



**THE CONTRIBUTION OF SYED ALI ASHRAF,
SYED NAQIB AL-ATTAS AND ISMAIL RAJI AL-
FARUQUI TO THE ISLAMIZATION OF
KNOWLEDGE**

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**A thesis submitted to the Department of Islamic Studies, University of Dhaka
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for MPhil degree**

**Prepared by
SK. Foyajul Islam**

**Department of Islamic Studies
University of Dhaka
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July 2016

ড. মুহাম্মদ শফিক আহমেদ
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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “The Contribution of Syed Ali Ashraf, Syed Naqib Al-Attas and Ismail Raji Al-Faruqui to the Islamization of Knowledge”, done by Sk. Foyajul Islam is submitted to the University of Dhaka in partial fulfilment of award of the degree of Master of Philosophy. This is also to certify that:

1. This work is written under my direct supervision and guidance;
2. It is a bonafide record of researcher’s independent work;
3. It is informative, significant and original research;

To the best of my knowledge, no MPhil degree is awarded under this title. It is a satisfactory work for awarding MPhil degree. I have checked it minutely and approved it with a view to awarding MPhil degree.

Dr. Muhammad Shafiq Ahmad
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Abstract

In the contemporary period of the history of Muslim education, there are only a handful of scholars who are acclaimed for their invaluable contributions to the idea of Islamization of Knowledge. They include Syed Ali Ashraf, Syed Naqib Al-Attas, and Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi. They contributed by educating, publishing, and active engagement in the educational domain. They heightened awareness among the Islamic scholars and academics about the significance of the reform in the educational realm.

This humble study critically examines idea of the above mentioned personalities on Islamization of knowledge, its methodology and its necessity. It also provides a general overview on their formative period of life and the formulation of their thought. A brief discussion has been presented on their other activities which are deemed to be worth mentioning such as the spiritual dimension of Syed Ali Ashraf and a few significant shifts in the formulation of thought in the case of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi. The study is divided broadly into three parts. Each part is devoted to one the above mentioned personality. In the beginning of each part a biographical narrative and analysis has been presented.

However, the main focus has been given on their contribution to Islamization of knowledge through their lifelong commitment to the subject. The role of different institutions established by them have also been discussed, namely the International Institute of Islamic Thought in the USA, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Darul Ihsan University in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The similarities and differences among them are also shown where it deemed to be relevant. This work also shades light on their methodology of implementing the Islamization agenda which would be a useful source for the researchers who wish to extend their knowledge in the subject.

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Finally, I would like to thank my family members for their encouragement and support over the years, particularly my devoted mother who set me in the right path and instilled within me the hope of pursuing higher education. Last but not least, I recall the days at Al-Azhar University where I developed the overwhelming desire for research which still inspire me so profoundly.

Abbreviations

SWT –SubhanahuWaTa’alaa

PBUH - Peace Be Upon Him

ICT - Information Communication Technology

OIC - Information Communication Technology

UK - United Kingdom

IAUPE - International Association of the University Professors of English

ISESCO - Islamic Scientific, Educational, and Cultural Organization

B. Ed - Bachelor of Arts in Education

M. Ed. - Masters of Arts in Education

ISTAC - Islamic Thought and Civilization

DLitt -Degree of Honorary Doctorate of Arts

ABIM - Islamic Youth Movement of Malaysia

GAPIM - Muslim Writers’ Association of Malaysia

DBP –DewanBahasanPustaka

Ed. - Editor

UTM -UniversitiTeknologi Malaysia

US - United States.

PhD - Doctor of Philosophy

NAIT - North American Islamic Trust

AAR - American Academy of Religion

IRPC - Inter-Religious Peace Colloquium

GCWR - Global Congress for the World Religions

IIFSO - International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations.

IIIT - International Institute for Islamic Thought.

USA - United State of America

UNESCO - United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Introduction

I began in the name of Allah, The Most Merciful, Most Compassionate. Every praise be to Him, to Whom all praise is due! And blessings and peace to upon the compassionate Prophet (PBUH), upon his family and his companions and upon all his true followers.

Islam puts utmost emphasis on knowledge. One of the core objectives of all prophets was to educate their respective ummahs. It is also evident in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as he managed to create through education a group of people who became the best generation in the history of the world. His companions had also showed similar interest in education and knowledge as after accepting the true message of Islam they learnt each and every aspects of life from the Prophet (PBUH) and spread them among the all Muslim communities. Even after the generation of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH), their followers engaged themselves into teaching and learning process to a greater extent as they developed and formulated the principles of the most important area of Islamic knowledge, namely the explanation of the Quran (*tafsir*), and hadith literature. In the medieval period, the Muslim ummah had reached the zenith of the education not only in the realm of Islamic knowledge but also many other disciplines including philosophy, medicine, astronomy, physics, biology and so forth. This trend continued in the Muslim ummah till the current day, especially by a group of scholars who devoted themselves to contributing to the Muslims ummah through their extensive research.

Therefore, education is regarded as one of the inextricable parts of Islam. The first Prophet of Islam was Adam who received divine knowledge from Allah as Allah says

(He (Allah) taught Adam all the names) ¹ و علم آدم الأسماء كلها¹

And the last Prophet was Muhammad (PBUH) who likewise received the first revelation on reading. Allah says

(Read in the name of your Lord) ² اقرأ باسم ربك الذي خلق²

¹ Al-Baqarah :31

² Al-Alaq : 1

It is an obligation for the Muslim ummah to attain knowledge irrespective of their gender, race and color, and that is why this ummah has actively immersed in a wide spectrum of educational activities of Quran, Hadith, *Fiqh*, Philosophy, Mathematic, Astronomy, Chemistry, Physics, Medicine, Biology, Botany, Agriculture and so forth. Consequently they made a remarkable headway particularly in the Golden Age.³ The nature of education was quite comprehensive from the age of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and there was no cleavage in the educational system. It is commonly argued the scholars of that age have sowed the seed of modern European civilization.

This continued until the World War II in the beginning of the twentieth century before the colonial period. Later the Islamic activities started to languish and most of their researches have been transferred to the Europe which resulted in the malaise of the Muslim societies all over the world.

