

ISLAMIZATION OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE IN INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA: A FEW CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Muhammad Mumtaz Ali*

International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Corresponding author: Muhammad Mumtaz Ali **email:** mumtazali@iium.edu.my

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Abstract: This paper examines the project of Islamization of Human Knowledge (IOHK), originally conceptualized and articulated by Ismail Raji al-Faruqi in 1982 within the broader context of intellectual reform in the Muslim world. The IOHK framework was later institutionalized as a core mission of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) in the 1990s, where it underwent further development and contextual adaptation. The study highlights key features and enhancements introduced by successive IIUM rectors, which have significantly broadened the scope, application, and relevance of IOHK in contemporary educational settings. These additions have transformed IOHK from a primarily theoretical construct into a more comprehensive and operational paradigm for integrating Islamic Revealed Knowledge with the modern disciplines of human sciences.

* **Professor Dr. Muhammad Mumtaz Ali** is a faculty member in the Department of Usuluddin and Comparative Religion at the AHAS Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. His academic interests include Islamic studies and comparative religion, and he can be contacted via email at mumtazali@iium.edu.my

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Employing a qualitative methodology based on content analysis, the paper critically examines the evolution of IOHK and situates it within its proper academic and intellectual context. It further clarifies several conceptual dimensions, including its epistemological foundations, methodological implications, and educational objectives. The paper argues that IOHK, as developed and practiced at IIUM, represents not only an educational reform agenda but also a vital framework for civilizational renewal. By fostering a balanced synthesis between spiritual values and scientific inquiry, IOHK contributes to the holistic development of knowledge and promotes the well-being of humanity in an increasingly complex and pluralistic world.

Keywords: Islamization of Human Knowledge; Malaysia; Epistemology; Relevance; IIUM.

Introduction

The intellectual project of Islamization of Human Knowledge [IOHK] emerged in the Muslim world from a careful diagnosis of the crises afflicting both humanities at large and the contemporary Muslim Ummah in particular. Drawing upon the Qur'an, the Sunnah, the Seerah of the Prophet Muhammad [peace be upon him], and the rich legacy of Islamic and human intellectual history, the pioneers identified the problem of fragmentation of modern knowledge, moral disorientation, and educational decay as central causes of civilizational decline. Unlike approaches that uncritically adopted the modern Western secular paradigms or romanticized a stagnant imitation of the Muslim past, they sought to revive the authentic Islamic intellectual tradition while engaging constructively with contemporary realities.

Their sources of insight were firmly grounded in the Islamic revelation and the accumulated wisdom of

Islamic scholarship, yet their method reflected a keen awareness of modern intellectual challenges. According to Naquib al-Attas, Ismail Faruqi, Abdul-Hamid Abu Sulayman, Kamal Hassan [Mumtaz Ali, M. 2019] and many more the problem could only be resolved through a comprehensive transformation of the systems of knowledge and education.

Education and knowledge were identified as the root causes of the crisis and decay. Their diagnosis and prescription became known as the Islamization of Human Knowledge. Abdul-Hamid Abu Sulayman and Kamal Hassan both, the second and third rectors of IIUM, adopted it in IIUM as its Mission during 1990s and suggested harmonizing Islamic Revealed Knowledge [IRK] with the human sciences [Mumtaz Ali, M. 2019] Hence, the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences [KIRKHS] was established. It is now renamed as Abdul-Hamid Abu Sulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences [AHAS KIRKHS]. It is mainly this Kulliyah that was assigned the Project of IOHK. It was expected that gradually all other Kulliyah will also adopt it.

