

## An Overview of Islamization of Knowledge from the Perspective of International Institute of Islamic Thought's (IIIT)

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**Abstract:** The Islamization of knowledge since its inception in the second half of 1970 has attracted the interest of Muslim intellectuals and activists throughout the world. It is a highly debated contemporary issue especially among the academia. Two academic Institutions spearhead the process; the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). This article attempts to examine the process from the IIIT perspective, due to its tremendous efforts in promotion and dissemination of the process by means of publication, seminars and workshops. A conceptual analysis of the process and its historical background is also dealt with in this paper. Some pioneers' view from the IIIT group and their strategy for Islamization of knowledge and their road-map for the process are also delineated. Using an analytical approach the article concludes the urgency of the need for the designation of an Islamic paradigm of knowledge based on the Islamic world view, by means of which Islamic intellectual heritage can be reactivated and made capable of providing solutions to problems of contemporary society.

**Keywords:** Islamization of Knowledge, methodology, jurisprudence, revelation and reason.

## INTRODUCTION

According to Al-'Alwani [1] one of the pioneers of the Islamic Institute for Islamic Thought, Islamization of knowledge basically stands for rearranging the sciences and their principles in terms of methodology and epistemology with the aim of removing conflict between universal principles and scientific facts. It is not, as one may presume, a cosmetic addition of religious terminologies to studies in social science or piecing together relevant Qur'anic verses pertaining to the subject of Islamization. In other words, Islamization of knowledge can be viewed as the designation of a dynamic methodology for knowledge and its sources, which could facilitate the formation of a dynamic normative framework for developing ideal human patterns for individual and society. Since social sciences and humanities are primarily developed in western countries they are deeply rooted in western values and to a great extent influenced by western culture. It is therefore imperative to re-evaluate them in the light of Islamic world view so that they could be made relevant to the context of Muslim society.

Al-'Alwani [1] provides a broader perspective on the Islamization of knowledge by viewing it as an epistemological and civilizational necessity not only for Muslims but for all of humanity. Initially, the process of Islamization of knowledge focused on presenting a criticism of both the traditional Muslim and western methodologies. Later it was followed by presentation of general outline of the process in which focus was made on identifying the epistemological foundations of an Islamic methodology.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Generally speaking, the process of Islamization of Knowledge can be traced back to the very beginning of descent of the Divine revelation to the Prophet Muhammad pbuh " 'Iqra' bi-ismi Rabbika alladhi khalaq..." [2] He used Divine knowledge to reform people's thought, attitudes and behaviour hence, building the first Islamic civilization on a spiritual basis. Divine knowledge played a key role in structuring and flourishing the Islamic society hence, its civilization. The success of Islamic civilization in its

early stage was due to the tremendous interest the people had in knowledge, and their commitment to the establishment of truth, justice and promotion of goodness and peace in society. Muslim scholars due to their strong quest for knowledge studied and translated the work of the early Greek philosophers. Some being impressed by speculative ideas and false notions, accepted them as truths. Among them were the group known as the Mu'tazzilites.

According to Ahsan *et al.* [3] Ibn Rushd, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and others, who were influenced by the writings of Greek philosophers, paved the way for Hellenic conceptualization in Muslim thought. This could be designated as the intellectual incursion through which certain philosophical and metaphysical concepts were introduced into Islamic thought resulting in much controversy and endless sophistry[4]. However, in response to this some Muslim scholars made tremendous efforts to remove the negative effect of the Hellenic notions and speculative ideas on the mind and thoughts of the Muslim. Imam al-Ghazali, Imam al-Shatibi, Imam al-Razi, Imam Ibn Taimiyah and Shah Waliullah are viewed as the pioneers of this reform movement who established the sciences of *Usul* based on Qur'anic epistemological approach as a tool for dealing with this problem effectively [5].

The beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century marked the decline of Muslim civilization and the rise of western civilization which had a severe impact on the psych and mind of the Muslim society as they lost motivation for seeking knowledge, while the west started building its intellectual base from the stock they borrowed from Muslim institutions. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Muslim reformers adopted a different strategy to deal with the deteriorating conditions of the Muslim society. They used the platform of political reform to remedy the situation. Among the outstanding figures of this movement were; Shaykh Mohammad Ibn Abdul Wahab in the Arabian Peninsula, Sunusi in North Africa, Mahdi in Sudan, Midhat Pasha in Turkey, Khayri-i-Din Pasha in Tunisia, Malikum Khan in Persia and Sayyed Ahmad Khan and Amir Ali in India[6].