At the end of 19th century and the end of 20th century, the scholars of the Muslim ummah have made concerted effort to identify the root causes of the current malaise in the Muslim societies including Sayyid Jamal Al-Din Al-Afgani,⁴ Muhammad Abdu,⁵ Rashid Rida,⁶ and Iqbal.⁷ They all called for reform in

³The (Islamic) Golden Age refers to the period in Islamic history during the medieval past from the 8th century to the 13th century when much of the historically Arabic-speaking world was ruled by various caliphates, experiencing a scientific, economic, and cultural flourishing. This period is traditionally understood to have begun during the reign of the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (786 to 809) with the inauguration of the House of Wisdom in Bagdad, where scholars from various parts of the world with different cultural backgrounds were mandated to gather and translate all of the world's classical knowledge into Arabic. It is said to have ended with the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate with the Mongol invasion and the Sack of Bagdad in 1258. Several contemporary scholars, however, place the end of the Islamic Golden Age to be around the 15th to 16th centuries.

⁴Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, also known as Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn Asadābādī and commonly known as Al-Afghani (1838/1839 – 9 March 1897), was a political activist and Islamic ideologist in the Muslim world during the late 19th century, particularly in the Middle East, South Asia and Europe. One of the founders of Islamic Modernism and an advocate of Pan-Islamic unity, he has been described as being less interested in minor differences in Islamic jurisprudence than he was in organizing a Muslim response to Western pressure.

⁵Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849 – 11 July 1905) was an Egyptian Islamic jurist, religious scholar and liberal reformer, regarded as one of the key founding figures of Islamic Modernism, sometimes called Neo-Mu'tazilism after the medieval Islamic school of theology based on rationalism, Mu'tazila. He broke the rigidity of the Muslim ritual, dogma, and family ties. He also wrote, among other things, "Treatise on the Oneness of God", and a commentary on the Quran.

⁶Muhammad Rashid Rida (Ottoman Syria 23 September 1865–Egypt, 22 August 1935) was an early Islamic reformist, whose ideas would later influence 20th-century Islamic thinkers in developing a political philosophy of an Islamic state. Rida is said to have been one of the most influential and controversial scholars of his generation and was deeply influenced by the early Salafī Movement and the movement for Islamic Modernism founded in Cairo by Muhammad Abduh.

society, hence initiated numerous movements throughout the world, particularly Abdu's educational reform movement in Egypt, which was thoroughly studied by Dr. Muhammad Imarah in his encyclopedic work on Abdu⁸.

The Contemporary scholars and educationists of the Muslim ummah continued their efforts, and dug deeper to find out the causes of the backwardness in Muslim countries. At the top of them were Syed Ali Ashraf, Seyd Naqib Al-Attas, Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, Syed Hossain Nasr, Abdul Wahhab Al-Messeri, Imad al-Deen Khalil and so on. They all reached a consensus that the current educational system in the Muslim countries has resulted in the decadence of the Muslim ummah. Professor Abdur Rahman An-Naqib argues

The corruption in education in the Arab and Muslim countries has resulted in the emergence of the current generation who are satisfied with division instead of unity, weakness instead of strength, backwardness instead of advancement.⁹

They also argued that the current educational system in the Muslim countries is an imitation of Western education which is secular in nature. The modern

Rida was born near Tripoli in Qalamoun. His early education consisted of training in "traditional Islamic subjects". In 1884-5 he was first exposed to *al-'Urwa al-wuthqa*, the journal of Jamal al-Din Al-Afgani and Muhammad Abduh. In 1897 he left Syria for Cairo to collaborate with Abduh. The following year Rida launched *Al-Mnar*, a weekly and then monthly journal.

⁷Muhammad Iqbal (November 9, 1877 – April 21, 1938), widely known as Allama Iqbal, was a poet, philosopher, and politician, as well as an academic, barrister and scholar in British India who is widely regarded as having inspired the Pakistan Movement. He is considered one of the most important figures in Urdu Literature, with literary work in both the Urdu and Persian languages.

Iqbal is admired as a prominent poet by Pakistanis, Indian, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankans, and other international scholars of literature. Though Iqbal is best known as an eminent poet, he is also a highly acclaimed "Muslim philosophical thinker of modern times". His first poetry book, *Asrar-e-Khudi* appeared in the Persian language in 1915, and other books of poetry include *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi*, *Payam-i-Mashriq*, and *Zabur-i-Ajam*. Along with his Urdu and Persian poetry, his Urdu and English lectures and letters have been very influential in cultural, social, religious and political disputes. One of his remarkable writings in English is *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

In 1922, he was knighted by King George V, granting him the title "Sir". While studying law and philosophy in England, Iqbal became a member of the London branch of the All-Indian Muslim League.

In much of South Asia and the Urdu speaking world, Iqbal is regarded as the *Shair-e-Mashriq*, "Poet of the East"). He is also called *Mufakkir-e-Pakistan*, "The Thinker of Pakistan" and *Hakeem-ul-Ummat*, "The Sage of the Ummah"). The Pakistan government officially named him a National Poet.

⁸ Life and Work of Sheikh Muhammad Abduh, by Dr. Muhammad Imaarah, Dar Asshuruq, 2009.

⁹ See *Fi massirat al-Islamiyyatul m'arifah*, by Professor Abdur Rahman An-Naqib, p. 259, Dar al-Salam, Cairo, 2010.

Western education has put too much emphasis on individuality, individual rights, freedom of speech and expression – that the right of individual takes priority over duty, responsibility and community.¹⁰

The modern Western secular education system tends to demonize Islam, and slander in the Quran as it was based on the idea of segregating religion from science, and the later one is contradictory with the former one.¹¹ Having realized and identified the pressing problem of the Muslim ummah, the contemporary scholars have come up with the idea of “Islamization” initially and later of ‘Islamization of Knowledge’ during 1960s as a prerequisite for the Islamic resurgence.