The Understanding of IOHK in IIUM

For Abdul-Hamid Abu Sulayman and Kamal Hassan, the Islamization of Human Knowledge was not a rejection of modern disciplines, but a critical engagement with them, removing their assumptions, purposes, and ethical orientations within an Islamic worldview. By providing the foundation of Islamic Revealed Knowledge [IRK] to the cultivation of acquired knowledge, they argued, IIUM can initiate a new era of integrated, holistic, and comprehensive education. The meaningful reform must begin with the farming of intellectually grounded, spiritually and morally conscious, and socially responsible individuals. IOHK did not mean that it entails

isolationism or rejection of modern knowledge, but rather a critical re-examination of its philosophical underpinnings. Liberation, in their conception, meant freeing Muslim intellectual inquiry from epistemological dependency and restoring confidence in the Islamic worldview and *tawhīdic* epistemology as a viable and universal framework. The IOHK project would cultivate balanced reasoning, ethical sensitivity, and civilizational awareness. It will help to cultivate the minds capable of thinking critically, faithfully, and creatively within the framework of IOHK. Therefore, critically and creatively engaging modern disciplines from within the Islamic intellectual tradition is not an act of rejection, but of intellectual honesty and responsibility. IOHK, in IIUM, does not imply the dismissal of empirical sciences or the wholesale rejection of Western intellectual contributions. Rather, it involved proper examining the philosophical foundations, aims, and ethical implications of various fields of knowledge.

Abdul-Hamid Abu Sulayman and Kamal Hassan maintained that disciplines such as the social sciences and humanities are particularly shaped by value-laden assumptions about human nature, society, and progress. Without critical scrutiny, the uncritical importation of these assumptions into Muslim societies would perpetuate epistemological dependency and civilizational imbalance. Thus, IOHK would seek to benefit from the beneficial insights of contemporary scholarship while orienting them genuinely within a framework rooted in *tawhīdic* epistemology and moral accountability. IOHK in IIUM is restoring balance, placing revelation, reason, empirical inquiry, and ethical values in their appropriate relationships. It aimed to overcome the dualism that separated religious and secular sciences, sacred and profane knowledge, and moral values from academic disciplines. By restoring the unity of knowledge under the

guidance of divine teachings, IOHK sought to cultivate scholars capable of integrating rigorous academic inquiry with ethical consciousness and spiritual awareness. Far from denying the “other,” the project encouraged constructive interaction, while resisting epistemological subordination.

IOHK in IIUM represents a comprehensive epistemological and methodological reform movement. Its goal is neither domination nor exclusion, but the restoration of intellectual justice, an ordering of knowledge that harmonizes revelation and reason, integrates ethics with scholarship, and establishes properly the spiritual and moral purpose of education within the broader project of civilizational renewal.

IOHK in IIUM aims to cultivate the capacity to think for the right purpose, to orient intellectual activity toward the right direction, and ultimately to serve the right ends. Knowledge must be anchored in a moral vision that directs human action toward the common good. It aspired to direct the processes of proper thinking within Muslim societies so that they could move beyond defensive postures and actively engage in shaping a more balanced and humane world order.

IOHK rejects isolationism; instead, it calls for confident participation in global intellectual discourse, a participation grounded in a clear epistemological and methodological framework derived from Islamic Revealed Knowledge yet open to empirical realities. IOHK argues that knowledge must not remain abstract or speculative; it must interact with lived realities. Empirical investigation, historical analysis, and social research are indispensable tools in understanding contemporary challenges. However, these tools must be guided by an overarching ethical framework to prevent their misuse or reduction to purely material ends. In this integration of revelation, rationality, and empirical experience, we see the revival of

the dynamic spirit that once characterized Islamic civilization.

Moreover, through IOHK, IIUM plans for the development of a new generation of scholars trained in both the Islamic intellectual tradition and contemporary disciplines. Such scholars would possess epistemological and methodological competence, critical awareness, and moral commitment. They would be capable of examining properly inherited juristic and theological formulations in the light of present realities without severing their connection to foundational sources.

Thus, IOHK, as conceived by IIUM rectors, represents a disciplined effort to restore coherence to the structure of knowledge, purpose to intellectual activity, and justice to human civilization. It seeks to reform the Muslim mind not for self-enclosure or domination, but for responsible participation in addressing the shared crises of humanity. By harmonizing revelation, reason, and empirical inquiry, the movement aspires to cultivate balanced thinkers who can navigate complexity with intellectual rigor, ethical clarity, and spiritual consciousness. The proper development and construction of knowledge would integrate properly the metaphysical awareness with empirical analysis, recognizing that human life unfolds within a divinely structured moral universe. This integration ensures that scientific and social inquiry remain ethically accountable.