Consequently, the call for political reform culminated the reform movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, pioneered by Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani [7] his contemporary Sayyid Abd Rahman [8], and his disciple Sayyid Muhammad Rashid Ridha [7]. The banner of this reform movement was carried on by some modern Islamic movements such as Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Muslim brotherhood) which was founded by Imam Shahid Hasan al-Banna in 1923, and Jam'ah Islami, established by Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi in 1941 [6]. These movements were supposed to have developed the discourse of their predecessor by presenting a more general and

comprehensive call, addressing the masses. However, they were not able to address the masses at large; hence they were destined to fail due to their misunderstanding the core of the problem which was the crisis of the 'thought'. [10].

To remedy the deteriorating condition of the Muslim society a group of Muslim youth studying in the United States in different universities came together and founded the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, as a platform for addressing the crisis of thought in 1972. Embarking on the re-evaluation and reassessment of the different Islamic movement, they came up with the idea of reformation of Islamic thought and the integration of western achievement in methodology with Islamic values and its belief system. To give it practical form, right after its formation the association got in touch with a number of Muslim activists and *du'at* and contemporary scholars. This was to share ideas, concepts and the conclusions they have reached and to benefit from each other's knowledge and experiences. Towards this end suggestions were made to hold several meetings and seminars [4].

Consequently, the Association held its first international conference in 1977 in Switzerland for two weeks duration. In addition to the Association's leading figures in Europe and North America, thirty other active leaders of Islamic movements and Muslim scholars in various fields of specialization from all over the Muslim world attended this conference. Diagnosing the contemporary problem of the *Ummah* as an intellectual crisis, they sought the remedy within the framework of thought. The participants agreed on the necessity of giving priority to the process of thought and its methodology. They also agreed on setting a specialized body tasked with conducting research into these areas. It was emphasised to undertake collective efforts in the form of an institution working specifically toward the resolution of the crisis [4].

Isma'il al-Faruqi, in his capacity as the leader of the Association officially incorporated International Institute of Islamic Thought in the United State of America in 1981. [11, 12] Abu Sulayman rightly observed al-Faruqi to be the first man who presented a general outline of the process in which focus was made on identifying the epistemological foundations of an Islamic methodology. He identified the five-fold unity: the unity of Allah, the unity of creation, the unity of truth and knowledge, and the unity of life and of humanity and urged that these methodological categories must replace the western ones in order for it to command the reality. The first priority of the institute, as al-Faruqi [13] projected, was the production of standard text books in each discipline,

stating the relevance of the Islamic vision to those disciplines[4].

With these objectives in mind, the International Institute of Islamic thought (IIIT) conducted its second international conference on the Islamization of knowledge. It was held in Islamabad with the cooperation of the Islamic University Pakistan in 1982. Its objective, besides promotion of the Islamization of knowledge, was to examine its products and enhance the process further. Following the conference, the Institute published the first edition of the book "Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan" based upon papers and speeches delivered at various conferences by al-Faruqi and Abu Sulayman. The late al-Faruqi took the initiative in editing the first edition, while Abu Sulayman re-edited, updated and introduced the plan in a subsequent Arabic edition [4]. The process was further publicised and its products were examined through conducting a third international conference, held on July 24<sup>th</sup> in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia. The focus of the conference was on themes related to Economics, Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology, Political Sciences and International Relation, and Philosophy. It was followed by the fourth international conference on the Islamization of knowledge, held in January 1987, in Khartoum University Sudan. Its focal point was the methodology of Islamic Thought and the Islamization of Behavioural Sciences [6].

Subsequently, the new ideas presented were approved by many scholars from different areas of knowledge. This had a significant effect on the publicity and promotion of the process, as some of the institutions resorted to giving practical form to its concepts and ideas. Among the institutions and organizations that played active roles in this direction are: the International Islamic University Malaysia, International Islamic University Pakistan, International University Chittagong, the International Institute of Thought and Civilization, the Islamic Society of North America, the Islamic Circle of North America, the Forum for Islamic Work, the Islamic Research Foundation, and the Islamic Propagation Centre, Association of Muslim Professionals and Scholars. However, the existence of some adversaries to the process cannot be denied. Having mixed feelings towards the process they considered it as an attempt to replace knowledge with knowledge that had somehow been Islamized whereas, others ridiculed the efforts. Some even went to the extent of viewing the process politically motivated and, hence, considering it as an ideological discourse and not an epistemological or methodological one [14].