The issue has captured the attention of Muslim intellectuals around the globe as Al-Attas says

The Islamization of Knowledge agenda has erupted like a wild fire blazing across the seas from Kuala Lumpur to Plainfield, Indiana, to many centers of learning across the globe.¹²

In order to investigate the epistemological and philosophical basis for the agenda of The Islamization of knowledge, the Islamic scholars and educationalists made considerable efforts which culminated initially in the establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought, and later the international universities in Islamabad, Kuala Lumpur, and in Niger. In addition to these Syed Ali Ashraf established the Islamic Academy in Cambridge, and started the publication of *the Muslim Education Quarterly*.

¹⁰ The History and Philosophy of Islamization of Knowledge, by Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, p. 11, IIUM press, 2010.

¹¹ Remarks on the Islamization of Education from the point of View of Dr. Seyd Ali Ashraf by As-syed As-syed As-Safti, Darul Ihsan University, 2003.

¹² The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naqib Al-Attas, Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, (ISTAC) Kuala Lumpur, 1998, p. 971

Significance of the study

In the contemporary Muslim history, there have been a number of initiatives by Islamic scholars to reform various issues in the Muslim world. This is regarded as a common phenomenon in the Islamic history as the Prophet (PBUH) said: “indeed, in every century Allah sends a *mujaddid* (reformer) for this ummah who would reform their religious affairs”.¹³ Although it is difficult to determine who were the exact reformers, the ummah always have a group of Islamic scholars in every age who possess the quality of the reformer in the light of the Prophet’s prediction. In the contemporary Muslim history, there are only a handful of Islamic scholars who are well-known to both the Western world and the Islamic world and attempted to reform the educational system of the Muslim ummah. The group includes Syed Ali Ashraf, Syed Naqib Al-Attas, Isail Raji Al-Faruqi, Syyed Hossein Nasr, Fazlur Rahman. They have contributed considerably to Muslim education, particularly to the Islamization of education movement.

There have been quite a few study on the thought and ideas of the above mentioned scholars, specially by Professor Dr. Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud in the case of Syed Naqib Al-Attas, and by Charles D. Fletcher in the case of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, however, considering the extent of their contribution more studies and investigation should be carried out in order for the ummah to benefit from their knowledge and experience. Apart from the Islamization of knowledge agenda, their area of contribution also include many other domains, particularly the methodology of comparative religious studies, and interfaith dialogue in the case of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi. In the case of Syed Naqib Al-Attas, and Syed Ali Ashraf, other area of their thought include their spiritual insight.

This study will provide an overview about life and thought of these three personalities, namely Syed Ali Ashraf, Syed Naqib Al-Attas, and Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi in general and their contribution to Muslim education and Islamization of knowledge in particular. The overview of their thought will help the scholars and researchers conduct more rigorous study of any different domain of their thought other than Islamization of knowledge, and their contribution will motivate the Muslim scholars and policy makers to consider the significance of the Islamization of knowledge and then implement it in the educational system of the Muslim world.

¹³ Abu Daud, Sunan, Kitad: Al-Malahim, Bab: Ma yuskaru fi Qarnil Mia’, Hadith no: 4291

Definition(s) of the Islamization of knowledge

Despite the substantial attention to the Islamization of Knowledge agenda by the contemporary Muslim intellectuals all over the world, there is not a unanimous definition for this term. Still, no one disagrees with the necessity of the idea as they already have identified the root causes of the malaise in the Muslim societies, and the top of these is the adoption of the modern Western education system by the Muslim educational institutions. The variation in defining the term is by virtue of the fact that some scholars are satisfied with a working definition while others put considerable emphasis on the need for a precise definition.

It is also indispensable to mention here that Islamization of Knowledge should be regarded as a part and prerequisite for the revival of the Muslim ummah. The term “Islamization”, with its broader process, is the main concern of the ummah, and as Dr. Muhammad Imaarah¹⁴ argues that it is not a contemporary phenomenon that Muslim scholars have come up with rather it is an intellectual agenda and a cultural mission that the Islamic civilization has known since the emergence of Islam particularly when the Islamic civilization has come into contact with Greek, Persian, Chinese, and Hindu literature.

Syed Naqib Al-Attas defined Islamization as

Liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural tradition (opposed to Islam), and then from secular control over his reason and language.¹⁵

The very idea has been reinforced by Danjuman A. Maiwada as he argues

It is pertinent to attempt to make a definition of Islamization and Islamization of Knowledge at the very first outset. Islamization is the transformation of a worldview from one that is “crooked” or jahil (ignorant) to one that is Islamic. This transformation has manifested itself time and again through a succession of prophets and messengers of God and culminated in the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). When the Arab Peninsula was

¹⁴ See Muhammad Imaarah, *Islamiyyatul Ma'rifah Ma Ja Ta'ni*, Cairo: Nahdatu Masr, 2007, p. 3,4.

¹⁵ Aslam Hanif Mohamed, *A Critical Survey of Islamization of Knowledge*, Malaysia: IIUM Press, 2005, p.18

gripped in the darkness of the Jahelliyyah- the period of ignorance, lawlessness, brutality and fear- Islam came as a light.¹⁶

For Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi Islamization can be defined as follows

Islamization represents the truth, the justice, the transformation, and the reformation that concerns all Muslims. Its care and concerns, by definition, extends to all human beings. It seeks to bestow dignity and honor upon all humans living on the earth. Islamization is the call that divinely based civilization has addressed to the present world which is torn apart with disaster looming large and clear.¹⁷

He further elaborates

In its widest sense Islamization means a framework for human life, civilization and human transformation. It determines the purpose of every activity, struggle, action and Islamic social organization. It gives human life purpose and charts its course. Giving priority to the Islamization of Knowledge does not cancel other priorities nor does it belittle the significance of political, economic, social, academic and military efforts.¹⁸

In this regard, Dr. Imad Uddin Khalil states that Islamization sometimes extends out of the framework of Islam as a religion in order to encompass all that unfolds within the jurisdiction of Allah.¹⁹

According to Dr. Muhammad Imarah, Islamization means establishing relationship with the revelation.²⁰

As for the definition(s) of Islamization of Knowledge, the actual meaning and scope as well as the process to achieve the best results still continue to be debated as the concept still develops. However, scholars have come up with various definitions in order to elucidate the concept of Islamization of Knowledge. These include the followings

Taha Jabir al-Alwani defined Islamization of Knowledge as follows

The Islamization of Knowledge undertaking seeks to develop an Islamic paradigm of knowledge that will serve as an alternative to the secular positivist paradigm that presently dominates the arts and science. Such as alternative combines Islamic and

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 21-22

¹⁷ Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Islamization of knowledge, General Principal and Work Plan*, Virginia: IIIT, 1989, p. 84

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 87.