Both rectors also emphasized the need for critical engagement with the Islamic intellectual heritage. They rejected both uncritical glorification of the past and wholesale dismissal of it. Historical Islamic paradigms must be examined in the light of their civilizational achievements and limitations, both stressed. Such engagement enables contemporary scholars to distinguish between enduring principles and context-bound formulations. By reassessing the juristic, theological, and

philosophical legacies of earlier scholars, the Ummah can recover methodological strengths while avoiding stagnation and rigid imitation [*taqlid*]. Kamal Hassan called this approach as relevantization of Islamic sciences. Kamal Hassan argued that the vital domain of traditional sciences requiring sustained and critical engagement in the intellectual training of Muslims. It is the vast corpus of Islamic intellectual heritage [*turāth*] that needs critical assessment to make it relevant to our situation. This heritage, rich, diverse, and spanning centuries cannot be approached through imitation [*taqlid*], romanticization, or uncritical reverence. Nor should it be dismissed wholesale in the name of modernity. Rather, it demands a principled, analytical engagement that enables Muslims to benefit from it constructively and responsibly in addressing contemporary realities.

Kamak Hassan introduced an additional and significant dimension to the ongoing discourse of IOHK concerning engagement with Islam and the Islamic or religious sciences, which he termed “Relevantization” (*IIUM policies and guidelines on Islamisation*, 2013). By relevantization, he refers to a critical and analytical approach to the study and application of religious sciences such as *Usul al-Din*, *Usul al-Fiqh*, Shariah studies, and *Uloom al-Qur’an*. He argued that these sciences were developed in earlier periods within the framework of Islamic Revealed Knowledge [IRK] and the Islamic worldview to address the pressing issues of their respective times. After the passage of several centuries, however, their contemporary application requires fresh analysis and careful re-examination. This process enables us to identify their beneficial aspects and guide their proper application in responding to the challenges of our own time.

He maintained that a merely imitative application of the religious sciences would only contribute to further

stagnation and confusion. At the same time, these sciences cannot simply be neglected, nor should they be followed blindly. Rather, they must be applied consciously, thoughtfully, and intelligently, considering present realities.

A pertinent question arises at this juncture: who should bear responsibility for the project of relevantization? Is it confined to the lecturers of the Islamic Revealed Knowledge [IRK] disciplines, or does it extend to all members of the university's academic staff? From the perspective of Abdul-Hamid Abu Sulayman, the responsibility is collective rather than exclusive. He did not view relevantization as the sole duty of IRK scholars, nor as a task limited to specialists in the traditional Islamic sciences. Rather, he envisioned it as a shared intellectual mission encompassing the entire academic community. In his thinking, genuine integration between revealed knowledge and the modern disciplines could only be achieved if scholars from both domains developed meaningful literacy in each other's fields.

For this reason, during his leadership at the International Islamic University Malaysia, he encouraged all academic staff of the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences [KIRKHS] to enrol voluntarily in diploma courses, IRK lecturers in Human Sciences, and Human Sciences lecturers in IRK. This initiative was not merely administrative; it was grounded in a deeper epistemological vision. Abu Sulayman believed that intellectual reform requires scholars who are not confined within disciplinary silos but can engage both the Islamic intellectual heritage and contemporary academic thought with competence and confidence.

By equipping themselves with both traditional Islamic sciences and modern disciplines, academic staff would be better positioned to approach teaching and research from a holistic perspective. Such dual

competence would enable them to present knowledge in a manner that is intellectually rigorous, contextually relevant, and rooted in Islamic values. In this way, the university's academic staff could teach more effectively and productively, bridging the perceived divide between "Islamic" and "modern" knowledge and embodying the very integration the institution seeks to promote.

IOK in Its Proper Perspective

The question of the true nature and purpose of the Islamization of Human Knowledge [IOHK) invites careful reflection. Is it a religious, communal, or sectarian movement? Does it aim to promote a particular religion, community, or civilization? These questions often arise because the term "Islam" is frequently understood especially in modern discourse, primarily as a religion in the narrow, Western sense of a private system of belief and ritual. However, many Muslim scholars have argued that Islam is far more than a religion in this limited definition. Rather, it represents a comprehensive worldview and an integrated way of life encompassing spiritual, intellectual, ethical, moral, and social dimensions. It was from this broader understanding that the movement known as the Islamization of Knowledge emerged. The central thrust of IOHK is not merely to "religionize" knowledge, nor to advance sectarian or communal interests. Instead, it seeks to restore knowledge and education to what its proponents regard as their authentic foundations - truth, reality, and meaningful purpose. The movement emphasizes that knowledge should not be divorced from ethical values, spiritual insight, and an awareness of ultimate reality.