Al-Faruqi [10] asserts these suppositions and presumptions to be lacking authenticity and hence affirms the systematization of the methodological issues and concepts and their realization in practical

terms as the true motive behind the process. Thus, according to him, the Islamization of Knowledge undertaking is an epistemological or methodological discourse which is striving to express the issue in terms of methodology. It does not refer to the grafting of relevant Qur'anic verses to the subject of Islamization [15]. His emphasis on methodology, one can say to be due to its perception as the major contributing factor to the enhancement and dynamism of the Muslim mind. For this will bestow him/her with ability to address the crisis of thought effectively hence, playing an active role in dealing with the crisis of humanity at large.

Al-Faruqi [14] acknowledged the difficulty involved in the undertaking of such a nature, thus suggested the clarity of vision, determination, dedication to the cause, and strong conviction as the necessary ingredients for its success. As the essence of knowledge and its foundation is the method, he stressed more on structuring a methodology based on the five-fold unity mentioned earlier, by means of which the process of Islamization of Knowledge can be realized [7]. Devising such a methodology, according to him, can potentially enable Muslim intellectuals to project Islam as a complete way of life in a systematic and convincing manner, to Muslims and non-Muslims, rather than a specific set of guidelines, except for those few fundamentals which are unchanging. *Tawhidic* episteme therefore could provide the guidelines of such a methodology. Thus, the production of Islamised knowledge is contingent on the emergence of Islamic methods [16] which is strongly rooted in the unique vision of elements of the unseen, the universe, life, and the rest of the belief system [17].

#### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE**

To have a full grasp of the process of Islamization of Knowledge it is imperative to delineate its component elements: 'Islamization' and 'Knowledge'. Islamization in its essence, as Ahsan *et al.* [3] hold, signifies planned and organized changes meant for the improvement of the individual and society through conformity with the Islamic values and norms. It comes from the word 'Islam' and means making something relate to Islam or making it compliant with the Islamic worldview. In this sense, Islamization is not a new idea or movement its root can be traced to the first message of the Prophet pbuh. However, the term 'Islamization' has been used widely during the last three decades of the second millennium. Other terms of the same connotations are Islamic Revivalism, (renaissance), a reform-oriented movement driven by a conscious change in Muslim thought, attitude and behaviour characterised by a commitment to revive Islamic Civilization.

On the other hand 'Knowledge' as defined in the Longman Dictionary, means, "the information,

skills and the understanding that a person gains through learning or experience” whereas, philosophers define knowledge as “beliefs that are true and are justified” [18]. Al-Raghib al-Isfahani defined knowledge as “...the *idrak*, comprehension, of something in accordance with its true nature.” which he held to be two kinds, comprehension of the essence of something, known as perception in logic, and the judgement of the existence of something that exists or the denial of something that does not exist, known as confirmation in Logic[19].

Subsequently, the term ‘Islamization of Knowledge’ is defined variably by different scholars depending on their background and area of interest. Al-Faruqi [20] as the founding father of IIT, elaborated its technical meaning, as the redefining, and reordering of the data, to rethink the reasoning and relating of the data, to reevaluate the conclusions, to re-project the goals and to do so in such a way as to make the disciplines enrich the vision and serve the cause of Islam. He also defined the Islamization of modern knowledge as the integration of the new knowledge into Islamic legacy after undergoing the process of elimination, amendment, reinterpretation and adaptation in the light of the Islamic world view. The aims of the Islamization of Knowledge, as can be perceived from his definition, are the production of university level textbooks in some twenty disciplines in accordance to the Islamic vision. Through which a framework for human life, civilization, and human transformation could be formed and which determines every activity and action’s purpose hence, bestowing human life with a purpose and charting its course. He concludes that Islamization represents the truth, the justice the transformation and the reformation that concern not only Muslims but the humanity as a whole [9, 21].

Abu Sulaiyman [22] as the co-founder of IIT and another pioneer of the process portrays Islamization of knowledge as a critical examination of different disciplines of knowledge in the light of Islamic world view then recasting them under categories which are consistent with Islamic vision. He asserts Islamization to be concerned with thought, ideology, and a normative and ideational human pattern, and how such a pattern, its constituent’s elements, its roots in reason, psyche, and conscience may be built. Viewing Islamization of knowledge as representing the type of knowledge which is based on revealed ideals and norms, he holds it to be related to all that is true, valuable in the legacy of the Ummah and the thought contents of its scholars and thinkers. Due to its comprehensiveness he considers ‘Islamization’ as a framework not only for human life but also for his civilization and transformation.