¹⁹ Imad Uddin Khalil, *Al-Madkhal ila Islamiyyatil Ma'rifah* by, Damascus: Dar ibn Kathir, 2006, p.9

²⁰ Muhammad Imarah, *Islamiyyatul Ma'rifah maja ta'ni* Cairo: Nahdatu Masr, 2007, p. 7

universalistic perspectives: address the intellectual and conceptual problems of all humanity, not just of Muslims: and includes a tawhid-base reconstruction of the concept of life humanity and the universe.²¹

For Imad al-Din Khalil, the Islamization of knowledge can be defined as follows

The term “Islamization of knowledge” means [i.e. practicing, discovering, compiling, piecing together, communicating and publishing] intellectual activity based on the Islamic concept of the universe, life and man. When placed in such a setting it becomes harmonious and logically consistent, so that all knowledge outside the framework is seen to be in conflict the laws of nature and with reality.²²

Abu al-Qasim Hajj Hammad defines Islamization of knowledge in another way. He says

The Islamization of knowledge is the breaking of the connection between the scientific achievements of human civilization and the transformations of postulative philosophy, so that science may be employed by means of a methodological order which is religious rather than speculative.²³

According to Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi

The task of Islamizing knowledge is to recast the whole legacy of human knowledge from the stand point of Islam. He also adds to recast knowledge as Islam relates to it, i.e. to redefine and to reorder the data, to rethink the reasoning and relating of the data, to reevaluate 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. He also sees that the Islamization of knowledge aims to produce the university level text books recasting some twenty disciplines in accordance to the Islamic vision.²⁴

Syed Naqib al-Attas defines Islamization of knowledge as

²¹ Muhammad Mumtaz Ali , *The History and Philosophy of Islamization of Knowledge*, Malaysia: IIUM Press, 2010, p. 23

²² Ibid., p 23

²³ Ibid., p 24

²⁴ Muhammad Aminul Ahsan, Dr. Abul Kalm Muhammad Shahed, and Afzal Ahmed, “Islamization of Knowledge: An Agenda for Muslim Intellectuals” *Global Journal of Business and Management research*, Valium.13, no. 10, P 5.

The deliverance of knowledge from its interpretation based on secular ideology and from meanings and expression of the secular. He suggests two steps to Islamize modern / contemporary knowledge. The first is the isolation process, where knowledge should be freed from the Western culture and civilization. After isolation, those existing body of knowledge should be infused with Islamic elements.²⁵

According to Attas, the aim and objective of Islamization of contemporary knowledge is to protect Muslims from corrupted knowledge that misguides and leads to confusion and skepticism of Muslim minds. It is also to produce true knowledge that can develop and mould Muslim minds and bring them to proper acknowledgement and recognition of God. Islamization of contemporary knowledge will result in peace, goodness and justice, and strengthening of the faith.²⁶

Syed Ali Ashraf, one of the pioneers of the Islamization Movement, argues that the Islamization of Knowledge could not be merely adding new or modern knowledge to the old or traditional knowledge found in Muslim countries nor could it be achievable by making a confused mixture of religious and secularist approaches to different branches of knowledge. He states, to make society “Islamic” in the true sense, an academic leadership whose knowledge and outlook are truly Islamic in character is needed. He believes Islamization of education can only take place if the government of Muslim countries agrees to implement such policy.²⁷

Mohd Kamal Hassan, a strong proponent of the Islamization of Knowledge Movement, elaborates the concept as follows

Islamization of Human knowledge is an alternative paradigm for pursuing, teaching, developing, organizing, disseminating, utilizing and evaluating contemporary human

²⁵ Muhammad Aminul Ahsan, Dr. Abul Kalam Muhammad Shahed, and Afzal Ahmed, “Islamization of Knowledge: An Agenda for Muslim Intellectuals” *Global Journal of Business and Management research*, Vol. 13, no. 10, P 3

²⁶ Mahmoud Hamid al-Migdadi, “Issues in Islamization of Knowledge, Man and Education”, *Revue Academique des etudes Sociales et humaines*. Vol. 16, no. 7, P 9.

²⁷ Muhammad Aminul Ahsan, Dr. Abul Kalam Muhammad Shahed, and Afzal Ahmed, *Global Journal of Business and Management research*, Vol. 13, no. 10, P. 3

knowledge [as contrasted with the Divinely revealed knowledge], in accordance with the worldview, fundamental principles, ethical values and norms of Islam.²⁸

He further explains his point

This paradigm engages the different branches of contemporary human knowledge as represented by the Western- oriented behavioral sciences, human sciences, humanities as well as the modern natural, physical and applied sciences, insofar as they or parts thereof are imbued with or constructed upon worldviews, philosophies, underlying assumptions, theories or principles which are contrary or repugnant to the Islamic equivalent.²⁹

From the above mentioned discussion we can understand that the scholars involved in the Islamization of Education Movement do not have a single specific definition for the term perhaps by virtue of the less importance of having a single definition as some of them are satisfied with a ‘working definition’ although they all have similar ideas and they all agree with the significance of the movement. Al-Alwani argues in this regard

The scholars of our school of thought do not seek to provide a strictly inclusive and exclusive definition in the classical manner when they speak of the Islamization of Knowledge. Rather this process is spoken of in general term and, in fact, should be understood as a loose designation calculated to convey the general sense of the undertaking and its priorities.³⁰

²⁸ Muhammad Mumtaz Ali , *The History and Philosophy of Islamization of Knowledge*, Malaysia: IIUM Press, 2010, p. 31

²⁹ Ibid, p.31

³⁰ Al-alwani Taha J., “Islamization of Knowledge: Yesterday and Today”, *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol. 8, no. 1 , p. 83

Significance and rationale for the Islamization of knowledge

As mentioned earlier that despite the difference of opinion on the definition and the process of Islamization of Knowledge, all contemporary Muslim scholars agree to the need of Islamization except for a handful of critics, namely Fazlur Rahman, Ziauddin Sardar, Yasien Mohamed, Seyyed Vali Nasr, and Hadi Sharifi. However, the main reasons for undertaking the movement can be both internal and external as expressed by the pioneers of the movement alongside some other factor that also contributed to the issue such as the aftermath of colonial power in the Muslim countries, and the failure of both the capitalist and socialist systems for Muslims.

