

Islamization of Human Knowledge: An Analysis of Methodological Issues

Pengislaman Ilmu Manusia: Satu Analisis Isu-Isu Metodologi

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Abstract

The concept of Islamization of Human Knowledge (IOHK) is generally understood as the movement of epistemological and methodological change. But the issue of the methodology of Islamization of Human Knowledge is either confined to the issue of Islamization itself or misunderstood as a whole. In fact, the issue of methodology is that of Islamic thought. Ismail Raji al Faruqi and Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman discussed this issue of methodology as that of Islamic thought and identified some specific steps for dealing the Islamization of Human Sciences. This paper is devoted to identifying and analyzing the views of scholars who consider Islamization of Human Knowledge as methodological issue.

Keywords: Islamization, Human Knowledge, Methodological Issue, Epistemology, Analysis.

Abstrak

Konsep pengislaman ilmu manusia secara amnya difahami sebagai pergerakan bagi perubahan epistemologi dan metodologi. Tetapi isu metodologi pengislaman ilmu manusia sama ada terhad kepada isu pengislaman sendiri atau disalah faham secara keseluruhannya. Hakikatnya, isu metodologi ialah pemikiran Islam. Ismail Raji al Faruqi dan Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman membincang mengenai isu metodologi sebagai pemikiran Islam dan mengenal pasti beberapa langkah tertentu untuk menangani Pengislaman Sains Kemanusiaan. Karya ini ditumpukan untuk mengenal pasti dan menganalisis pandangan ulama yang menganggap pengislaman ilmu manusia sebagai isu metodologi.

Kata Kunci: Pengislaman, Ilmu Manusia, Isu Metodologi, Epistemologi, Analisis .

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Introduction

The discourse of Islamization of Human Knowledge (IOHK) is seen by scholars variously. Its origin, scope, subject matter, aim and method are discussed differently. But most scholars in the discourse on IOHK seem to agree that the core concern of the project and concept of IOHK is genuinely the integration of social sciences into the framework of Islamic Revealed Knowledge. Hence, the Islamization of social sciences was seen as the main focus of IOHK. It is said that all the proponents share the essential belief that modern knowledge, specially, the modern social and natural sciences need to be Islamized. Scholars, experts and institutions of higher education in the Muslim world are contributing towards that goal. Yet, there are some problems in the way to educate the Muslim mind on the significance of IOHK. The most significant issue in IOHK is how to Islamize human knowledge. This paper is humbly devoted to identify and analyze the problems concerning methodological pattern of IOHK as conceived and explained by al-Faruqi and Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman.

Epistemological and Methodological View of Islamization of Knowledge

Ismail al-Faruqi felt very much concerned about the plight of the *Ummah*. He wanted to pull it out of the backwardness and lead it to the process of development and leadership. For this purpose, he argued that *change* as an effective strategy should be accepted. *Change* first in the concept of knowledge and then in educational system. He debated this process of *change* will bring *change* in the conditions of the *Ummah*. The *changed Ummah* will not only occupy the role of leadership but rather it will design another strategy to guide the humanity to the path of an alternative civilization free from crisis and chaos. As a starting point, he suggested Islamization of Knowledge. It will begin with Islamization of social sciences. His main argument is that a *change* in knowledge will lead to a *change* in the thinking process and finally a *changed mind-set* will develop dynamic and creative thought. Al-Faruqi at the very outset estab-

lished link between IOHK and Islamic thought. In this background of intellectual revival and creativity of the *Ummah* on ethical, spiritual and moral basis, the movement of Islamization of Human Knowledge has to be appreciated. Reducing it from its cultural and civilizational role to a religiously oriented academic activity against the *other* would be tantamount to sheer injustice to IOHK. Daud contends:

Modern Muslim thought has been trapped in an intellectual quagmire and caught in the debilitating dilemma between the wonderful appearances of the results of modern and pervasively secular knowledge and technology, and the apparent rigidity and bankruptcy of its own traditional thought, as conceptualized and presented by the jurists and theologians. Even though the conception of the islamization of knowledge as an intellectual idea and an epistemological method is a recent achievement, the actual practice of Islamizing knowledge began with the first revelation of the Islamic message and continued throughout the centuries, albeit with different degrees of results.¹

Rosnani Hashim and Imron Rossidy further highlight the importance of Islamization of Knowledge:

Many Muslim scholars concerned with the plight of the Muslim community [*Ummah*] have been deeply involved with the concept of Islamization of knowledge which gained momentum in the 80s, as a result of the global consciousness for the “resurgence of Islam” in the 70s and the momentous gathering of prominent scholars in the First World Conference on Muslim Education in Makkah in 1977. Nothing has engaged the Muslim scholars as deeply as this epistemological, social and political issue.²

IOHK is an expression of those intellectuals who are looking for an alternative framework for civilizational development. In this background,

¹ Daud, Wan Mohd. Nor Wan, *The Beacon on the Crest of a Hill-A Brief History and Philosophy of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization* (ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1991), pp. 32-33.