Al-‘Alwani [1], as another prominent proponent of the Islamization, defines Islamization of

Knowledge as a call for a global Islamic cultural and intellectual mobilization for the purpose of rethinking the foundation of human society and then rebuilding it, a process which he believes to result in human felicity in this world and the Hereafter. He contends further that Islamization of Human knowledge does not mean the grafting of relevant Qur’anic verses with science and specific disciplines intended for Islamization. He rather sees it as the methodological rearrangement of the sciences and their principles through the combined reading of the two books: the Book of Revelation and the Book of the Universe [15]. He derived the notion of the reading of the two books from the revealed guidance replete with commands requiring human beings to refer to these two books as the sources for knowledge. This, as he perceives, can provide the effective tool for an accurate and comprehensive understanding of human responsibility and position in the universe hence, determining human civilization. It also furnishes the means for formulation of a methodological scientific approach to the humanities, social sciences and applied science based on their similarity and complementary nature. He justifies this by contending that the reading of the unseen (revelation) requires interpretation and discovering of its universal principles and the manner of their manifestation in nature. Whereas, the other involving the objective reading of the (universe) real-existential in the light of the universal principles derived from the verses of the revelation. Therefore, according to him, the essence of Islamization of knowledge entails the methodological rearrangement of the sciences and their principles by means of the combined reading of the two books. Thus, he considers Islamization of knowledge primarily as a methodological issue focusing on the identification and articulation of the relationship between revelation and the real-existential. He envisages the existing relation between the two as that of integration and permeation symbolising the comprehensive manner in which Qur’an deals with the real-existential, and its governing and regulating natural law and principles.

Imad al-Din Khalil [23] as another proponent of the process, defines it as: “... involvement in intellectual pursuits, by examination, summarization, correlation and publication, from the perspective of an Islamic outlook on life and universe.”(p.15) He visualizes the process of Islamization at two levels, the theoretical and the actual levels. The former focusing on explanation of the dimensions, motive, aims, stages and the way of Islamization of knowledge, while, the latter focusing on the actual Islamization of the various disciplines which has to be done by specialists in those areas. Therefore, the first level, as Haneef [24] holds, theorizes about the rationale, justification, definition and process involved, whereas, the second level involves the application of the process to various bodies of knowledge ... or sciences, utilizing those

specific methodologies of the first level. Khalil further explains, Islamization of knowledge means practicing (i.e. discovering, compiling piecing together, communicating and publishing) intellectual activities in the light of the Islamic perception of life, man and the universe [3].

Khalil views the process to be more readily applicable to humanities; however, it does not mean 'making rules about mathematical or chemical equations or interfering with laws of physics or biology or amending mathematic theory'. Whereas as far as the pure and natural sciences are concerned he sees them to escape the scope of Islamization.

Abu al-Qasim Hajj Hammad [25] defines it as "...the breaking of the connection between the scientific achievements of the human civilization and the postulative philosophy ... by means of a methodological order which is religious rather than speculative, in nature." (p.45)

Abu Fadl [26] presents a broader perspective on Islamization of Knowledge by viewing it as a force of cultural renewal and direction not only for Muslims but for humanity as a whole. Highlighting the epistemological weakness of modernity, she holds *Tawhidi* episteme to have a great potential of universal characteristic for the process [26, 3].

Other writers have also expressed briefly their view pertaining to the Islamization of Knowledge which is not much different from the two main proponents. For instance, Brohi [21] consider it as a process of rationalization of the components elements of modern knowledge and the elimination of its deleterious elements, which are in conflict with the sanctity of Islamic beliefs and practices. He portrays the inconsistency of modern knowledge and its framework with the Islamic worldview as main reason for the necessity of Islamization of knowledge. Ali [4] agreeing with this view, states that 'every system of social and behavioural science needs a conceptual framework or Grand Theory of society' and that the conceptual framework of modern science is not applicable to Islamization of knowledge, due to not being in tune with Islamic worldview. Ragab [27] generally views Islamization in its essence as a research and theory building effort, which aims at the restoration of the scientific enterprise in general, and the social sciences in particular, to the right direction of integration of revelation with the observation of the real world. He confirms the important role that the social sciences play, and rejects the underlying assumptions of modern social sciences that are unacceptable from an Islamic perspective.

