

The Islamization of the Methodology of the Behavioral Sciences

Many years ago, and after numerous conferences and exhaustive studies and consultations on our Ummah's present situation, as well as an extensive analysis of our past and future aspirations, an idea crystallized in the minds of a group of young committed Muslims: The Ummah's crisis, in both its essence and its reality, is an intellectual crisis, because everything else in the Ummah is sound, except for thought. The Ummah still possesses all of the fundamentals that had once made it "the best of peoples evolved for humanity" (3:110); all that is missing is the soundness of its thought and the ability to develop, utilize, and strengthen it. As far as the rest is concerned, if the Ummah is no better than it was, at least is no worse off. Therefore, the various phenomena of corruption in the Ummah are, in our opinion, only a reflection and embodiment of the crisis of its thought.

Thought is the fruit of all sources of knowledge, education, experience, ability, and social concepts and trends. For Muslims, it is formulated by revelation as well as humanity's inherent intellectual capacity, cultural developments and knowledge, and experience, in addition to one's *fiṭrah* (inherent nature) and potential, which Allah has bestowed upon every person. Thought is like a tree, for it needs healthy and strong roots to survive. Hence, if the roots and sources of knowledge are sound, the methodology correct, and the aims worthy, then both its situation and that of its supporters will improve. However, if there are mistakes or deliberate alterations and distortions in these sources, then thought will be corrupted and all aspects of life disrupted. Consequently, people will become short-sighted and narrow-minded, begin to neglect the basics and essentials because of their concentration on minor and irrelevant issues, ignore the long-term

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aims and objectives, and focus on ritualistic details. In addition, they will either ignore the relationship between effects and their causes, or attribute effects to the wrong causes and thus fall victim to superstitions and fail to identify their priorities.

When a society reaches such a stage, its social equilibrium crumbles and collapses, and conflict among members of the group (or Ummah) will come to dominate all political, intellectual, and social aspects of life. Security will disappear, and distrust and corruption will prevail. Odd ideas and principles will predominate and create serious divisions and schisms. People will be hesitant and afraid to participate in or contribute to collective and public work, endeavors, and activities. Lacking both in trust and confidence, they will tend to isolate themselves from society. Positive, disciplined, and fair attitudes will disappear, only to be replaced with whimsical, frivolous, and erratic ones. Objective thinking will be lost, only to give way to Machiavellian and precautionary ideas and thought and to mixing up different issues and means. The members of the Ummah will have nothing in common. Killing, torturing, and the repressive silencing of all opposition will become the only way of communication between the rulers and the people. As a result, the Ummah will lose its ability to understand its own situation and fail to plan for the future; its efforts and activities will be limited to combating non-issues that are the product of selfishness and greed. All of these systems serve as clear indicators of nothing more or less than a crippling intellectual crisis.

If a nation's thought is distorted and suffers such a crisis, its situation cannot be rectified or improved, so that it may develop, without reforming its thought. Any attempted reform undertaken before resolving the crisis of thought is doomed to fail and lead to more confusion and corruption. Undoubtedly, all means of reform will become ineffective if they are influenced to any extent by corrupted and distorted thought. The positive results, if any, of such attempts will be short-lived and may even be used as a means of repression and destruction. Indeed, there are many striking examples of this in our own history.

Allah has ordered us to believe in *qadar* (i.e., His assignment of ends to all processes of life and existence on Earth). Belief in *qadar* is considered one of the most important pillars of *īmān* (i.e., the conviction that Allah is the One and only God and that Muhammad is His last Prophet). Anybody who does not believe in it cannot be considered a *mu'min* (a believer). Belief in *qadar* encourages Muslims to achieve great things,

releases people from all kinds of desires and fears, and frees them from all sorts of pressures and evil influences. It gives them self-respect and enables them, in accordance with the will of Allah, to explore the universe, utilize it for their own benefit, and study its natural laws and the interrelationships among them so that they can build civilizations and establish truth, goodness, and beauty.

