

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF

ISLAMIC THOUGHT

**Toward Global Cultural Renewal:
Modernity and the Episteme of
Transcendence**

Dr. Mona AbulFadl

Occasional Paper 7

Today's quest for Islamization is here put into historical and ideational perspective. It traces the movement to a newfound awareness among Muslims, cognizant of the immense worth and potential of their heritage, yet clamoring to emerge from their actual debilitation, whether enforced or self-inflicted. The author considers and evaluates various contemporary approaches to truth and compares them to the Islamic mode of knowing, discovering it to be a superior and beneficent foil to the existing paradigms and epistemes of modern culture. It offers a blueprint for a new kind of scholarship, one that invokes the vocational ideal and has the power and the vision to intelligently absorb cultural diversity and transmute it into an overarching and transcendent, but realistic and humane, critique. The credentials of Islam to buttress and enlighten such an endeavor are presented with clarity and conviction. And while the pervasive and protean malaise of contemporary civilization is attributed to the sense of vacuity and absence of higher purpose brought about by the renunciation of God, that of the Muslim Ummah is seen to be rooted in intellectual lethargy. However, and despite the colossal challenges which face the quest for renewal and reintegration challenges that are unflinchingly tackled and delineated in this paper the final view is one of hope and affirmation in both human recoverability and the latent power of Islam to lead man out of the present morass.

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