Faruqi considers the external issues to be the main causes of the backwardness such as the political, social, and economic conditions of the Muslims. Faruqi mentioned in his Work Plan the backwardness and lowly contemporary position of the ummah in all fields e.g. political (divided, disunited, military rule), economic (undeveloped, dependent on the West, illiteracy despite huge new found oil wealth) and religio-cultural (westernized, alienated from Islam and its culture). Al-Attas, on the other hand, identifies the primary reasons of the backwardness as the internal issues. He argues that the discipline of the body, mind and soul that have resulted in loss of justice, which betrays an internal confusion in knowledge. This confusion of knowledge is due to the inability of the Muslims to distinguish the true knowledge from the knowledge that has been infused with the Western vision. Therefore, the internal reason for the Islamization of Knowledge stems from the basic premise that the contemporary knowledge is not normal. Al-Attas further says

Our real challenge is the problem of the corruption of knowledge. This has come about due to our own state of confusion as well as influences coming from the philosophy, science, and ideology of modern Western culture and civilization.³¹

Syed Hossain Nasr, a key proponent of the Islamization of Knowledge Movement, explains the rationale quite eloquently. He says: Since the thirteenth Islamic century, numerous Muslims have been sent to the West to study and to master Western science, medicine and technology or to modern schools and

³¹Hanif Mohamed Aslam A Critical Survey of Islamization of Knowledge, , IIUM Press,2005, p. 14

universities within the Islamic world. The later were established either by missionaries to propagate Christianity and along with it Western Humanism and later on secularism or by Muslim governments seeking to create institutions which would train their citizens in such a way as to be able to gradually hold the reins of power in their hands and run a modern society and economy. Although the goal of many of these educationalists was not commendable from the point of view of the immediate needs of their societies their efforts nevertheless resulted in the creation of a major hiatus and cleavage within the Islamic world. Within most Islamic countries, two types of Islamic institutions came to vie with each other. One was an educational system based upon Western ideas, often presented very subtly in the domain of the humanities where Islamic teachings could be substituted and more openly in the social and natural sciences; and the second was traditional schools where students continued to and still continue to learn Islamic subjects such as jurisprudence, and, of course, Quran commentary and Hadith. During the last two decades, many Muslim leaders have become aware of the tragic consequences of such a situation which creates a society divided against itself.³²

Imad Al-ddin Khalil attributes the necessity of Islamization of Knowledge mainly to four dimensions. He explains

1. Necessity of Faith: Islam provides a clear illustration of its nature and laws in the world and man. Thus it puts the believers in a harmonious position with the divine nature and laws. This fact necessitates acquiring through knowledge of the divine laws in order to establish the desired harmony which will leads to more advancement. Therefore human quest for knowledge can be carried out under the framework of divine faith. The necessity of Islamization of Knowledge can be seen from two aspects. Firstly, it will help Muslims to appreciate the cohesion of their religion and consequently increase their contentment and importance of their religion based on their achieved knowledge. Secondly, it will allow Muslims to achieve material advancement and improve their social condition as well as enable them to confront the pressure and challenge of the time.

³² The History and Philosophy of Islamization of Knowledge, Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, IIUM Press, 2010, p 6

2. Humanitarian necessity: Indeed the objective of faith is to create a human being who is visionary and steadfast. The quest for knowledge from a monotheist point of view, therefore, paves the way to attain this objective. We can easily understand the significance of faith based education when we see the negative impact on humankind resulted from secular education. The struggle of a man in a society which refused the monotheistic ideology or segregated it from all aspects of life is rather evident despite the massive materialistic advancement.

There is another issue pertaining to the importance of Islamization of Knowledge from humanitarian respect. Indeed, attaining knowledge based on faith inspires a believer to confront and control his temptation, selfishness, racism and all other unethical issues regarding human behavior. On the contrary, the secular education has applied their knowledge and discoveries to create devastating weapons to destroy peoples and the humanity at large. For instance, the incident of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is a clear indication of the negative aspect of the secular which role out all the divine values and norms.

3. Civilizational necessity: The imitation of Western education will not create any civilization. At best, it can create a confused citizen who is satisfied with an alien civilization although who might make headway from material perspective. The Islamization of Knowledge is considered one of the highest priorities in this respect.
4. Scientific necessity: The scientific activities, in most cases, steam from the interest of discovery and development. It is also an important tool to achieve development in the realm of economy, infrastructure, strategy and military.

These are some stimulation, perhaps justifiable, that motivated people for more scientific advancement. And consequently these scientific activities ushered in a new horizon that human mind have barely thought of.

However, what about if we add the theistic ideology to all these above mentioned issues as strongest motive for the scientific discoveries, which

necessitates the quest for knowledge as religious obligation in order to attain closeness to Allah? And this ideology also entails making more efforts for its adherents for new discoveries, and thus more developments and more power through which they can transform from isolation to integration in society in order for Allah's word to be the uppermost.³³

The rationale for embarking the mission of Islamization of Knowledge, according to Mohd Kamal Hassan, can be summarized as follows

The urgent need to provide an alternative to the secular paradigm of knowledge which resulted in the social sciences and the humanities, in particular, being loaded or colored with values, perspectives and biases coming from the secular environment, culture and civilization of the modern West which are at odds with the values and perspectives of Islam. The natural, physical and applied sciences too are based on secular scientific paradigm and epistemology of the modern West, although the factual, material, physical, biological, mathematical and technical contents *per se* of those sciences and technology are not the focus of the mission of Islamiization of Knowledge insofar as they are indeed value-natural or objective.