From the above given definitions it is clear that the Islamization of knowledge is not a cosmetic

addition of religious terminologies to studies in social sciences or quoting relevant Quranic verses onto the subject of Islamization. It is rather, a methodological and epistemological rearrangement of the sciences and their principles in a manner eliminating the apparent contradiction between the universal principles and the scientific facts. In other words, it is a dynamic undertaking with the objective of facilitating the production of a purposeful knowledge, based on the belief that the universe has a Creator Who is One and Unique, The Originator and Provider of all the things and that He has entrusted man with stewardship and taught men the necessary knowledge. Thus as al-'Alwani[1] holds, the Islamization of Knowledge constitutes the foundation of *Tawhidic episteme* which views the revelation and the natural world as the principal sources of knowledge, and encourage their study in the light of the doctrine of *Tawhid* for producing purposeful knowledge.

Thus, from the preceding discussion it became crystal clear that the Islamization of Knowledge occupies a position of prime importance in the current debate among the Muslim intellectuals. It is held rigorously in high esteem due to it being concerned with thought, ideology and how the normative and ideational human pattern could be built. Therefore, it could potentially provide a comprehensive normative framework for the individual and society, thought and action, for education and practice, for knowledge and organization, for this world and the world to come [9]. Such a normative framework can enable the *Ummah* to organize its struggle on political, economic, and military fronts effectively, hence proving its immense worth. However, the realization of such goals heavily depends on structuring the correct principles the stimuli of which come from the Islamic worldview. This explains why the Islamization of Knowledge stresses more on devising a proper and comprehensive Islamic methodology reflecting the Islamic worldview.

#### **THE ROAD -MAP FOR ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE**

Scholars have devised different procedures and work plans, in light of Islamic principles for drawing a methodology for Islamization of knowledge. Since, this article articulates the process of Islamization from IIT perspective therefore, focuses is made on the road-map presented by the well-known pioneers of this school. Al-Faruqi, as the founder of IIT, described five principles in order to Islamize knowledge which according to him constitutes the epistemological foundations of Islamic methodology. The road-map (work plan, as he calls it) he presented for Islamization of knowledge involved five steps: (1) mastery of modern disciplines of knowledge (2) mastery of Islamic legacy relevant to those field (3) establishing the relevance of Islam to each modern discipline (4) creative synthesis of Islamic legacy

based values with modern social sciences and, (5) propelling Islamic thought in a direction leading to the fulfillment of Divine patterns of Allah. He expanded his work plan to 12 points through which the process of Islamization should proceed. They comprised of: (1) mastery of modern disciplines of knowledge, (2) Survey of the disciplines, (3) mastery of the Islamic legacy: anthology, (4) mastery of the Islamic legacy: analysis, (5) establishment of Islam's relevance to the modern disciplines, (6) critical assessment of the modern discipline in light of the Islamic framework, (7) critical assessment of the Islamic legacy, (8) a thorough survey of the major problems of the Ummah, (9) an overall survey of humankind, (10) creative analysis and syntheses, (11) filtering the discipline through the Islamic framework (12) dissemination of Islamized knowledge [9, 28].

From al-Faruqi's initial five steps work plan and 12 auxiliary points, it is clear that the scope of his road-map for Islamization was broad covering both Western and Islamic traditions of scholarship. It is seen as a double movement of integration due to requiring the rebuilding of both Islamic traditional and modern knowledge. He argued that it is necessary to subject Western sciences to evaluation from an Islamic perspective, due to being developed in a society with a different set of problems, needs and objectives than those of the Muslim Society [29]. However, steps 1-3 especially the third one of his work plan have been seriously criticized by Sardar who was one of his most vocal critics. He criticized the order of priority that was supposed to be taken into account. He argued that instead of trying to establish the relevance of Islam to modern discipline it was more appropriate, in creating Islamic alternatives, to identify the relevance of the reference point and not the modern discipline [30].

However, Abu Sulayman the co-founder of IIIT who initially shared al-Faruqi's ideas and work-plan, modified the steps in a later version of the work-plan, by revising re-editing and updating its 12 points. Then dedicated a new chapter under the title "Agenda of the Institute". In the 1989 edition of the Islamization of knowledge work-plan. His revision of the steps were in the following order: (1) creation of understanding and awareness, (2) concretization of the concepts and methodology of Islamic thought, (3) mastery of both Islamic legacy and contemporary knowledge, (4) publication of textbooks in disciplines and (5) prioritization of scientific research and training of the academic cadres. Thus, Abu Sulayman's latter edition could be viewed to provide a better and greater understanding of the intellectual issues faced by the Ummah and Muslim scholars. In addition, it offers a more dynamic and precise work-plan for the Islamization of knowledge by IIIT. It also manifests the interaction between increased knowledge and

increased involvement of the scholars in the process of thinking in the field [3].