IOHK can thus be understood as an intellectual and civilizational project aimed at liberating human thought from excessive reliance on speculation, conjecture, and purely materialistic interpretations of existence. Beginning

in the 1970s, a number of prominent scholars and intellectuals observed that dominant paradigms of knowledge particularly those shaped by modern secular frameworks had become increasingly fragmented. In their view, education had lost its moral coherence and spiritual orientation, leading to a worldview that prioritizes material progress while neglecting deeper questions of meaning, purpose, and transcendence. Within this modern context, spiritual and moral dimensions of life were often marginalized, either dismissed entirely or confined to the private sphere. Knowledge became increasingly detached from any sense of the divine or transcendent, and the idea of “neutral” or “value-free” education gained prominence. Proponents of IOHK challenge this assumption, arguing that all knowledge is shaped by underlying worldviews and value systems.

Against this backdrop, the Islamization of Knowledge movement seeks to reintegrate knowledge with a moral and spiritual framework grounded in the true, authentic, and universal worldview that is Islamic worldview. Its goal is to harmonize intellectual inquiry with ethical responsibility and metaphysical awareness, thereby reconstructing education as a holistic enterprise. Ultimately, IOHK aspires to cultivate a form of knowledge that not only informs but also guides leading humanity toward a more balanced understanding of life, the world, and its ultimate purpose.

Ismail al-Faruqi, one of the pioneers for example, argued that the concern of IOHK is to resolve the plight of the Ummah. He wanted to bring it out of the backwardness into the process of development and leadership. He referred to Development of the Ummah and its leadership position. For this purpose, he suggested, as an effective strategy, firstly a *change* in the concept of knowledge and then in the educational system. Since 1982 this prescription of Ismail al-Faruqi was

neglected by majority of Muslims. Neither heads of higher institutions of education, [universities], such as rectors and vice-chancellors took any interest in it nor the heads of states and governments, the prime ministers and presidents. Even university academicians also overlooked it. As a result, the modern Western secular education system continues in Muslim countries. Refereeing to need of IOHK Faruqi said: there is a need to redefine and re-order the data, to rethink the reasoning and relate the data, to re-evaluate 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. For Faruqi Islamization does not stand for consumption of existing knowledge but the creation of new knowledge. For this purpose we do not need to redefine the data but to define it properly and order the data genuinely so that we can think authentically and reasoning rightly and relate the data, to evaluate the conclusions, to project the goals and to do so in such a way as to make the disciplines improved further and enrich the vision to serve the cause of humanity. For him, by large, to Islamize a certain discipline is to engage, teach, learn, and present that discipline in an authentic, truthful, and universal way so that on one side we can remove the underlying flaws and on the other hand we can improve it.

Identifying problems of various disciplines, al Faruqi asserted that as disciplines, the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences must be reconceived and rebuilt, given a new base of truth and reality of life and the world and assigned new purposes consistent with truth and reality of life and the world. Every discipline, he asserted, must be recast to embody the principles of universal truth and reality in its methodology, in its strategy, in what it regards as its data, its problems, its objectives, its aspirations for life and society. Every discipline must be remoulded to

incorporate the relevance of true way of life, a long a triple axis constitutive of *tawhid* – the truth and reality of existence of Allah SWT [Al Faruqi, 1982].