When the Ummah's first generation, namely, that of the Ṣaḥābah (the Companions) and the Ṭābi'ūn (the following generation), combined this driving force with enlightened thought and were able to understand it within this framework, no obstacle could hamper them and no difficulty could prevent them from achieving their aims and goals. But when this pillar of *īmān* (belief) is combined with disturbed and distorted thought, it leads to laziness, indifference, and apathy.

If we study the relationship between causality and divine power, we find that the first generation of Muslims understood it in a comprehensive and clear manner. Each of them would use what they had and, if successful, would thank and praise Allah, Who had created and made available such means and brought about the desired result. However, if they failed, they would go back and carefully reexamine the means to find out where they had gone wrong in order to rectify the mistake. After this, they would do their best again, within the Allah-given *sunan* (laws), to achieve the desired results. At the same time, they believed that Allah has complete power to do whatever He wills and "has power over all things" (2:20).

The first generation of Muslims knew that complete divine power did not prevent them from using the available and appropriate means to bring about the required result. All believers, they rightly felt, must do everything possible in the most proficient, accurate, and sincere manner, and then leave it to Allah to bring about a result in accordance with His *sunan* and *qadar*. Allah has the right to test His servants, but they do not have the right to test Him by neglecting the necessary means and causes to see whether or not the same result would occur. The first generation always sought the appropriate means in any matter. None of them felt that this detracted from the sincerity of their *īmān* or the reality of *tawakkul* (reliance on Allah). The Prophet summed up this matter in a single sentence. When an upset and surprised Bedouin, who had left his camel untied outside the mosque and later on learned that it had run away, complained to the Prophet that he had relied on Allah to take care of his camel, the Prophet said: "Tie the camel up (*'iqil*), then rely on Allah (*wa tawakkal*)."

However, the thought of the contemporary crisis-stricken generations has dramatically changed this simple, clear matter into an insoluble problem. The scholastic theologians (*kalāmīyūn*) have spoken and written a great deal on the reality and the nature of the cause and the relationship between causes and effects. They have raised such questions as: “Is the effect necessarily brought about by the cause?” and “When is it necessary, and when is it not, to mention and explain causes?” Such questions and consequent arguments confounded, bewildered, and confused the Muslim mind. Sometimes Muslims were told that resorting to means is a sign of weak *īmān* and *yaqīn* (apodictic certainty of the truth of Islam and its claim); other times they were told that adopting and resorting to means is a requirement of faith.

In all cases, this had a tremendous shattering effect on the Muslim mind and conscience. The Ummah now needs to make a great educational and intellectual effort to rid itself of these debilitating and paralyzing effects. The deviation of thought caused by the principle of causality is responsible, to a great extent, for the spread of superstition, indifference, lack of objectivity, and apathy. These negative effects have been exacerbated by the exponents of superlative *fiqh* and cryptic issues. An example would be those who seek to block the punishment of a woman who, pregnant through adultery, claimed that a jinn had impregnated her, thereby rendering her guilt “doubtful.”

For the first generation of Muslims, the relationship between the intellectual capacity of *‘aql* (reason) and *naql* (revelation, transmitted knowledge) was complementary. No narration indicates that any member of that generation felt that there was any dichotomy between the two. Whenever there was a revelation concerning *ghayb* (hidden, invisible, unseen, that which is beyond perception), they would submit to it, with no *i‘tirād* (objection), *jidāl* (argument), *ta‘tīl* (delay), *tashbīh* (doubt), or *ta‘wīl* (interpretation); with no argument or objections; and without trying to find an explanation. In other words, they had no need for such procedures because their intellect had already played its role in determining whether or not the Prophet was speaking the truth, and they had already pondered, argued, discussed, and asked for evidence (the miracle) before they had embraced Islam.

As long as they believed that the Prophet was the Messenger of Allah and was telling the truth, and that the Qur’an was the Book of Allah in which “no falsehood can approach from before or behind it” (41:42), they

could easily accept whatever the Prophet told them about such matters. They were genuinely convinced that some things can be known only through revelation, and that the Revelation had been proven correct and authentic by miracles. Therefore, there was no need to waste precious intellectual energy or time on these matters. Rather, it is far better to devote ourselves to the study of the tangible universe and to use it as creatively as possible.