Al-'Alwani [31] in his capacity as the third president of IIIT after Abu Sulayman, further refined the work-plan in 1995. Considering Islamization not simply as putting together the relevant Qur'anic verses to sciences or disciplines intended for Islamization, he assumed it as a process involving a methodological rearrangement of the sciences and their principles. He drew the road-map for Islamization by asserting the combined reading of the two books; book of Revelation (Qur'an) and the book of creation (natural universe) the details of which will follow in the next section. His road-map involved six discourses: (1) constructing the Islamic paradigm of knowledge based on *Tawhidic* episteme, which he believed to lead to the emergence of an Islamic outlook, capable of interpreting the immutable scientific laws in the light of not only the Islamic dictums but also in the spirit of the revelation [32] (2) developing a Qur'anic methodology based on *Tawhidic* episteme to overcome the present methodological shortcomings prevalent in sciences related to the Qur'an, thus enabling the Muslim to deal effectively with his historical and contemporary problems (3) a methodology for dealing with the Qur'an, which enables the Muslim to review the Quranic science and assess their relevance to the present context of the Muslim world. (4) A methodology for dealing with the Sunnah, which requires its understanding in the context of prevalent circumstances that occasioned its inception. (5) Re-examination of the Islamic intellectual legacy, (6) Dealing with the Western intellectual heritage. Hence, removing the negative effects of the western heritage and integrating its congruent part with the Islamic paradigm of knowledge.

After a critical appraisal and evaluation of the Islamization of knowledge, Safi [33] concluded that it was still in "it's pre-methodological" stage should therefore be seen as an epistemological and methodological concern. He viewed al-Faruqi's 12 point plan as psychologically overwhelming and logistically difficult to attain. He proposed a revised strategy whereby al-Faruqi's 12 point work plan is reorganized into two parallel tracks: one dealing with modern knowledge and its methodology and another dealing with Islamic legacy and its methodology [33].

Ragab being a social scientist categorised Islamization's approach in the context of social sciences into two kinds; 'engagement' and 'disengagement' approaches. According to him, those adopting the former approach assumed that modern knowledge could play a valuable role in the Islamization process. Those with the tendency of disengagement totally rejected the integration between Islamic and Western tradition of scholarship [27, 3].

Ragab acknowledged the two contending positions to have valid points but does not agree with stretching those points to the extremes. He opines that the social sciences offer a lot in terms of research method, theory building and tools of analysis, yet he concedes their shortcomings in terms of errors of commission and omission. According to him, one of their very obvious errors in terms of omission is the complete absence of spiritual factors from their theories due to their exclusive focus on the sense perception, hence denying revelation as a valid source of scientific knowledge. A related mistake pertaining to commission is that of relativistic stance, which idolise humans as the only source of all valuation. Ragab [27] despite social sciences' errors of commission and omission sees some value in them. He considers this to be possible through remedying those errors of commissions and omissions in two ways; complementing and substituting. In case of the former, for instance, when an omission is detected it should be complemented by provision of the missing part. Whereas, in the case of the latter, when an error of commission is detected it should be substituted. This could be done by discarding the incongruent components and substituting them with 'Islamically-correct ones'. For instance, replacing secularised valuations with Islamic valuations which are balanced in nature.

#### **COMBINED READING OF THE BOOKS OF THE REVELATION AND UNIVERSE**

The worth and efficacy of the combined reading as an effective methodology for Islamization of knowledge could be proved based on the fact that revelation is the words of Allah, and the world is His creation, hence, no contradiction is possible between them. Any presumed apparent contradiction between them could be ascribed to the misinterpretation of religious statements or unsound empirical and rational assessments. Therefore, it is significantly important to re-examine the two sources of knowledge in light of simultaneous readings of the two kinds of readings to avoid contradiction between them.

The Islamization of Knowledge as an intellectual endeavour did not come out of a vacuum. It represents the intellectual side of Islam which started with Ibrahim a. s and was completed by Prophet Muhammad pbuh. This can be derived from the Quranic verse first revealed to the Prophet which starts with the word 'Read' commanding him to read. What can be understood from the verse is the importance of knowledge and learning. Allah SWT states in the Holy Qur'an: "Read in the name of your Lord who created human from a clot, Read! For your Lord is most bountiful, He who taught by the pen, taught man that which he knew not (Al-Qur'an 68: 1-2). Also another verse in the Qur'an states: "The All-Merciful: Who taught the Qur'an, created humankind and taught them expression. (Al-Qur'an 55: 1-3)

The above verses indicate two kinds of readings: reading of the book of revelation (Qur'an) and the book of creation (the natural universe) or the world. The former explains the matter of religious importance whereas the latter explains the matters related to the natural universe. Their combined reading simultaneously could generate an accurate form of knowledge where no contradiction between religious matters and natural facts could be presumed [34]. Their relation could be described as being complementary rather than being contradictory.