² Rosnani Hashim & Imron Rossidy, “Islamization of Knowledge: A Comparative Analysis of the Conceptions of Al-Attas and AL Faruqi”, *Intellectual Discourse*, vol. 8, number 1, 2000, pp. 19-44

Islamization of Human Knowledge movement was perceived as a civilizational project. In early 1990s, for example, Meryll Wyn Davies was able to see it as a civilizational project of rethinking, taking the Qur'ān as the frame of reference. She said: 'soon it became a topic of general interest, a vital concern not just for Muslims but also for the rest of the world.'³ Davies further argued that "Islamization offers a means to think about the present and the future of Muslim reality in a different way."⁴ According to her, "Knowledge does not occur in a vacuum, it is a civilizational artefact, a genetic code, and the genes of the living being that is a civilization". She said: "Islamization of Knowledge is impelled, influenced, affected by, contributory to and wrestling with what is happening in today's Muslim civilization – the invaded, fragmented, destabilized, recreated, modified civilization that is the unstable amalgam of the Islamic, the Muslim and the modern we have been discussing. The agenda for Islamizing disciplines of intellectual inquiry has been pre-set by events within Muslim civilization." For her, "The discourse of Islamization of knowledge also has been the objective of setting a new agenda, a league table of problems to be tackled by Islamic knowledge and Muslim civilization. The very confusion, diversity and multiplicity of what is happening in Muslim civilization are part of the dynamic of Islamization of knowledge as new intellectual disciplines."⁵

Sarfaraz Niyozov and Nadeem Memon in a recent research argued that, "Islamization is not a minor filtering or gate keeping conduit; it is a broad-based, diverse and evolving epistemological, ontological, and pedagogical strategy that aims to counteract not just Western and secular, but also any other non-Western, and in some cases, not-so-proper-Muslim encroaches into Muslim psyche and society."⁶ They further asserted:

³ Davies, M.W., "Rethinking Knowledge: Islamization and the Future", *Futures*, Number 23, 1991, p. 231

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁶ Sarfaraz Niyozov & Nadeem Memon. "Islamic Education and Islamization: Evolution of Themes, Continuities and New Directions", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Jeddah, 31: 1, 2011, p. 14.

“Islamization is an alternative paradigmatic endeavor; it is based on the premise that all knowledge can and need to be understood from within an Islamic worldview.”⁷ Discussing the influence of both inward and externally-oriented factors, they comment: “Competing Islamic traditions have used Islamization to filter out not only Western or scientific knowledge, but also each other’s knowledge, values, and practices.”⁸ In addition, they said Islamization of Human Knowledge “proponents have built [it] on the [basis of] scripture, Prophetic tradition, and later developments to enhance and apply it as concept, framework, and methods.”⁹ Finally, they drew a conclusion and argued that: “In that sense, Islamization of knowledge could be understood as constituting and ideologically driven form of Muslim educational and intellectual response to an encounter with the ‘other’ rather than the West only.”¹⁰

According to Suleman Dangor, Islamization of Human Knowledge project represents an attempt by Muslim scholars to produce (or reproduce) an indigenous knowledge system.¹¹ Explaining the IOHK project, he maintains that “it demands a revisit of the Islamic heritage and the development of a new epistemology, paradigm of knowledge and methodology.”¹² He does not separate Islamic heritage or religious sciences from the discussion of IOHK. He refers to al-Faruqi and further argued that IOHK means “a systematic reorientation and restructuring of the entire field of human knowledge in accordance with a new set of criteria and categories derived from and based on the Islamic worldview”¹³ and relevant to our time and place. He goes to argue further that Islamization of Human Knowledge ‘constitute that process of reforming and revitalizing the current underlying structures of thought and perception by means of

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Suleman Dangor, “Islamization of Disciplines: Towards an Indigenous Educational System”, *Journal of Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 2005, 37, 4, pp. 519-531.

¹² Ibid., p. 526.