According to Faruqi every Muslim youth has a fundamental right to receive a complete and meaningful education so that he/she can learn about the *dīn*, true worldview and the way of life in the comprehensive way. This includes not only spiritual knowledge, but also a deep understanding of all areas of studies such as ethics, law, history, and the rich cultural legacy of Islam and humanity. Such an education is essential in shaping individuals who are spiritually grounded, morally conscious, and socially responsible. For this, the responsibility to provide this foundational instruction does not rest solely on families or educational institutions; rather, it is a collective duty of the entire Ummah. Communities, scholars, and leaders alike share in this obligation, as they are entrusted with nurturing the next generation in accordance with the principles truthful and realistic life. Failure to fulfil this duty is not a trivial matter, it carries both legal and moral weight. In the sight of Allah SWT, neglecting to provide every child with proper truthful and realistic education is a serious lapse, one for which the Ummah and its leadership may be held accountable. As emphasized by Faruqi ensuring access to authentic and holistic education is not merely an ideal, but a binding responsibility, one that reflects the community's commitment to preserving its determination to follow truth, maintain identity, and uphold moral integrity across generations.

The Islamization of present-day knowledge refers to a systematic intellectual process through which contemporary bodies of knowledge are critically examined, purified, and reconstructed in accordance with the Islamic worldview. This process begins with what may be termed an epistemological isolation: the identification

and removal of elements, assumptions, and key concepts within modern knowledge that are rooted in secular, materialistic, or reductionist philosophies. Such elements often reflect historical and cultural experiences especially those of modern Western thought and are not epistemologically neutral, despite claims to objectivity.

Once this critical filtering has taken place, the remaining body of knowledge is not left in a vacuum. Rather, it is *re-infused* with foundational Islamic elements and key concepts. These concepts are not externally imposed or artificially attached; instead, they are understood to be intrinsic to the *fitrah* - the primordial nature of human beings and therefore restore knowledge to its proper function and purpose. In this sense, Islamization does not distort knowledge but rather reorients it toward truth and reality, thereby transforming it into what is regarded as true knowledge. Importantly, this process is not limited to the modification of existing disciplines. It also involves the engagement with new or foreign concepts, theories, and frameworks. These are not rejected wholesale; rather, they are critically appropriated and reinterpreted through a tawhīdic epistemological lens. Thus, Islamization is both a corrective and a constructive project: it refines inherited knowledge while simultaneously shaping new intellectual horizons.

Central to this process is the integration of key Islamic concepts that structure both thought and action as claimed by Naquib al-Attas. Among these are *dīn* (Islam as a comprehensive way of life), *insān* (the human being as a moral and intellectual agent), *‘ilm* and *ma‘rifah* (forms of knowledge that encompass both rational understanding and experiential awareness), *ḥikmah* (wisdom as the proper application of knowledge), *‘adl* (justice as balance and right ordering), and *‘amal* as *adab* (right action grounded in ethical discipline and proper conduct) [Al-Attas, S. M. N. 1995]. These concepts are not isolated

abstractions; they are deeply interconnected and ultimately grounded in the principle of *tawhīd* - the unity and absolute reality of Allah SWT, including His Essence and Attributes. Furthermore, these foundational concepts derive their meaning and authority from the primary sources of Islam: the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the *Shariah*. Together, these sources provide not only normative guidance but also an overarching metaphysical and epistemological framework within which knowledge is to be understood and developed.

In this light, the Islamization of knowledge can be more precisely described as a method of meaning-making. It involves interpreting empirical facts, human experiences, and social realities through the metaphysical principles of Islam. This process generates coherent and integrated meanings both at the individual and societal levels by situating knowledge within a unified spiritual vision of reality.

Significantly, this approach rejects the superficial strategy of merely grafting Islamic terminology or selectively appending religious principles onto an otherwise unchanged body of modern knowledge. Such an approach risks producing conceptual inconsistencies, epistemological tensions, and what has been described as "intellectual schizophrenia", a condition in which conflicting worldviews coexist without genuine integration. Instead, Islamization calls for a deep structural transformation of knowledge, ensuring that its underlying assumptions, methods, and purposes are harmonized with the Islamic worldview. The Islamization of present-day knowledge is not a rejection of modern knowledge, nor a simple return to classical formulations. Rather, it is a rigorous and dynamic intellectual endeavour aimed at reconstructing knowledge so that it reflects the unity of truth, integrates the spiritual and material dimensions of existence, and fulfils its ultimate

purpose in guiding human life in accordance with divine reality.