Simultaneity is the determining factor in the effectiveness of the two readings. This means the undertaking of the two readings individually in isolation from each other does not produce positive results. Al-'Alwani puts an extreme emphasis on the undertaking of the two readings simultaneously, as a methodology for the process of Islamization of knowledge. His emphasis on this type of reading seems to be due to its conduciveness for the acquisition of a comprehensive knowledge required for the maintenance of a civilised society and its further development. In his view the undertaking of one reading in isolation of the other would yield no positive result in terms of attaining an accurate understanding of the reality. As a result one's efforts would not be conducive to fulfilling his role as the *Khalifah* (steward) of God or the keeper of His *Amanah* (trust). Therefore, a true Muslim in carrying out his responsibilities effectively need to take seriously four factors into consideration: working in harmony with the natural order of the universe, understanding the requirements of his *Fitrah* (natural disposition), taking guidance from his creed and adopting the methodology ordained by God[35]. Serious consideration of these factors could produce positive results hence, rendering one's endeavours fruitful. This will entitles him to success in this world as well as in the world to come as promised by God. The concern for these factors could be addressed through the simultaneous undertaking of the two types of readings, hence proving its worth as an effective road-map for the Islamization of knowledge.

The justification for the two types of readings could be derived from the fact that Qur'an as a source of truth instructs believers to redirect their attention toward the natural world for it embodies the divine laws and divine will. That is why the natural world is perceived by Al-'Alwani as the book of the universe. In other words, the divine will and laws, according to him, are not to be found only in the Qur'an but also in the working of the universe. Therefore, a study of the natural world, as Kashuli [36] believe, can enhance humanity's understanding of itself. The Qur'an requires believers to undertake the study of the visible

material world in the hope of knowing the true reality and also their position in the universe.

Conversely, relying on a one-sided reading one would fail to accomplish his objective of uniting humanity in faith hence, realizing the divine purpose of creation. Thus, the necessity for the concurrent undertaking of the two readings becomes evident due to their complementary role towards each other. The complementary reading of the two books can prevent disruption in human life which may emerge from imbalance in the undertaking of the two readings. Therefore, each of one of the two reading constitutes an epistemological fundamental and a creative source of an accurate knowledge. Al-'Alwani [1] views the concurrent undertaking of the two readings and their integration in a comprehensive manner, as a remarkable characteristic of a sound and discerning society. He contends that the society loses sight of its relationship with God and its responsibilities to Him when it ignores the first reading (revelation) in favour of the second (natural universe). As a result it emerges as a self-centred society that detaches itself from the unseen. The inevitable outcome of such perceptions is an adaptation of a speculative philosophy that is incapable of attaining true knowledge.

Al-'Alwani [1] further argues that the societies upholding speculative philosophies based on sensory perception dismiss every question beyond the sensory perception as supernatural. Such a perception makes it impossible for them to find answers to ultimate questions thus failing to attain an accurate knowledge of God, hence, perceiving God as another element of the supernatural. This is why they argue that He actually created the universe all at once and then forgot whatever He had created and left it to act according to previously established natural laws. Al-'Alwani holds that this kind of reading not to be leading to an accurate knowledge of God which is why Muslim theologians reject emphasis on the orderliness of the universe based on causality. They argue that such assumptions would render the world devoid of any necessity for God. Belief in such a manner would amount to believing in God in the way they want Him to be. Al-Faruqi [9] rightly, holds this to be in stark contrast with the uniqueness of God and His attributes and thereby similar to equating God with nature itself. Such perception is thus, similar to the doctrine of incarnation, *Shirk* (associating others with God) which is not in consonance with the true knowledge.