The relationship between the intellectual capacity of reason and revelation was severely affected by this crisis, which damaged scholastic theology and philosophy. This led to a great deal of distortion, confusion, and sterile arguments about fate, free will, cause and effect, people's deeds, humanity's role, and the value and importance of life and its goal. All of this affected the Muslims' way of thinking, outlook, education, behavior, attitudes, and reactions. In fact, they transformed Muslims into weak-willed, short-sighted, negative, indifferent, and fatalistic beings who blindly imitate others and are totally occupied and exhausted by trivialities. Such Muslims are like worthless flotsam, for no harmony whatsoever exists between them and their surroundings.

If the wonderful harmony between intellectual capacity and revelation had continued, and if Muslims had continued to study the universe and its laws and find ways to harness it for the benefit of humanity in order to establish truth and justice, we would not find ourselves in this situation. It would not be possible for the reins of civilization to be in alien hands, nor for Muslims to be worthless flotsam. If Muslims had remained industrious, worshipping and meditating upon Allah with their mind and intellect, as well as with their actions and deeds, would this present intellectual lethargy, laziness, and inertia be arresting and paralyzing their intellectual capacity?

Moreover, if Islamic thought had continued to ascribe the appropriate importance to the *sunan* of cause and effect and establish the relationship between results and their causes, could superstition still dominate the Muslim mind? If it were not for the blind imitation of others, which has made Muslims behave like a lost herd, would we now find our Ummah being driven headlong into destruction and ruin as millions of Muslims are killed (most of them by other Muslims)? The situation is so chaotic that the killers do not know why they kill, and the dead do not know why they are dead. If it were not for the widespread confusion caused by this intellectual crisis, would it be possible for thousands of Muslims to die of diseases caused

by overeating and other features of imported alien cultures while millions of others die of starvation and a lack of shelter?

This Ummah has been in existence for fourteen centuries. Although it is difficult to determine exactly when its crisis actually began, the split between the political leadership and the '*ulamā*' and '*fuqahā*', which appeared after the era of the four rightly guided caliphs (632–61), can be considered a starting point. This split continued to grow and develop, leading eventually to the formulation of policies that, unlike those of the rightly guided caliphs, bore no relationship to the goals of Islam. These policies, which have had the worst effect on the Ummah and its thought, heralded the spread of those wrong ideas and concepts that brought about intellectual corruption.

Undoubtedly, the field of knowledge, along with its sources and methodologies, and the field of education, which is based on such knowledge, have been seriously affected and damaged by the current ongoing intellectual crisis. The human personality is formed from an intellect and a psyche, two features that distinguish people from animals by enabling them to think, analyze, and decide. The human intellect is formed by education and knowledge, plus the experiences and experiments of life. The psyche is formed by the arts, literature, and attitudes. So, any distortion in education is necessarily reflected in the intellect, and any disturbance or change in the arts and literature is reflected in the psyche.

The social sciences and humanities (e.g., psychology, sociology, education, economics, politics, and media) form the intellect of modern people (whatever their religion) in accordance with their orientation and educational influence. All of these subject areas are the product of the western mind, which formed them in accordance with its own philosophy and complicated outlook on the universe, life, and humanity, and then molded them to suit their own needs and without any regard for the needs of other peoples. The Soviets often describe the standards and methods of these sciences as being *capitalist*. I wonder what term Muslims will ascribe to them after their thought is reformed and their will is freed from their shackles and fetters.

The methodologies of these sciences, as well as their subject matter, results, aims, behavior, and outlook on life and the universe, are all in sharp conflict with our beliefs, concepts, and aims in life. They have succeeded in dividing educated Muslims into several groups, each adhering to one of its various philosophies and schools of thought. Some of them are described

as “logical and positivist,” others as “existentialist,” and still others as “materialist.”