The movement of Islamization of Human Knowledge (IOHK) is a relatively recent intellectual development that emerged in the mid-1970s as a response to the growing epistemological and educational challenges faced by the Muslim world. It represents a comprehensive ideological and academic program aimed at reorienting modern knowledge within a worldview which represents the truth and reality of life. Rather than rejecting contemporary disciplines, the movement seeks to critically engage with them, reconstructing their foundations in the light of universal and truthful principles, values, and metaphysical assumptions. The ultimate ambition of this movement is to provide a renewed intellectual framework for knowledge and education - one that is deeply rooted in the concepts of Truth (*ḥaqq*) and Reality as understood throughout history. This endeavour requires systematic and well-planned epistemological efforts, including the proper use of revelation (*wahy*) as the source of knowledge with reason (*'aql*), and the harmonization of empirical inquiry with spiritual and ethical dimensions. In this sense, IOHK is not merely a reform of content but a transformation of the underlying philosophy, methodology, and purpose of knowledge itself. The central concern of which is the cultivation of authentic, coherent, and relevant modes of thought that can address the contemporary needs of societies. It emphasizes the development of sound methodologies, the reform of educational systems, and the nurturing of individuals who embody intellectual, moral, and spiritual excellence. Ultimately, the movement aspires to contribute to the holistic development of human beings and the revitalization of civilization based on universal values, ideals and principles.

One of the most significant contributions of the Islamization of Knowledge movement is its diagnosis of the root causes behind the decline of the Muslim Ummah and humanity. Scholars associated with IOHK argue that this decline is closely linked to the dualistic nature of modern education in many modern and contemporary societies, where a divide exists between traditional religious institutions and secular, Western-oriented systems. This dichotomy has led to fragmented worldviews, intellectual inconsistency, and a loss of civilizational direction. In response, the IOHK discourse calls for the integration and unification of these educational streams into a coherent system grounded in the truthful and realistic worldview. The IIUM model of education reflect such unification and provide under one roof the knowledge of all disciplines. The scholars of IIUM continue to examine the origins, scope, subject matter, aims, and methodologies of Islamization of Human Knowledge, offering diverse perspectives and approaches. As such, the movement remains an evolving intellectual project, engaging critically with both Islamic heritage and modern knowledge in its pursuit of a balanced and meaningful unity. The Islamization of Human Knowledge is fundamentally an intellectual and methodological project aimed at revitalizing Islamic thought by reconnecting it with the primary sources and enduring intellectual heritage of the Muslim Ummah as starting point but its final goal is to guide humanity. It seeks to reopen access to the foundational “fountainheads” of truthful and realistic scholarship rooted in the Qur’an, the Sunnah, and the rich legacy of classical and post-classical Muslim thinkers so that contemporary inquiry may be guided by an authentic and coherent worldview.

At its core, this project aspires to achieve intellectual mastery of truthful and realistic thought, generally called as Islamic thought, across all branches of

human knowledge, whether in the social sciences, natural sciences, or applied and professional fields. Such mastery is not merely a matter of familiarity or historical appreciation; rather, it involves the capacity to critically engage, reinterpret, and extend this tradition in ways that address contemporary realities. The ultimate goal is to construct a robust and dynamic intellectual foundation capable of guiding action across all domains of life, cultural, social, political, scientific, and civilizational. In this sense, the Islamization of Knowledge is not limited to abstract theorization. It calls for a comprehensive effort to mobilize both spiritual and material resources in order to bring about meaningful reform in the intellectual sphere. This includes cultivating ethical integrity, strengthening spiritual consciousness, and fostering disciplined scholarship, alongside developing institutions, research programs, and educational frameworks that embody these principles. Central to this endeavour is the recognition that genuine reform cannot occur without a profound transformation of thought and methodology based on speculation and conjecture. It requires strong foundation of true, authentic, and universal knowledge - Islamic Revealed Knowledge. A clear and coherent vision grounded in the Islamic worldview based on IRK is indispensable. Without such epistemological clarity, intellectual efforts risk becoming fragmented, reactive, or derivative. In such conditions, even sincere efforts and significant sacrifices may fail to produce lasting or meaningful outcomes.