¹³ Ibid.

their exposure to a radical critique in the light of an integrated set of cognitive, affective and symbolic values derived from the Islamic tradition'.¹⁴ He supported the position of Taha Jabir al-Alwani who considers IOHK 'as an epistemological or methodological movement for civilizational building'.¹⁵ In continuity of this argument, Ibrahim A. Ragab had already contended that "Islamization of Knowledge is basically an epistemological and methodological concern. Even when discussions of the subject explore its deeper ontological and axiological prerequisites, such discussion is only brought to the fore at the service of the epistemological, and more specifically, the methodological concerns."¹⁶ To him, IOHK in its genuine form remains clearly a methodological and an epistemological issue. He said, "To stretch the concept to cover endeavors to infuse social institutions with an Islamic character is potentially problematic. It should be reiterated that Islamization of Knowledge or of particular disciplines is a separate activity which is justified in its own right, and should be carried out, with or without any broader efforts at Islamic reform in any society at all. Making the connection between the two levels unnecessarily links the fate of both. Emotional considerations aside, Islamization of Knowledge is a dispassionate, hard-nosed, rigorous, scientific enterprise, which should never be confused with broader political or economic types of human endeavor. It represents a much-needed paradigm shift of concern to those within the knowledge-building, scientific and professional communities, rather than to political parties or political movements seeking reform of whole societies."¹⁷ He did not stop here. He went further and argued: "The essence of the 'Islamization' process is the systematic movement from the other-than-Islamic ontology and epistemology to the Islamic ontology and epistemology. That essential change is the foundation upon which the methodological shift is based. Therefore, it is essential for the Islamizers – before undertaking any actual substantive attempt at Islamization – to take stock of the Islamic ontol-

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ragab, Ibrahim A, "On the Nature and Scope of the Islamization Process: Towards Conceptual Clarification", *Intellectual Discourse*, 3 : 2, 1995, p. 120.

¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 120-121.

ogy and epistemological assumptions...This is an absolute prerequisite for any attempt to 'Islamize' a social science discipline, a subject, or even one social science concept."¹⁸

For Roxanne L. Euben, Islamization of Human Knowledge project is an "attempt to negotiate a path between modernist and Islamist positions by charting the interpretation of cultural knowledge in the shadow of Western 'epistemological imperialism'."¹⁹ He considered IOHK movement as a nascent school of thought advanced by the distinctiveness, relevance, and purchase of Islamic ways of knowing and verifying truths necessary for moral and political life."²⁰ Although he did not see IOHK as a positive venture of Muslims, but still he argued that the emphasis of IOHK is clearly on epistemological dimension. He said, "The emphasis on the epistemological dimension of 'the Islamic perspective' is brought into even sharper relief in the Islamization of Knowledge Project. This project clearly builds upon the work of a range of Islamic thinkers from Muhammad Iqbal to Islamists such as Abul al-Ala al-Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb."²¹ According to him, "The overall purposes of the Islamization of Knowledge are to overcome the opposition between fact and value universalized through Western hegemony, and to recognize the supremacy of an approach to knowledge that regards the entire universe as a unity [tawhīd]. The unity beneath the diversity of appearances derives from a common origin: everything is the creation of an unfathomable and omniscient God. This pursuit of knowledge thus requires a commitment to reading and balancing the Creator's two 'books' the Qur'ān and the physical universe."²²

¹⁸ Ragab, Ibrahim A. "On the Methodology of Islamizing the Social Sciences", *Intellectual Discourse*, 7, 1, 1999, p. 35.

¹⁹ Roxanne L. Euben, *Contingent Borders, Syncretic Perspectives: Globalization, Political Theory, and Islamizing Knowledge* (International Studies Association, Blackwell Publications), p. 26.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 42.

Hasan Dzilo prefers to focus on the epistemological concern of Islamization of Knowledge. He reasons that this issue of IOK needs to be seen within philosophical and epistemological framework which has stimulated deep philosophical and epistemological discourse. He said: "...the concept of Islamization of knowledge is not monospermous. It involves multiple approaches to the various forms of modern-world thought in the context of the Islamic intellectual tradition, including metaphysical, epistemological, ethical and methodological premises regarding the modern issue of knowledge."²³ He contends that the philosophers such as Naquib Al-Attas, Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Ismail al-Faruqi wanted de-Westernization of knowledge. They are critical of the modern method of knowledge which has disastrous consequences for the future of mankind. It has created a nihilist and technical image of the world which suppresses the metaphysical dimension of reality. These philosophers devoted their intellectual energies and explained the philosophical and epistemological dimensions of IOHK.²⁴

Taha Jabir al-Alwani argued that the Islamization of Knowledge is primarily a methodological issue:

"Within the Islamization of Knowledge, the idea of the Islamization of Knowledge has always been understood as an intellectual and methodological outlook rather than an academic field."²⁵ The most appropriate appraisal of IOHK came from Taha Jabir al Alwani who put the case of IOHK in its proper perspective:

The Islamization of Knowledge may be understood as a cultural and intellectual project aspiring to correct the processes of thinking within the Muslim, so that it is able to produce Islamic, social, and Humanistic knowledge based on the two sources we Muslims accept as the established sources for knowing the truth: *Wahy* [Divine Revela-

²³ Dzilo Hassan, "The Concept of Islamization of Knowledge and its Philosophical Implications", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 23: 3, 2012, p. 248.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

²⁵ Al Alwani, Taha J. "The Islamization of Knowledge: Yesterday and today", *The American Journal of social Sciences*. 12: 1, 1995, p. 81.

tion] and *Wujūd* [Existence]. In this endeavor, we shall utilize reason and the senses to assist us in acquiring such knowledge, and we therefore reject any approach or source of knowledge which cannot be established on *wahy* and *wujūd*.

He further said:

The Islamization of Knowledge is an effort, a process, to restructure the Muslim mind so that it can function in the sphere of *ijtihād* once again and can put it back on its own unique track where it can operate in all its historically recognizable genius, so that it can clarify to itself and then to mankind the purpose and the aims of the *Shari'ah* and *wahy*, and then ascertain the ways and means by which they may be projected forward and applied in current situations.²⁶

Methodology of IOHK

The most important issue in Islamization of Human Knowledge is how to Islamize human knowledge and reformulate a new methodology? What are the principles which are needed to be followed? Are we applying qualitative, quantitative, descriptive, historical, analytical, or comparative methods or a combination of all these? If we are applying these methods, what is, then, Islamic input? What principles should be applied which will make the product Islamized? We need to answer these questions.

For the formulation of an authentic methodology, relevant to the time and needs, it seems pertinent to explore and examine what has been said earlier in this regard. For example, Al-Attas seems to be in favor of comparative and analytical method in the light of Revelation. He suggested comparison, identification and isolation of key Western concepts from existing present-day knowledge. He also recommended for the infusion of key Islamic concepts in the body of present-day knowledge and modern Western sciences. The Islamization of Knowledge project fo-

²⁶ Al Alwani, Taha Jabir, "The Reconstruction of the Muslim Mind: The Islamization of Knowledge", *The American Journal of social Sciences*, 7: 3, 1990, p. 453.

cused on the “Mastery of the Modern Sciences” and “Mastery of the Legacy”.²⁷

Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, Ismail Raji al Faruqi, Taha Jabir Alwani, Imad al Din Khalil, Mehdi Gulshani and others who have touched the issue of methodology of Islamization of Knowledge have focused more on ideological/conceptual/metaphysical framework of Islamic methodology rather than a systematic, and focus oriented elaboration of methodology. They emphasized the methods and their technical dimensions again and again. Their contention is to provide an Islamic metaphysical premise, for it is an integral part of Islamic methodology which legitimizes the need for the reformulation of modern Western methodology. This metaphysical premise of Islamic methodology which has been emphasized by these scholars, distinguishes it from the existing methodology in the modern West. The Islamization of Knowledge project has elaborated this premise and calls it the “First Principle of Islamic Methodology”, whereas Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman seems to have paid more attention to the contextual, empirical and time-space dimensions of methodology. To him, most of the classical as well as contemporary Muslim jurists and thinkers for the most part, overlooked some important dimensions of Islamic methodology such as the empirical and time-space dimensions and their relation to the structure and application of classical Muslim methodology.²⁸ Advocating the need for a fresh look into traditional Islamic methodology, he argued that the substance and the structure of social institutions always changed according to time-space context:

The substance and the structure of social institutions at any point of space and time reflect the need and the rationale of a specif-

²⁷ Al-Faruqi, Isma'il Raji, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan*. (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1989), p. 88.

²⁸ Abu Sulayman, Abdul Hamid, (1987). *The Islamic Theory of International Relations: New Directions for Islamic Methodology and Thought* (Herndon, VA.: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993), P. 87.

ic society. With the progression of time and the change of space, the substance and structure of social institutions should also change.²⁹

According to Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman, much has been said about the content of Islamic thought, its relevance or irrelevance; what lacks is the issue of methodology and the need for its reformulation due to time-space context. He believes, this issue has not been addressed properly. Consequently, “This has led to the borrowing of foreign ideas, ideologies and institutions, all of which have apparently failed to revitalize Muslim thought.”³⁰ Commenting on the need of a new Islamic methodology, he argued that the change must come from within, on the basis of the beliefs and values of the worldview of Islam; and reform must initiate “with intellectual reform, especially with the development of disciplined and systematic methodology for thought based on rational principles and approaches that incorporate Islamic objectives.”³¹

Why Did Islamic Thought Fail?