However, the underlying philosophical or metaphysical assumptions, presuppositions, theories and first principals of those sciences; the interpretations of the scientific facts based on those assumptions; and the divers ways of utilizing science and technology have to be subjected to the analysis and critical evaluation on the Tawhid-based epistemology and ethics of Islam. This does not mean that the Muslim societies and countries should not be concerned with the acquisition of all the useful knowledge, sciences, and technologies as a means of strengthening the overall position and development of Muslim human and natural recourses.

The reform of the Muslim Ummah has to be based upon educational reform in accordance with the worldview of the unity of knowledge, revelation and intellect, religion and science, this world and the Hereafter, and human beings' role of servant hood and vicegerency of Allah (SWT). The dualism and the dichotomy of the religious and the secular into water-tight compartments following the

³³ Imaad Al-Deen Khali, *Madkhal Ila Islamiyyatil ma'rifa*, , Beirut:Dar Ibn kathir, 2006, p12-16

Western model of education is repugnant to the Islamic worldview and epistemology. The mission of Islamization of Knowledge is also meant to provide the solution to this unwarranted dichotomy and the crisis of the Muslim mentality and personality accruing from the serious educational fault.

The continued domination of secular, atheistic, agnostic or materialistic Western thought, system and civilization will only lead to more crisis, disaster and injustices in the world. Islam as a Tawhidic religion, culture and civilization processes the right solutions to the problems of mankind, based on its inherent harmony between religion and science, and revelation and reason, the material and the spiritual dimensions of life, as has been witnessed in the history and clearly emphasized in the message of the Qur'an and Sunnah.³⁴

On the other hand, the negative aspects of Western education system which has resulted in the crisis, chose, corruption, and violence in modern societies has been also reinforced by some Western scholars. Harry R.Lewis, Gordon McKay, professor of computer science and former dean of Harvard College observes the following

In short, universities have forgotten their larger educational role for college students. They succeed, better than ever, as creators and repositories of knowledge. But they have forgotten that the fundamental job of undergraduate education is to turn eighteen-nineteen-year-old into twenty-one and twenty-two-year-old, to help them grow up, to learn who they are, to search for larger purpose for their lives, and to leave college as better human beings. So totally has the goal of scholarly excellence overshadowed universities' educational role that they have forgotten that the two need not be in conflict.³⁵

He further observes that

Peruse the speeches of the leadership of any university and you will see plenty of talk about the world's problems, about the pursuit of knowledge, about hard work and

³⁴ Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, *The History and Philosophy of Islamization of Knowledge*, Malaysia: IIUM Press, 2010, p 29-30

³⁵ Ibid, p.8

success. Rarely will you hear more than bromides about personal strength, integrity, kindness, cooperation, compassion, and how to have the world a better place than when you find it. The greater the university the more intent it is on competitive success on the market place of faculty, students, and research money. And the less likely it is to talk seriously to students about their development into people of good character who will know that they owe something to society for the privileged education they have received.³⁶

Some Muslim scholars attribute the corruption of knowledge and penetration of secular system in education to the colonial occupation in the Muslim countries in order to consolidate their domination and subjugation. Lord Macaulay (1800-1859), the formulator of the British educational System in India articulates

The sole aim of modern Western education for Muslims was to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern- a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect.³⁷

Munir M. Al-Otaybi and Hakim M. Rashid further elaborate the issue as William Montgomery Watt³⁸ observes

All Islamic countries had a Western type educational system up to university level, and it is in this that most of the best brains of the country receive their education....One result of this process has been the creation of a new class of Western-educated people, most of whom do not accept the traditional Islamic worldview.³⁹

Mahmoud Hamid Al- Migdadi believes that there are three key factors which necessitate the Islamization of Knowledge. These are as follows

1. **The Malaise of the Islamic Nation**

The overarching reason for the Islamization of Knowledge is the deep malaise that Muslim societies had fallen into, which is mostly the result of other principal causes, namely: secularism, dualism and blind following. To put it more clearly, we Muslims are living now in a predominantly Western age with its thought-pattern, culture and civilization and its intellectual make-up and training. This age

³⁶ Ibid, p 8-9.

³⁷ Ibid,p13

³⁸ William Montgomery Watt (14 March 1909- 24 October 2006) was a Scottish historian, emeritus professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Edinburgh University.

³⁹ Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, *The History and Philosophy of Islamization of Knowledge*, Malaysia: IIUM Press, 2010, p 13

of our history can rightly be called an age of intellectual and social enslavement. This intellectual and social enslavement of the people of the Muslim countries, which is preceded by an age of political and military subjugation, is mostly the result of the long period of imperialistic role of the West over the Muslim world, and more importantly our present academic and educational system which is based on Western concepts of education, developed after Western fashions and supplied with textbooks, curricula and sciences which are Western in their appearance , contents and spirit, and run by men educated by Western tradition, indeed.

All these issues indicate the intellectual crisis prevailing in the Muslim world resulting in the decadence and impotence of the Islamic nation preventing it from contributing decisively or significantly to the culture and civilization of the modern world. Hence, the removing of the misconceptions of the Muslim conception of the contemporary knowledge through the Islamization of modern knowledge is essential for any clarity of vision, effective reforms and redirection of Islamic nation.

2. Secularization and dualism

The predominance of the secular system in the Muslim world puts the society in a hazardous position exposing people to lose their Islamic identity and integrity. This is because the secular system gives great precedence to the temporal world and ignores the spiritual one. The dissemination of the Western world view was gradually accomplished through the educational system based upon a concept of knowledge and its principle that would bring about the de-Islamization of the Muslim mind.

The situation of most Muslim countries suffers from the so-called educational dualism or dichotomy. The existence of educational dualism is the visible outcome when the Islamic nation was under the dark period of colonization in the 14 century.