The history of Islamic civilization itself highlights this principle. Its periods of greatest vitality and creativity were marked by the presence of a unified intellectual vision and a sound methodological framework that allowed reason to work under the guidance of revelation, ethics and inquiry, theory and practice. Similarly, earlier civilizations achieved growth and advancement when

their systems of knowledge were rooted in true, authentic, and universal worldview such as Islamic worldview that provided both meaning and direction. Accordingly, the Islamization of Knowledge seeks to revive this integrative dynamic. It aims to restore the unity of knowledge, align intellectual pursuits with moral and spiritual purpose, and generate a form of scholarship that is both faithful to its origins and responsive to contemporary challenges. Through this process, it envisions the reemergence of a civilization that is intellectually vibrant, ethically grounded, and capable of contributing constructively to the broader human experience. Hence, the term Islamization, as employed in this context, refers to a comprehensive intellectual process whereby the concepts, principles, and methodologies that structure and guide the development of knowledge are brought into conformity with the spirit of truth and reality of life [Islam] and the epistemological framework derived from the Qur'an. It implies not merely an external alignment, but a deep internal coherence in which the foundations, assumptions, and aims of knowledge reflect the truthful and realistic worldview grounded in revelation, reason, and ethical purpose.

Islamization seeks to ensure that the organization, production, and dissemination of knowledge are guided by principles that affirm the unity of truth (*tawhīd*), the moral responsibility of the human being, and the meaningful integration of the material and spiritual dimensions of existence. Hence, it is not a futile religious exercise but a scientific and ethical intellectual project. Knowledge, in this sense, is not value-neutral; it is inherently connected to questions of purpose, responsibility, and ultimate reality. Within this framework, the objective of Islamization is not to reject modern science and technology, nor to isolate Muslim intellectual life from global developments. Rather, it is to

engage, appropriate, and transform these domains by reinterpreting them through the categories of *‘ilm* (knowledge) and *ḥikmah* (wisdom). The metaphor of capturing the “fairy” of *‘ilm* and *ḥikmah* may thus be understood as an aspiration to harness the power and potential of contemporary knowledge particularly in science and technology so that it becomes both intellectually integrated and ethically directed. This entails mastering the methods, discoveries, and applications of modern disciplines while critically examining their underlying assumptions and reorienting them toward higher purposes. Islamization, therefore, calls for intellectual rigor, creative engagement, and disciplined scholarship that can advance knowledge without divorcing it from its moral and spiritual foundations.

Ultimately, the aim is to make knowledge truly truthful and realistic, not in a parochial or exclusionary sense, but in the sense of achieving intellectual independence, authenticity, and responsibility of humanity. By doing so, it becomes possible not only to contribute to the advancement of science and technology, but also to ensure that such advancements serve the broader well-being of humanity. In this vision, knowledge is cultivated as a means of promoting justice, balance, and human development, rather than merely as an instrument of power, control, or material accumulation which are the dominant features of modern-day life.

The Islamization in general and Islamization of Knowledge both extend not only to the theoretical dimensions of inquiry but also to the domain of applied sciences and the foundational principles upon which scientific disciplines are constructed. In this regard, Islamization of Knowledge involves a critical and constructive engagement with scientific knowledge, one that seeks to align its conceptual underpinnings, interpretive frameworks, and applications with true,

authentic, and universal worldview. Such an endeavour may be advanced through a deeper understanding of the relationship between the principles formulated within the natural sciences and the intrinsic order of nature itself. From this perspective, nature is not a self-subsisting or autonomous reality; rather, it is a manifestation of a divinely ordained order, governed by laws that reflect coherence, balance, and purpose. Scientific principles, therefore, are not merely abstract constructs or human inventions, but attempts, however partial, to describe and systematize this underlying order. It is precisely this correspondence between scientific laws and the patterned regularities of the natural world that provides a point of convergence with spiritual and moral values. In this sense, intellectual tradition, the study of nature (*āyāt al-kawn*) is understood as complementary to the study of revelation (*āyāt al-wahy*), both pointing toward a unified truth grounded in divine reality. Consequently, the Islamization of applied science entails recognizing this unity and re-situating scientific inquiry within a broader metaphysical framework that affirms purpose, meaning, and moral accountability.

