview of the visible and invisible world and life as a whole, needs to be understood by the "Islamizer" first because the process of Islamization cannot take place unless the person carrying it out knows what needs to be "applied," what is acceptable, and what are the alternatives that are acceptable or not and why.

While social/humanitarian science is the main branch of science that is the focus of Islamization, the scientific, physical and practical sciences are also involved in terms of their underlying philosophical foundations, interpretations and the formulation of theories. In fact, according to al-Attas (1995) the task of Islamization of science must involve: A critical examination of the methods of modern science; its concepts, assumptions, and symbols; its empirical and rational aspects, and those that violate values and ethics; its interpretation of origins, its theory of science; its assumptions about the existence of the external world, about the uniformity of nature, and about the rationality of natural processes; its theory of nature; its classification of science: its limitations and interrelationships with each other in science and its social relations.

Wan Mohd. Nor (1997) in his work on al-Attas warns that one may find the weak-minded erroneously regarding the process of Islamization as a mechanical process that works outside the mind and soul. Quoting al-Attas, he reminds the reader that the processes of IOK are conceptual, rather "they are presented to the intellect, and therefore referred to as being in the mind." It is these weak-minded individuals who then start talking about "Islamic bicycles, Islamic trains and Islamic bombs," or give higher priority to the creation of physical institutions, without realizing that IOK requires first of all, a brilliant intellect.

Al-Faruqi (1982) also saw IOK as a process of "reconstituting science as Islam relates to it." It involves a wide scope of activities including, ultimately, to overcome the dichotomy between the modern secular education system and traditional Islam. IOK also aims to "produce university-level textbooks by reconstituting about twenty disciplines according to the Islamic vision" and while mastery of modern science is the "first prerequisite" for IOK, this must be followed by "integrating the new science into the corpus of the Islamic heritage by eliminating, editing, reinterpreting and adjusting its components as dictated by the Islamic worldview and its values".

From the definitions and scopes put forward by al-Attas and a little as much by al-Faruqi, it is evident that IOK as expressed by Ragab (1995), is primarily a matter of epistemology and methodology and involves the integration of sciences based on Islamic sources, which is accomplished by modern social science methods. It is a research and theory-building endeavor, intending to restore the scientific enterprise in general and social science in particular, to the right path of unification of revelation and observation of the real world; it cannot be a simple process of addition and rejection but a serious process of 'creative engagement' with modern social science (Ragab, 1997).



CONCLUSION

This paper has formulated a brief view on the Islamization of science with an overview and historical analysis that supports and challenges the criticisms and theses put forward. The theses of al-Faruqi and al-Attas have been widely recognized as intellectually distinctive among Islamic scholars and literature, with some effective criticism at the most basic level especially by Ziauddin Sardar. The findings of the study show the similarities and differences in ideas as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the concepts, philosophical frameworks and methodologies of both, in addition to exploring the possibility of reconciling the theories and premises expressed for furthering the efforts of the Islamization of Science. In researching, comparing and analyzing the ideas of both scholars in relation to various interpretations related to the concept of Islamization of Knowledge, it reveals the openness of the ideas and integrative manhaj outlined and their effectiveness in addressing the problems of dichotomy and intellectual and value crises in the Islamic world, while establishing a holistic and ideal method of integrating 'ulum al-naqli and aqli for accelerating renewal efforts and driving the educational revolution in the Islamic world.

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