

The audience consisted of students and faculty from several academic institutions of Malaysia. It was generally agreed by the participants that it is the need of the moment for psychologists to make serious attempts at deriving an Islamic framework of psychology in trying to understand human nature from the perspectives of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. It was recommended that similar seminars be held on an ongoing basis, even though, at smaller scale, in order to monitor progress in the goal of Islamization of Psychology.

Amber Haque

Department of Psychology, IIUM

National Seminar on Knowledge and the Issue of Islamization: Shah Alam, May 1997

At the core of the ummah's experiences stands the intellectual crisis, because of the absence of suitable methodological approaches. The systems of education in the Muslim world fails to inculcate the good-Muslim-citizen values stressed in the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*. Certainly, the problem of methodology and epistemological paradigm emerge as the significant issues to be handled.

With this in mind, International Institute of Islamic Thought Malaysia (IIITM) has started contacting scholars, educationists, academicians and intellectual leaders in Malaysia to exchange ideas to discuss the crux of the issue. In order to serve this purpose, IIITM organized a two-day national seminar on "Knowledge and the Issue of Islamization" held at Holiday Inn, Shah Alam, Selangor from 30-31st May 1997. The participants were mostly scholars, university professors, researchers, undergraduate and graduate students from all around Malaysia. The seminar was meant to provide scholars and intellectuals with a forum for exchanging ideas and views on Islamization of Knowledge so as to develop a better understanding of its methodologies, approaches, directions and goals. Also the seminar was meant to provide an appropriate forum for Muslim scholars, intellectuals, students, and community leaders to interact, discuss and provide insights on the direction of the IOK agenda and to foster better cooperation for developing Muslim scholarship.

The seminar was graced by the presence of the Minister of Education, Dato' Najib Tun Abdul Razak. Dato' Najib officiated the

seminar and presented the Ismail al-Faruqi Award and Lamy^ā al-Faruqi Awards for Academic Excellence 1997. None of the entries was adjudged to be placed as first. The second prize winner of the Ismail al-Faruqi Award was Dr. Mohamed Aslam Mohamed Haneef, Head of the Department of Economics at IIUM. The third prize winner was Prof. Mohammad Hashim Kamali, Professor of Law at IIUM.

The first prize winner of the Lamy^ā al-Faruqi award for Academic Excellence was Mohd. Ma^ʿsum Billah, a student of Ph.D. at IIUM. The second prize went to Fethi Ben Jomaa Ahmed who obtained Masters degree in Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage from IIUM in March 1997. Badrane Ben Lahcene who is also pursuing his Masters in Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage received the third prize.

Speaking at the occasion, Dato' Najib Tun Abdul Razak recalled the late Ismail Al-Faruqi's efforts in the world of modern Muslim scholarship, and called upon intellectuals and scholars to incorporate the culture of academic excellence to come up with theories, concepts, and applications so as to shift the present paradigm of knowledge towards Islam. He congratulated the winners of the two awards for their efforts to expand the horizons of Islamic intellect.

The inaugural speech was given by Dato' Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, the Rector of IIUM. In his speech he emphasized the understanding and practical aspect of Islamization of Knowledge. He urged the participants of the seminar to re-examine all aspects of Muslim life and culture, especially the educational aspect. "An integration of revealed knowledge with human sciences in proper, comprehensive, analytical, and systematic ways of thinking to recapture the dynamism of the Muslim mind, and to address the ever-changing condition of life; such a process will serve man on this earth to gain a better life in the present day and in hereafter."

Dr. Louay Safi opened the first session with a paper entitled "Islamization of Knowledge: An Integrated Model of Scientific Inquiry." Dr. Louay called upon scholars to two main alternative solutions by re-integrating the spheres of knowledge and consciousness around revelation, and by making creative synthesis of modern and classical Muslim methodology.

The second paper "IOK: Past, Present, and Future" was presented by Dr. Osman Bakar, Vice Chancellor of University of Malaya who gave his classification of the different groups of scholars involved in

the IOK project. Dr. Shaharir Mohd. Zain of National University of Malaysia (UKM) presented his ideas in a paper titled "The Concept of Knowledge and its Implication for Muslim Thought." Dr. Shaharir identified the major issues in the IOK process and called upon the scholars to identify values not conforming to Islam by giving other alternatives.

In discussing the relationship between Islamization of knowledge and Islamic science, Dr. Ibrahim Zein stressed that the Islamization of knowledge is a process concerned with the whole ummah and, therefore, it is inappropriate to limit it to a certain kind of people. Dr. Zein considered the definition of Islamization of knowledge as reflected in *ijtihad* as a means of understanding our social realities.

In the session titled "Perception of Islamization of Knowledge" Dr. Md. Salleh Yaapar (University of Sciences Malaysia) pointed out that the emergence of the idea of Islamization of knowledge is a response to the challenge faced by the Muslim ummah i.e. secularism. Muslim scholars are facing a challenge to overcome secularism and to undergo a process of Islamization or more accurately, re-Islamization. Dr. Yaapar further elaborated by explaining the concept of Islamization of knowledge and recounting the significant contributions of scholars such as al-Attas, al-Faruqi and Nasr.

Dr. Hazizan Md. Noon, Department of Anthropology and Sociology IIUM, made a critical examination on the concept of Islamization of knowledge. Many important questions were raised, such as "Is there any real and valid reason for us to talk about Islamization of knowledge? What is the social impact of Islamization of knowledge on the intellectual process? If Islamization of knowledge is universal, then to what extent can Islamization of knowledge be set relevant not only to Muslims but also non-Muslims? Regarding the social impact of Islamization of knowledge, the presenter further stated that it is not expected that the Islamization of knowledge will have an immediate impact on society as it is a long term process with long term impacts.

One of the sessions, "Muslim Communities and the Challenge of Economic and Technological Modernization," looked at information and communication technologies and their impact on the knowledge paradigm. While speaking about "Educational Development and the Future of the Ummah" Dr. Ibrahim Ba Junid (Director, National Institute of Educational Management and Leadership) talked about using the MSC experiment to promote greater literacy in the ummah

and as a way to harness the ummah's brainpower. In the same session, Dr. Rosnani Hashim discussed the role of the First World Conference on Muslim Education as an important milestone in Muslim learning and towards the Islamization of education. She expressed the opinion that the future of the Muslim ummah will be bright if Malaysia is considered a test case.

In the session "Islamization of Disciplines: The Case of Sociology and Psychology," the speakers emphasized that it was incumbent on every Muslim social scientist today to do a little unlearning and some new learning and that they need to develop more sophisticated research designs.

The plenary discussion session on "The Future Agenda of Islamization of Knowledge Process" was an opportunity for all the participants to express their views on the future agenda of the IOK process. Dato' Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman emphasized that the agenda of IOK was continuously changing and advancing with dynamic mobility. He called for a re-examination of culture, and for the new generation to have a mature, integrated Islamic culture.

Mustafa Kamal
International Institute of Islamic Thought Malaysia