Although colonization had ended, after long years, the type of education from colonizer still prevails in the Muslim world until today. This makes educational dualism present in Muslim countries. That two conflicting system of education exists in Muslim world. These two systems are secular-religious which

was introduced with the coming of Islam, and the Western secular system which was a result of colonization and modernization.

These two types of education have produced graduates of different outlooks who could not understand one another; and in competing for influence in society, they contributed to its tension and division.

Muslim thinkers believed that the secular system of education and the Western life-style are dominant and the Muslim world is in danger of losing its identity, therefore, to present a solution to the problem a true Islamic education must be reformed, they contended.

3. **Blind following (*Taqleed*)**

By blind following I mean following others sayings and more particularly, actions as though these were not protected from errors, when they are not in accordance with ones worldview or values. In today's globalization era and with the ever growing Information Communication Technology (ICT) gaps of information among different societies have been reduced through dissemination of knowledge in many fields of study and disciplines. Access to worldwide information of all kinds; useful, of no worth, pseudo, half-true, exaggerated, and mutilated have been made possible. As a result of this information explosion, this, for the most part, comes from the West and non-Islamic societies. People in the Muslim countries are deluded with this knowledge and are made to think that their potentials valuable, and they are incapable to contribute to hitherto they should depend others for knowledge and even ideas and then started blindly following then

⁴⁰Mahmoud Hamid al-Migdadi , "Issues in Islamization of Knowledge, Man and Education", *Revue Academique des etudes Sociales et humaines*. Vol. 16, no. 7, P 6-8.

Part One:
Seyd Ali Ashraf

Chapter: 1

Biography

Syed Abu Naser Ali Ashraf was born in January 30rd in 1924 in Nababgang, Dhaka. He was, however, known as Ali Ashraf.⁴¹ His father was Seyd Ali Hamed and his mother was Syeda Kamrun Nigar Khatun. His genealogical tree can be traced over a thousand years through Syed Shah Ali Bagdadi⁴² of Iraq all the way back to the Imam Hossain, the grandson of Prophet (PBUH).

Seyd Ali Hamid, farther of Syed Ali Ashraf, was born in Alokdia, Magura. He learnt Bangla, Arabic, Urdu, and Persian in his early age as a family tradition. Then completed secondary education in 1915 from Colegiate School. He then entered in Dhaka College and completed Higher Secondary education in 1917. In 1920 he graduated in Arabic Language and literature from the University of Dhaka, and started his career as an assistant school inspector. Alongside his profession he was also involved in D'awa activities. He passed away in 1957.

Syeda Kamrun Nigar, mother of Syed Ali Ashraf, was born in 1897 in Nababgang, Dhaka. She learnt Quran, Hadith, Arabic, Urdu and Persian in very early age. She was a mother of twelve children. However, two of them have passed away in early age. She was acclaimed for the success of her children.

Hisfamily

Syed Ali Ashraf has ten siblings. Five brothers and five sisters. Brothers are Syed Ali Ahsan, Syed Ali Reja, Syed Ali Naqi, Syed Ali Tqi, and Syed Sajjad Hossian.

⁴¹ Nasir Helal, *Borenya*, Dhaka: Darul Ihsan University, 1999, p.105

⁴² Syed Shah Ali Bagdadi, born in a town on the bank of River Furat in 1393 CE on the , was a great saint of his age. Imbued with spirituality, Syed Shah Ali Bagdadi moved to Delhi in 1443 along with forty companions by his father's order to preach Islam and accepted Sultan Alauddin's hospitality the king of Delhi of that time. Then in 1451 he moved to Gerda, Faridpur of Bangladesh and later settled down there. He travelled extensively throughout the country for the sake of dawa'h. His axect date of birth remained unknown. However, he was barried in Mirpur, Dhaka. See Syed Ali Ashraf: Life and Work, a PhD thesis submitted by M.M Raich Uddin Ahmed to the Department of Islamic Studies, University of Rajshahi.

Syed Ali Ahsan

Syed Ali Ahsan was born in 1939 in Mgura District. He earned B.A and MA degree in English Language and Literature from the University of Dhaka. He started his career as a lecturer at Hugli Islamic Intermediate College in 1945. In the same year he joined in Al India Radio, and moved to Dhaka in 1947. He then again started academic career in the University of Dhaka in the Department of Bangla. In 1958, he moved to Karachi University and started working as a Reader and Principal. In 1960, the government of East Bengal asked him to join in Bangla Academy as a director, and he came back to Bangladesh to serve at the Academy. Later in 1967, he secured a professorship at the Department of Bangla, University of Chittagong, and subsequently became the Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the same university. After the independence of Bangladesh (1972), he assumed the responsibility of Vice Chancellor at Jahangirnagar University. In 1975 he joined Rajshahi University and served in the same position. He also had the privilege to serve as Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, and Religious Affairs under the government of Peoples Republic of Bangladesh from 1977 to 1978. In the following year, he joined in the University Grand Commission as a Charmin. And in the same year he has been conferred the award of National Professor⁴³ for his invaluable contribution to the educational realm. In the wake of Syed Ali Ashraf's death, Professor Ali Ahsan assumed the responsibility of Darul Ihsan University as a vice chancellor in 1998. However, he had to leave the responsibility by virtue of his physical illness. He passed away in 2000 CE.

Syed Ali Reja

Syed Ali Reja was born in 1930. He received his primary education at home. He entered in Armaanitola English School, and completed his secondary education in 1948. Then he completed his higher secondary education at Dhaka College. He then entered Bangladesh Homeoeopathic Medical College and completed his degree in 1960. In the same year he joined the same college and served there for 25 years. Because of his family tradition, he was also involved in spiritual practice, and da'wa activities.

⁴³National Professor is a prestigious teaching award given by the Government of Bangladesh for outstanding contribution on the field of education. It is awarded by the president of Bangladesh according to *Bangladesh National Professor Act 1981*. The awarded persons receive various facilities from the government.