Similarly, the reading of the natural universe in isolation of the revelation can mislead humanity for in science no principle is sacrosanct and everything is questionable[20]. Consequently the complementary reading of the book of Revelation is necessary to provide appropriate answers to questions pertaining to the unseen and unobservable phenomenon. This saves

humanity from wandering in the wilderness of uncertainty. However, the hypothesis derived from the observable phenomenon can be admitted as valid based on experiment. The hypothesis does constitute a law of nature when its validity is confirmed by means of repeated observations and experiments and no other experiment has disproved it [20]. Nevertheless, sole reliance on the reading of the natural universe in search for true knowledge can stimulate the idea of the world being formed of mutually opposed powers. Individuals with their limited knowledge under the influence of such perception tend to claim control over their surroundings, thus, considering their desire as their guide and worshipping themselves. This tendency leads humanity to rely solely on nature as the source of derivation of their value and not religion. They will regard religion useful only when the need arises whereas in ordinary circumstances they will deny assigning it an effective role. Thus, the natural knowledge which is the result of human sensory and intellectual perception cannot be regarded as the basis for true knowledge of the unseen [37]. This underscores the remarkable role of the combined reading of the revelation and the natural universe in the process of Islamization of knowledge.

To the same effect, any attempt by those involved in the first reading (revelation) to ignore the second reading (natural universe) can bring about a great deal of imbalances such as an aversion to worldly pursuit. It will cause them to lose the ability to contribute to society. This state of affairs deprives man from his role as a steward (*Khalifah*) in this world. The loss of equilibrium caused by one-sided reading can ultimately neutralise the people's ability to engage in creative and independent thought. When people adopt the belief that human beings are not capable of independent actions they are overwhelmed by a feeling of worthlessness of action and meaningless of existence. Such ideas being in clear contrast with the Qur'an and Sunnah underscores the extreme significance of both readings simultaneously. Otherwise, confusion may arise with regard to important issues concerning faith. 'Al-'Alwani, clarified this by saying that those reading only the book of revelation will suppose, for instance, that the true elimination of anthropomorphic elements from the concept of a deity requires three things; negation of the value of action, the rejection of belief in free will and the denial of a positive role of humanity. Such ideas reflect the confusion about what constitutes a human, as opposed to divine, deeds, the meaning of free will and predestination and the issues of cause and effect among others [1].

In a nutshell, the Islamization of Knowledge as an epistemological approach attempts to combine these two readings in a complementary perspective, hence avoiding an imbalanced understanding of reality.

Therefore, the undertaking of the two kinds of reading prove its worth as an effective strategy of the Islamization of knowledge by means of which the contemporary global crises could be solved.

## CONCLUSION

In sum, the construction of a dynamic methodology based on the fivefold unity: the unity of Allah, the unity of creation, the unity of truth and knowledge, the unity of life and the unity of humanity, constitute the main purpose of the Islamization of knowledge. Systematization of methodological issues and concepts and their realization in practical terms, constituting the concern of the genuine efforts of Muslim intellectuals, were undertaken to provide adequate solutions for the crisis of thought which the *Ummah* is facing. The importance of the process lies in the fact that the essence of knowledge and its foundation is methodology. Therefore, the Islamization of Knowledge stresses on the construction of the methodology for dealing with the issues of concern to the *Ummah*. The methodology adopted by IIIT School for Islamization of Knowledge is a commendable one. It combine both elements of revelation and reason in its structure in a manner that leave no room for conflict with the revelation. This methodology in its entirety reflecting the objectives, norms and ultimate purposes of the revelation, could offer adequate solutions for the present crises of thought.

A simultaneously undertaking of the two kinds of readings is required for an accurate understanding of reality and production of a purposeful knowledge. For, it constitutes the founding rock of a comprehensive methodology. This will enable the *Ummah* to overcome the lingering influence of social sciences which has created a rift between religion and sciences and has led to conflicting dualities of positivism and mysticism. This not being in accordance with the universality of Islam, make it imperative for Muslim intellectuals to re-examine the Islamic intellectual heritage, hence reactivating it and highlight its relevance to the present requirements of the society. The practical way of doing this is to identify the fundamental tenets of the Islamic world view and the manner of its relevance to social sciences. This should be followed by discerning the basic premises of modern sciences and identifying the compatible ones with the Islamic world view and separating them from the theoretical assumptions which would have to be Islamized. This will lead to the construction of an Islamic perspective on sciences and social sciences, hence bringing them in accord with the divine principles. Indeed, the methodology which is dominated by literal tendency in dealing with the revealed text could not offer adequate solutions to the contemporary complex issues. Thus, there is a need for a collective comprehension of the divine texts in order to come up with reasonable solution to the said

contemporary complex issues of thought and civilization. A prominent scholar Ali ibn al-Madini[38] once said: for a judgement to be accurate and errors to be detected, whatever is said about an issue must be combined in order to reach reasonable conclusion”(p.117)

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