The aim of this reform for Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman is “to examine the reasons why Islamic thought has apparently failed to play an active and constructive role in the contemporary world of thought and ideas, as well as to offer new alternatives to Western thought..., and thus address the growing need for peace, security, cooperation, and participation.”³² One of the reasons identified by him is “stagnation and the narrow application of classical Muslim methodology” that resulted in the form of “rigidity and exclusiveness of Islamic thought.”³³ He stresses that it is imperative for Muslim intellectuals “to study and analyze the classical Islamic methodology and the traditional way of applying it in the field of Islamic thought” to identify its shortcomings.³⁴ He considers it obligatory for Muslim intellectuals who can “revive Islamic thought

²⁹ Ibid., p. 64.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 68.

³¹ Ibid., p. xiii.

³² Ibid., p. xix

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., p. xx.

and methodology”³⁵ and see “what is wrong with Muslim thought and why the *Sharī‘ah* is no longer providing man with rules and regulations that can enable him to exert more effective control over his environment and destiny.”³⁶

The Issue of Methodology of Islamic Thought

Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman provided a working definition of methodology. He said: “Classical Muslim methodology [*uṣūl*] refers to the basic textual sources and methods used in producing Muslim attitudes in different spheres of life,...These sources are the Qur’ān, the Sunnah, *ijmā‘*, and *ijtihād* [the use of human reason or *‘aql* in the elaboration and interpretation of the *Sharī‘ah*]. *Ijtihād* includes the fourth major source of Muslim thought, *qiyās* [analogy], along with other supplementary methods such as *istihsān* [juristic preference], *maṣlahah* or *masāliḥ mursalah* [public interest], and *‘urf* [customs of a particular society].”³⁷

At another place he asserted, “Muslim jurisprudence [*fiqh*] developed a methodology of its own to interpret and make deductions in line with the *Sharī‘ah*, for example *qiyās* [analogy] and *ijmā‘* [consensus]. The source material coupled with the methodology is called *usūl* [sources and methods of Muslim jurisprudence]. Some of the *usūl* are Sunnah, *ijmā‘*, and *qiyas*.”³⁸ To him, the *uṣūl* had included in its scope whole life: “*uṣūl* takes the whole of human conduct as its field and is concerned with both the internal and the external affairs of the Muslim people. Classical Muslim methodology provides not only the research method for Muslim thought but also its source materials.”³⁹ But later on during subsequent centuries, the scope of Islamic methodology was confined to the study of *fiqh* alone. To clarify the role of *fiqh*, he elaborated the difference between *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-fiqh* and the *Sharī‘ah*. He said:

³⁵ Ibid., p. xxiii.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 65.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 63.

The difference in meaning among *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, *al-fiqh*, and the *Sharī'ah* must be clarified. The Islamic Sharī'ah is the Divine Will revealed to the Prophet pertaining to the conduct of human life in this world. *Uṣūl al-fiqh* is the science of deducing and extrapolating rules and injunctions from their sources in the data of revelation. *Fiqh* is the body of rules and injunctions deduced from the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* which contains the Divine Will as revealed to the Prophet.⁴⁰ ...*fiqh* should not be confused with sources of *fiqh* itself, that is, the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, which together constitute the *Sharī'ah*. Fiqh represents the sum of jurisprudential interpretations, deductions, and opinions of the Muslim scholars, the 'ulama, and especially of those of the highest rank, the *mujtahidūn*, who showed marked competence and independence of thought.⁴¹

The Need for Improvement of Methodology of Islamic Thought

In the beginning, scholars did not provide systematic theorization of methodology, and, later on, it was not revised and improved. There was some reason for this. For example, according to Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman:

The sources and methods do not involve a systematic and comprehensive theorization. They merely constitute individual employment of the deductive method through the Qur'ān and the Sunnah in order to handle specific issues and practices. This is the case because there already was a concrete social system, laid down by the Prophet, within which the jurists were satisfied to work.⁴²

But in this modern period, it was necessary for scholars to expand the methodology and its scope. He realized that this goal cannot be achieved unless a change is brought in the existing education system. This need was also felt due to the changing role of institutions and government agencies. He invited scholars to think to respond to new demands of thinking. He asserted, "In modern times, with the massive change in the structure and organization of the Muslim social system and the pressing need for more precise and effective organization of the social system and government" it was necessary for Muslim intellectuals

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴² Ibid., p. 9.

“to reorganize and systemize the functions of the government” based on “Islamic ideals and goals, to develop its political base effectively... This can never be achieved without reforming the educational system and the constitutional system, incorporating both Islamic goals and values with modern needs and functions.”⁴³ At this stage, he clarified one more important point: “The Qur’ān and the basic elements of the *Sunnah*” must “serve as the source and documentary materials, while works of *fiqh*, along with other works,” should be taken “as secondary materials.”⁴⁴

But unfortunately this order was not maintained. Rather, scholars started “referring to the juridical speculations made at the height of Muslim civilization.”⁴⁵ They also forgot that it was necessary for them to take the note of context and specific issue instead of looking into the views of jurists first.