Within this framework, the philosophical assumptions embedded in many modern scientific theories particularly those that treat their foundational postulates as self-sufficient or value-neutral are subjected to critical scrutiny. Islamization of Knowledge does not deny the empirical validity or practical utility of such theories; rather, it questions the absolutization of their underlying assumptions. By re-examining these postulates, they may be reformulated in terms that reflect a more universal and holistic understanding of reality, one that acknowledges the contingent nature of creation and its dependence upon a transcendent source. In this sense, scientific concepts become “Islamized” not by altering their empirical content, but by reinterpreting their

philosophical significance. They are recast within a framework that recognizes the unity, order, and intelligibility of the cosmos as signs of a purposeful and coherent creation. This reorientation introduces the notion that all processes, movements, and patterns in the natural world are not random or purely mechanistic but are imbued with meaning and directed toward ends consistent with a divinely instituted order.

Ultimately, the Islamization of applied science seeks to ensure that scientific knowledge and technological advancement are not divorced from spiritual and ethical considerations and metaphysical insight. It aims to cultivate a form of science that is both intellectually rigorous and spiritually aware, one that contributes not only to material progress but also to a deeper spiritual understanding of existence and humanity's role within it.

Conclusion Remarks

From the perspective of IIUM, the Islamization of Human Knowledge (IOHK) has never been conceived as a mere slogan or a superficial academic reform project. Rather, it represents a deeply rooted epistemological and methodological endeavour aimed at reshaping the very structure of the human mind, particularly that of students, academics, and researchers. It is an ambitious intellectual vision that seeks not only to transform what is taught, but more importantly, how knowledge itself is understood, constructed, and applied within the broader framework of *tawhīdīc* and civilizational development. This vision was most clearly articulated and advanced by former rectors such as Abdul-Hamid Abu Sulayman and Mohd Kamal Hassan. They regarded IOHK not simply as an academic exercise, but as a comprehensive vehicle for intellectual, spiritual, and civilizational renewal. For them, the crisis facing Muslim societies was not due to a scarcity of

information or technical expertise but rather stemmed from a deeper epistemological and methodological disarray. Knowledge had become fragmented, disconnected from its ethical and spiritual roots, and often divorced from the ultimate purposes of human existence as defined by the truth and reality of life - Islam.

In response, IOHK was envisioned as a proper training ground for cultivating a proper intellect, one that is capable of *ijtihad*, understood as disciplined creativity guided by divine revelation. This intellectual formation requires more than the acquisition of facts; it demands a reorientation of the mind toward a coherent worldview grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Students are thus trained to think through the Qur'anic worldview, allowing revelation to serve not as an afterthought, but as the central axis around which all forms of knowledge revolve. This is the reason that the current rector of IIUM is asking for the development and application of *tawhīdīc* epistemology. At the same time, IOHK emphasizes the integration of multiple tools of knowing under the guidance of revelation (IRK). It is IRK which will guide reason (*'aql*), and empirical inquiry. Rather than privileging one at the expense of others, it seeks a harmonious unity of all tools that reflect the holistic nature of *tawhīdīc* epistemology. This uninformative approach challenges the entrenched dualisms that have characterized much of modern education, particularly the divide between the sacred and the secular, or between religious and "worldly" sciences. Within the IOHK framework, such divisions are seen as artificial constructs that undermine the unity of truth. Furthermore, IOHK aspires to restore coherence between knowledge and action. In this paradigm, knowledge is not pursued as an end in itself, but as a means to cultivate morals, responsibility, and meaningful engagement with society. The ultimate goal is to produce individuals whose

intellectual pursuits are aligned with spiritual and moral purpose and whose scholarship contributes to the well-being of humanity in accordance with truthful and reality-oriented values.

Thus, the Islamization of Human Knowledge is not about the superficial “Islamization” of textbooks alone such as inserting Qur’anic *ayaths* [verses] into existing disciplines without analytical and critical engagement. Rather, it is a far more profound project: one that calls for the application of the tawhīdīc epistemic foundations and methodological structures upon which all disciplines are built. It seeks to reconstruct knowledge itself so that it reflects the unity, purpose, and ethical orientation inherent in the Islamic worldview.

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