Shortly after its formation, Israel established a committee for the social sciences and entrusted it with conducting research in those fields and calculating the extent of the threat they posed to Jewish and Zionist thought. The committee was required to devise a way to rid these fields of any negative effects to the Jewish mentality, because Israel’s leaders and thinkers were well aware of the negative and destructive effects that these sciences could have on life. The fact that many of the main exponents of these philosophies and schools of thought were Jews has not prevented Israel from seeking to neutralize their effect on the Jewish people, both inside and outside of Israel.

Tragically, however, Muslim youths are being greatly influenced and affected by all of these alien ideas and concepts. They accept and propagate the positive and negative elements without thinking; they become absorbed in daydreams. Their excuse for accepting such cultural and intellectual colonialism is that the West took the foundation of its culture and civilization from the Islamic legacy. In the whole Islamic world, there is no single center for the critical study of these sciences from an Islamic viewpoint, let alone centers that could provide an Islamic alternative.

The time has come for our universities to turn away from their role of producing clerks and officials and to begin producing educated scholars: not merely graduates with general knowledge, but educated Muslims who are aware of their duties, well-versed in their fields, and understand and are committed to the Islamic concepts of the universe, life, and humanity. This cannot be achieved unless educated Muslims resume their proper role in life: conveying the message of Islam and reformulating their own legacy, as well as humanity’s cultural and scientific heritage, by giving an Islamic character to its methodologies, principles, results, and aims. Thus, all fields and methods of knowledge, both in the arts and the sciences, will begin and end with Islamic concepts. However, this cannot be achieved without Islamizing knowledge.

THE SHARI‘AH SCIENCES

Our knowledge suffered a split very early in its existence. The origins of this split may be traced to the second to fourth Islamic centuries, the age of translation, classification, compilation, and recording. As a result, knowledge was divided into two separate areas: Shari‘ah knowledge and “other”

knowledge. This division still prevails. When the West colonized the Islamic world, it reinforced this division and gave it a new impetus. Western strategists took advantage of the dual system of education to completely isolate Islam from life and confine it to mere theoretical issues that served little practical purpose and had no great effect on everyday life. In each Islamic country they colonized, they established a secular system of education that enforced the westernization of the Muslim mind.

Consequently and tragically, Muslims began to believe in western values and adhere to western methodologies in all aspects of life and knowledge. The colonialists enabled this secular educational system to influence society and provided it with all the means to do so. In order to kill any serious opposition, they allowed some religious schools to remain. In most countries, these schools were attached to mosques; in others, they were kept independent. They taught the legacy of *fiqh*, *kalām*, and *uṣūl*, as well as Arabic sciences, using books written and ideas formulated after the gates of *ijtihād* had been closed.

This dual system of education caused the split of the Ummah's educated members into two groups: the westernized group that tries to establish all kinds of connections and rapport with the West, thinking that this will improve the Ummah's situation, and an opposing group that strongly resists this, not through sound thought but through the thought and mentality formulated during the period of decline, when the bases of such studies and education were formed. This conflict, which continues to waste the Ummah's energy and destroy its unity, is a major reason for its backwardness.

Given the above, we can clearly realize the urgent necessity for what we call the Islamization of Knowledge, which, in addition to the goals mentioned above, seeks to abolish this dual system of education in order to rid the Muslim mind of this dichotomy of knowledge. This goal, once achieved, would produce a united education system and a methodological syllabus capable of providing the Ummah with Muslim specialists in every practical area as well as in the social sciences and the humanities. These specialists would understand the general *aḥkām al-Sharīʿah* (rules of the Shariʿah) in addition to the rules of their field, so that they would know what to accept and what to reject. This would enable them to align their own activities with the general goals of Islam and its conception of the universe, life, and humanity.

Those studies known as "Shariʿah studies" need to be completely revised with regard to the books used, the tutors involved, the subject mat-

ter studied and researched, and the teaching methods followed. A great deal needs to be added, and the syllabus needs to be changed. Both the humanities and the social sciences, as well as the study of human nature and natural laws, should be added to the syllabus so that the *fuqahā'* can understand human nature and instinct, both individual and social, and life's various aspects. Equipped with such knowledge, they can interact effectively with these realities and, by becoming aware of its problems and values, play an active part in society.