According to him, in this modern period, Muslim intellectuals became either confused or followed the methods of the West without any critical examination, assuming that these methods are free from error because they were presented in the name of “scientific”:

It is mainly under the influence of Western challenges, discoveries, and scientific methodology that Muslims have hastily reinterpreted their texts in the face of new realities. Nevertheless, they have failed to establish serious integrated studies and systematic research in the areas of law and the social sciences... At present the Muslim system of education still lacks originality in this direction and is only a poor imitation of an alien educational system.⁴⁶

According to Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman, what is needed today by Muslim intellectuals is the realization of and quick action on the re-formulation of Islamic methodology of Islamic thought.

Islamic countries need a new framework for Muslim social thought, one that is based on a systematic and objective investigation

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 14-15.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 55.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 89.

of the social aspects of human life. Only then is the achievement of a viable modern system of philosophical and moral Islamic values possible. Together with the fulfillment of this need, inductive and deductive methods must be rigorously applied to Muslim social studies. It is not surprising that *ijtihād* ceased by the end of the fourth century AH, because the source material was the same, the method of deduction was the same, and no fresh input or feedback through new and continuous empirical investigations was available in the fields of jurisprudence and social studies. Unless Islamic social sciences and humanities are genuinely established along with their textual bases through empiricism, and unless both induction and deduction are applied in these fields, *ijtihād* must, for all practical purposes, continue to be considered as closed and Muslim thought will lack dynamism and productivity.⁴⁷

Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman also focused on comprehensive systematization along with the application of induction and deduction. He says: “The need for a comprehensive systematic approach in the fields of law and Islamic social sciences is in a real sense, a contemporary Muslim problem.”⁴⁸

He explained there should not be any misunderstanding among Muslim intellectuals on the approaches of early scholars:

The jurist’s work was in many ways logical and systematic within the existing conditions and frame of mind. The contemporary Muslim social system facing new changes, needs, challenges, and pressures, has fallen apart, and the changes are so tremendous that the mere maintenance of an old order is no longer workable or desirable.⁴⁹

Muslim intellectuals of today have to realize and commit to this cause of development of Islamic methodology and, also Islamic thought:

Contemporary Muslim thinkers and scholars should realize that ad hoc and causal reflections on the issues of Muslim social life and system are no longer enough. They have to create Islamic social

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 92.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 93.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

and human sciences, to systemize the goals and methods of their studies of Islamic life, to concern themselves in their studies with the facts of social life and with its nature and interactions as much as with Islamic texts and regulations, and to create and develop comprehensive inductive and deductive Islamic methodology.⁵⁰

Shortcomings of Traditional Methodology

Ismail al Faruqi commented on the shortcomings of the traditional methodology which was maintained in the new reedited and expanded edition of *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* of 1989.

It is an admitted fact that the stagnation of thought in the *Ummah* is one of the most important reasons for its contemporary backwardness. It is also an admitted fact that a reform of the methodology of Islamic thought, on the one hand, and the Islamization of the social sciences, humanities, and other branches of knowledge, on the other hand, are greatly needed if we wish to overcome the crisis of thought and to move ahead into modern life. ...we wish to interact with it from an Islamic perspective in order to realize the Islamic goals of human life and civilization. It is for this reason that the scientific research...will emphasize methodology...as the first step toward initiating the reformation of Islamic thought and the realization of the Islamization of Knowledge.⁵¹

What is needed before embarking on the mission of Islamization of Human Knowledge? It is to develop the basic methodological principles in the light of fundamental source of Islam. It will help to “prevent the overlapping of ideas...and...put an end to the” Western influences “which have negatively affected scientific efforts and adversely influenced the psychological motivation of the scientist, worker, researcher, and intellectual in the Ummah.” It is also asserted that the traditional methodology must be cleaned from the negative influence, which has made it irrelevant to our time. Hence, it was said: “The first thing needed here is to develop a methodology...free from Sufi influence and free

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 94.

⁵¹ Al-Faruqi, *Islamization of Knowledge*, pp. 113-114.

from the philosophical dialectic and historical controversies.”⁵² Identifying problems in existing traditional methodology of Islamic thought, it was commented:

Among the other topics that are raised...in connection with research methodology in Islamic thought is how to establish methods for conducting scientific research that is more appropriate for Islamic goals. Indeed, a quick look at Islamic methodology leads one to conclude that the research methodology of Islamic thought is mostly confined to the linguistic approach.⁵³

It is contended that the existing methodology of Islamic thought has not paid attention to the analytical, experimental, and quantitative approaches in examining the issues at hand. Along with this, it was also said:

There is no doubt that the problem of scientific approach and methods in Islām is a basic issue that needs to be solved in order to bring Islamic methodology out of its isolation, to make it overcome its dependence upon the linguistic approach, and to help it crystallize methodological paradigms that will relate form to substance and lead to understanding the essence of problems encountered in the texts. Is it not necessary then that an analysis should include in its content the facts of life and action and should provide alternatives in thought, studies, attitudes, and institutions?⁵⁴

In this connection, a good number of questions have been raised by the Islamization of Knowledge project with regard to methodology and its improvement. The questions are as follows:

What was the methodology of the early period of Islamic social thought and investigation? What was the secret of their ability to develop pioneering alternatives? How can we identify their particular scientific methodology? How did the scholastic methodology developed? How did it respond to the actual circumstances of the period of its establishment and to later development? Did the development of this methodology stopped?

⁵² Ibid., pp. 115-116.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

What are the positive and negative factors in its function and progress? Are there new possibilities and conditions that require improvement in this methodology? What are the possible applications of this methodology? Has it been applied in the correct manner? What are the reasons for its present inadequacy and imbalance? What are the desired amendments and improvements in order to make the methodology of Islamic studies compatible with that of contemporary Islamic studies? To help us create the required transformation in quality of thought and to direct Islamic civilization toward more dynamism, how can we improve, amend, and present in a proper way the Islamic methodology? How can we perfect the measurement and evaluation of the results of Islamic theoretical and applied studies and research? These are some of the issues related to the history, experience, sources, philosophy, approaches, and means of Islamic thought.⁵⁵

With regard to mastery of the Islamic legacy, it is expected that through this process

...the Muslim scholar must, of necessity, have command over the fundamentals of Islām as embodied in the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah*....He also must be fully conversant with the Islamic legacy – sifting what is correct, useful, precious, and has emanated from genuine Islamic spirit and ideals from what is spurious and has been overlaid with diverse aberrations, barren sophistic discussions, or deviations and maladies that have afflicted the spiritual life of the *Ummah* and its thinking, over the centuries.⁵⁶

The Role of *Fiqh* and *Fuqahā’*

The understanding of *fiqh* was highly restricted to the technical meaning of it “when compared with that of the Qur’ānic usage of the root (*fa-qa-ha*) reported in numerous verses, which point to intellection and understanding, to grasping the essence and explanation of Islām as a whole” the understanding of *fiqh* was confined to legal solutions.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, “The great jurists of Islam—al-Shāfi‘ī, Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik,

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 116-117.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 88.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 24.

and Ahmad ibn Hanbal—all understood the comprehensive term “*uṣūl al-fiqh*” to mean the...first principles of Islamic understanding of life and reality.”⁵⁸

Due to the restriction of the term *fiqh* to its technical meaning, the *faqīh* [jurist], who was trained in *fiqh* and “whose knowledge of *Shari‘ah* enabled him to translate all contemporary social problems into legal terms, and to make pronouncements upon them under the categories of the law” was restricted practically to the domains of *Aḥkām* (rules).⁵⁹ In this way, “The role of Islam in society and life became confined only to legal terms....This bypassed the necessary alternative needed to realize the Islamic vision and to establish a social order based upon Islamic concepts and goals....Such limited practice and conception called for inevitable efforts to reform the traditional methodology and to introduce a new Islamic methodology.”⁶⁰ The role of *faqīh* and *fiqh* were to guide people and society on the path of civilizational development, by way of suggesting and developing systems and mechanisms of government and administration, so that the civilizational objectives of Islam can be achieved. This restriction caused obstacles for development and reformation of government and administrative machinery.

The Opposition of Revelation [*Wahy*] to Reason [*‘aql*]

The Qur’ān was always understood with the help of human reason as the Qur’ān itself reiterated the significant role of reason in grasping original message of the revelation. But, there came a time in the Muslim history when the reason was no longer considered by Muslim scholars a necessary tool to understand the Qur’ān. According to Islamization project,

Probably the most far-reaching development in the intellectual history of the *Ummah* is the dichotomy between revelation and reason....The dichotomy was accepted...Such logic continued to dominate the field of intellectual discussion...especially under the

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 26.