This Ummah must establish academic institutions for research and study that deal with and specialize in the areas mentioned above in order to utilize its potential to hold meetings, invite scholars to research and write, adopt the most intelligent young people, and prepare them to devise the methodologies, programs, steps, plans, and conditions necessary for reforming its thought and Islamizing knowledge. Moreover, such institutions would strive to make this undertaking the main concern of educated Muslims, thereby establishing a trend that will lead the Ummah to a real, solid renaissance; carry the message of Islam from a comprehensive, civilized viewpoint and perspective; and put its basic issues into action. This will lead the Ummah toward a life of goodness in this world and a great reward in the Hereafter.

The First International Conference on the Islamization of Knowledge was held in Europe in July 1977. A decision was taken to establish an institute that would work toward reviving Islamic thought and its methodology. Thus, IIIT was established in Washington, DC, in 1981 by some Muslims who volunteered to shoulder this responsibility and duty and devote themselves to fulfilling the institute's objectives and securing its independence. The Second International Conference on Islamization was held in Islamabad, Pakistan, in 1982, as a joint effort between IIIT and the International Islamic University of Pakistan. As a result of the participants' research and discussions, a plan for Islamizing knowledge was crystallized and published as *The Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan*.

One result of this conference was that the Islamic trend in Pakistan was not confined to knowledge. The Pakistani president himself participated in the conference and instructed his advisers and the nation's leading figures to take part in the research and discussions. Since then, Pakistan has taken wide-ranging steps toward Islamization in many fields. Civil and criminal laws have been reviewed and replaced with Islamic alternatives. A system of

zakah was announced and is being enacted. The study of Islamic civilization and Islamic thought has been included in the syllabi of all universities, and specialist research centers have been established in many branches of knowledge in the universities to study how to Islamize those subjects. Many Pakistanis see a direct connection between that conference and the Islamic changes that followed it.

The Third International Conference on the Islamization of Knowledge was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in cooperation with the International Islamic University of Malaysia. The prime minister, as well as other officials, party members, and many prominent Malaysian scientists and scholars, participated. This had far-reaching effects on the wide-ranging steps that Malaysia has taken toward Islamizing many fields. Useful alterations have been made to most syllabi, and an international Islamic university and an Islamic bank have been established in Kuala Lumpur. One is delighted to hear that Malaysia's non-Muslim minority has welcomed the call for Islamization and the various moves in that direction. This proves beyond any doubt that if Islam is presented to people in a correct and positive way, and as a solution to their problems, a cure for their ills, an answer to their questions, and a just and practical way of dealing with matters, then they will rush to embrace it. But if Islam is presented in a negative way, merely as empty words and slogans and strict actions, then it will be rejected and resisted.

Today, the institute is holding its Fourth International Conference in cooperation with the University of Khartoum. We hope that this conference will produce a comprehensive view of the Islamic methodology and a practical conception that will enable the Islamization of the behavioral sciences, which form the basis of the social sciences. These should be presented to the teachers of those sciences so that they can give examples and evidence of the Muslim mind's ability to structure and develop knowledge, and reintroduce these sciences to their students from an Islamic angle by adopting from the Qur'an and the Sunnah their ideas of the human soul and human nature, the rules of individual and social *fiṭrah*, the purpose of creation, and the divine laws governing the universe, humanity, and life.

At the same time, they should seek to use all of the sound means and methods of scientific research that Allah has bestowed upon His servants so that these sciences can help produce strong new Muslims that can fulfill their role as Allah's vicegerent on Earth. Therefore, humanity's *raison d'être*, which is to serve of Allah, involves building civilizations and utilizing all of

the energies and potentials – both apparent and hidden – that Allah has provided so that humanity can fulfill its role.

The institute hopes that Sudan will carry out this trust, especially since its government is led by an important Muslim thinker who has contributed a great deal to many Islamic causes and issues. We also hope that the prime minister will include this message in his suggestions to the Islamic Summit Conference and ask Muslim leaders to give due and appropriate attention to reforming the methodology and Islamizing knowledge.

As we pointed out earlier, three western behavioral sciences (viz., psychology, sociology, and anthropology) are considered the basis and the starting point for all western humanities and social sciences. Their assumptions, rules, and theories define the understanding of humanity and its nature, aims, motives, and reactions, as well as the significance of people's activities, relationships, and interactions with others. One could almost say that the other social sciences consist merely of applying the assumptions and rules of these sciences to education, politics, economics, administration, media, law, and so forth. However, the western thought found in these sciences has many negative features and serious shortcomings, the most important of which are listed below:

- *Limitation of the Sources of Knowledge:* As the West confines the sources of its knowledge to human intellect alone, it has deprived itself of the most important source of knowledge, namely, Divine revelation, which provides comprehensive and detailed knowledge.
- *Limitation of the Means of Examining the Knowledge Produced by the Human Intellect:* As the West limits these means to experiments alone, it has made this the only proof of soundness in any branch of knowledge. Hence, westerners think that experiments are the only means of verification and therefore are suitable for every field of knowledge. But this is not the case.
- *Application of Deduction Regardless of Wide Differences:* The West subjected the behavioral and social sciences to the rules and methodologies of the natural and applied sciences. The motive for doing so was its great achievements in the applied and natural sciences

At this point, I hope you will permit me to pause briefly in memory of two great martyrs of the institute: Professor Ismā'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī and his wife Lois Lamyā' al-Fārūqī (may mercy fall on them).

Ismā‘īl Rājī al-Fārūqī was an exponent and a leader of this cause. He traveled throughout the world, advocating it in his books and lectures. Like his ancestor ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb al-Fārūq, al-Fārūqī distinguished between truth and falsehood. Like him, he also compensated as a committed and devoted Muslim for all of the time and energy he had wasted in earlier gatherings, meetings, and activities. The cause of reforming the methodology of thought and the Islamization of Knowledge ignited his *īmān*, which until then had lain dormant, shrouded in the fog of philosophy, both ancient and modern, western and eastern. This cause stirred up strong emotions that had been scattered among many causes. Suddenly, he became devoted to this one cause: the Islamization of Knowledge. It dominated his life and activities as he pondered, discussed, and planned with his fellow Muslims how to realize it and how to mobilize enough people and resources for it.

Al-Fārūqī always expressed himself sincerely and clearly, and presented his arguments in the best possible manner. He was aware of the faults of Christianity and Judaism, having studied and mastered both, in addition to being well-versed in the history of religions. As an expert in western philosophy, he had identified its limits and was cognizant of the Shari‘ah’s advantages. He enjoyed an international reputation, and there was hardly a conference in any field of the humanities and social sciences at which he was not one of the main speakers or did not captivate the minds of his audience.

Always by his side was his wife, the *shahīdah* (martyr) Lois Lamyā’ al-Fārūqī. She had been his partner in life since his arrival in the United States. A distinguished scholar in the field of arts and civilization, she combined her energies with his. For many years, she devoted her efforts to tracing the roots of and establishing a theory for “Islamic arts.” She took it upon herself to Islamize the arts and succeeded in doing, with the utmost humility and modesty, that which hundreds of Muslim women, raised in Muslim homes, have failed to do. The whole family was the enemy’s target, and so Lamyā’ was killed by the same Rambo knife as her husband. She died minutes before him. The killer tried to finish off their pregnant daughter, whom he repeatedly stabbed with his knife, stopping only when he thought she was dead.

This is the institute’s first conference since the martyrdom of the al-Fārūqīs. We want to ensure that the flag will be kept flying, that the institute will continue spreading its message, and that the brothers and sisters of

al-Fārūqīs will carry on their mission regardless of all challenges, obstacles, and hindrances.

In conclusion, we ask Allah to enable us to complete our task and achieve our aims; grant us all resolution and sincerity; bless this conference, from which we shall be able to take on that which will benefit our Ummah and help to spread progress; and make our efforts and those of all sincere Muslims successful. Indeed, He is the only One we can ask for success, and the only One who can grant it.