influence of Sufism....Sufism advocated a purely intuitive and often esoteric methodology, and, hence, found no fault with estrangement between reason and revelation.⁶¹ And...the call of Islām was rational and critical. Invariably, it invited men to use their intelligence, to apply their critical faculties to all claims, to consider the alternatives, to always be cogent and coherent, to say nothing but the truth of which one is absolutely certain, to always seek correspondence with reality and to shun conjecture, guessing, and supposition. Practically every page of the Qur'ān contains such exhortations, injunctions, and commands. Without reason, the truths of revelation cannot be appreciated; nor can they be recognized for what they are.⁶²

The Separation of Thought from Action

Right from the time of revelation of the Qur'an both thought and action were inseparable. But due to known and unknown reasons thought was gradually separated from practical life. In the early Islamic period, the leader was the thinker and the thinker was the leader. Later, the unity between thought and action was broken.⁶³

Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman said:

...In the defeat of the intellectual and religious leadership, a development which engendered their withdrawal from politics and their assumption of a new role: an intellectual and religious opposition. Their isolation continued to increase and, over the centuries, left an indelible mark on the nature of Islamic thought and the concerns of Islamic thinkers. As the scholars fell into the trap of looking at problems from a narrow perspective and interpreting the texts of revelation from a purely lexical point of view, schools of *taqlīd* came into existence...contributed to the overly conservative approach...the natural result was that as time went on, Islamic thought became distinctly retrospective, lost in faint recollections of times past and the adoration of sacred relics.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 26-27.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

⁶⁴ AbuSulayman, AbdulHamid, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind* (Herndon, Va., U.S.A.: I

This attitude did not allow the scholars ‘to think about overall and comprehensive approaches.’⁶⁵ They failed to realize that to develop dynamic Islamic thought “there must be a complete understanding of, and concentration on, the higher purposes of the *Shari‘ah* and on its general principles, values, and fundamental teachings. These must become the starting point for contemporary Islamic...thought and for the arrangements of its institutions, organizations, and the regulations that direct and guide its movement.”⁶⁶

Mundane and Religious Dualism

This separation of thought and action ultimately resulted in the form of dualism. The life which was integral became divided into mundane and religious. “This bifurcation of Islamic life into two paths is in constant opposition to each other (the one condemnable and involving the material world with all its values, and the other praiseworthy and involving all the religious and ethical values) corrupted and destroyed the role of the two paths...The former became empty spirituality.”⁶⁷ Later on in the modern period, the Western onslaught completed this process of dualism and finally Muslim world turned into the secular one and lost Islamic vision and mission.

Lack of Clear Vision

The modern Western secular knowledge and educational system produced some good results in Western societies due to their clear vision of it. This clear vision was, in fact, responsible for the success of modern Western model of education. But unfortunately, this clear vision was not developed in the Muslim world when this Western model of education was imported. It came without spirit and vision. That is why it failed in the Muslim world. The Muslim world as a whole remained backward until the emergence of Islamic revivalist movement in modern period. The Islamic revivalist movement created a new spirit, vision and

ternational Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993), pp. 15-16.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Al-Faruqi, *Islamization*, p. 29.

mission in the Muslim world. The movement of Islamization of Knowledge became an integral part of the Islamic revivalist movement. Commenting on the lack of a clear vision, it is said in the Work Plan:

...the Western educational model depends ultimately upon a specific vision, though different from that of Islam, and is animated by a will to realize that vision. Buildings and offices, libraries and laboratories, and classrooms and auditoriums teeming with students and faculty are all material paraphernalia of little worth without the requisite vision. It is the nature of such vision that it cannot be copied; ...that is why in nearly two centuries of Westernized, secularized education, the Muslims have produced neither a school, college, university, nor a generation of scholars that matches the West in creativity or excellence. The insoluble problem of low standards in the Muslim World institutions is a necessary consequence of this lack of vision. There is no genuine search for knowledge without spirit, and the Western spirit is precisely what cannot and should not be copied. It is generated by its own vision of life and reality, in short, by its faith. The materials and methodologies presently taught in the Muslim World are copies of the Western ones but devoid of the vision which animated them in the West. Devoid of that vision, they became instruments of mediocritization. Unconsciously, these dispirited materials and methodologies continue to exert a sinister de-Islamizing influence on the student, by posing as alternatives to the Islamic ones as well as agents of progress and modernization.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 7.

Conclusion

Islamization of human knowledge is a movement to rethink, remold, recast, and overhaul the existing anthology of human knowledge in both natural and social sciences from epistemological and methodological angles. Ismail al-Faruqi and Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman developed a very clear vision of IOHK and elaborated on how to achieve the goal. For that matter, they identified not only the problems with the Muslim mind but also made practical suggestions to surmount them. It seems the only solution to the pathetic situation of the Muslim *ummah* today is that Muslim scholars should aggressively participate in the movement of IOHK.