Syed Ali Naqi

Syed Ali Naqi, was born in 1939. He received his elementary education at home. He earned a B A and a MA in History from the University of Dhaka in 1963 . He started his career as a lecturer at Bagura Azizul Haq College in 1964. In 1964, he joined Jagannath College. Then in 1974 he become the head of History Department, at Dhaka College. After the establishment of Darul Ihsan University, he assumed the responsibility of Assistant Rector. In 1997, he became Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Drul Ihsan University. In 2005, he became the Vice Chancellor of Darul Ihsan University.

Apart from these, he also taught in Islamic University, and was involved in different educational centers and think tanks. Currently, he is the charmain of Ashraf Charitable Trust. He participated in a number of international conferences and visited many countries including India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, Egypt, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

Syed Ali Taqi

Born in 1942, Syed Ali Taqi has completed a BA and a MA in Bangla literature from the University of Dhaka. He taught in many institutions including Karachi Ialamia College, Moymensing Ananda Mohon Govt. College. He was a researcher on Bangla literature at the department of Bangla, University of Chittagong.⁴⁴

He has experienced severe physical torcher by the Pakistani military, and consequently became mentally ill.

Syed Ali Ashraf's education

Syed Ali Ashraf was a brilliant and promising child from the very early age of his childhood. He received his primary education in Nababgang, in the residence of his maternal uncle. Then in 1931 he moved to Dhaka along with his other family members, and enrolled in Armanitola English School. In 1940, he completed Matric (Secondary Certificate) and secured fifth position among the top meritorious student list. Based on his result he obtained a scholarship to study at

⁴⁴At present the post “Researcher on Bangla Literature” does not exist at the University of Chittagong.

Dhaka College in higher secondary level, and obtained sixth position in the merit list.⁴⁵

He then got admitted into the University of Dhaka in the Department of English Language and Literature for a BA degree and managed to secure the 1st position and received gold medal from the University for his outstanding Result. He also completed MA in English Language and Literature from the same university. Subsequently, he had the privilege to study at Cambridge University. There he studied BA in 1952, and came back to Bangladesh. In 1961, he was awarded a scholarship from Cambridge University; he completed MA and PhD respectively in 1956 and 1968.⁴⁶

Academic pursuits

Syed Ali Ashraf displayed a wide and vibrant interest in numerous academic and social activities, from lecturing and consulting to initiating, founding and participating in various organizations. On top of these are the establishment of Darul Ihsan University in Bangladesh, and his initiatives in issue of Islamazation of Knowledge. He started his academic career as a lecture at the Department of English, University of Dhaka in 1947. After teaching there for one year he went to the UK for higher education at the University of Cambridge. He then came back to Bangladesh and wanted to join again in Dhaka University. Still due to of some internal issues, it did not happen. However, he was invited by Dr. Juberi, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Rajshahi to join as a reader and the Head Department of English of University of Rajshahi. After one year, he was invited by Dr. I.S. Qureshi of Karachi University to work there as a reader and the head of the department at the Department of English. Syed Ali Ashaf accepted his invitation and decided to join there in 1956. As mentioned earlier, in the early 1960s he went to the University of Cambridge, and after completing his MA and PhD he again join in the same University as a professor. During the Liberation War of

⁴⁵ . See M.M Raich Uddin Ahmed, *Syed Ali Ashraf: Life and Work*, an unpublished PhD thesis submitted by to the Department of Islamic Studies, University of Rajshahi.

⁴⁶Nasir Helal, *Borenya*, Dhaka: Darul Ihsan University, 1999, p.203

Bangladesh (1971)⁴⁷ he remained in Karachi. However it was assumed that he was a strong proponent of the liberation of Bangladesh.

In 1971, he joined at Harvard University as visiting professor. From 1973 to 1974, he worked as fallow at Cambridge University. He also worked in the University of New Brunswick as a visiting professor for a short period. In 1974, he joined in King Abdulaziz University as a professor and Head of the Department of English. He worked there for a decade. He then moved to the Uk and worked in the University of Cambridge until 1984. In addition to these, he also taught and delivered lecture in a numerous institutes around the globe including Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei. During his teaching at Cambridge University in the mid-1980s, he started working on the establishment of Darul Ihsan University⁴⁸ in Dhaka. Eventually in 1992, he established Darul Ihsan University, and worked as a vice-chancellor until his death.

Other academic activities

In addition to above mentioned responsibilities, Syed Ali Ashraf was involved in numerous activities. In the year of 1943-1944, he was the assistant secretary of Pakistan Literature Forum and in 1945 he worked as secretary of the same forum. He was a life member of Bangla Academy⁴⁹. In 1977, he was the organizing secretary of the Muslim Education Conference held in Mecca. He was the first director of the World Center of Islamic Education established by Organization of

⁴⁷The Liberation Bangladesh War 1971 was a revolution and armed conflict sparked by the rise of the Bengali nationalist and self-determination movement in the East Pakistan and the 1971 Bangladesh genocide. It resulted in the independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

⁴⁸ Darul Ihsan University is regarded as the brainchild of Syed Ali Ashraf. The detail of the establishment and the nature of the university will be presented in the thesis later on.

⁴⁹The Bangla Academy is Bangladesh's national language authority which was established in 1954. It is located in Burdwan House in Ramna, Dhaka within the grounds of the University of Dhaka and Suhrawarddy Udyan. The Bangla Academy hosts the annual Ekushey Book Fair, as well as the Bangladesh Hey Festival. The main task of the Academy is to conduct research on Bengali language, culture and history, and to publish Bengali literary and research work. It has also established the Bangla Academy Award, given each year for contribution to Bengali language. To commemorate the Language Movement and the Language Martyr's Day, the Academy organizes the month-long Ekushey Book Fair, the largest book fair in the country.

Islamic Conference (OIC)⁵⁰, the period between 1980 to 1982 in Mecca. He was the Director General of the Cambridge Islamic Academy; also the editor of the Muslim Education Quarterly, which was published by the very Academy. In 1990, he had the privilege to become the life member of the Faculty of Education, Cambridge University. He was the founder Chairmen of Darul Ihsan Trust, and also the founder of Ashraf Charitable Trust. He was a member of AUPE⁵¹ and also the member of PFN⁵². He was also the senior member of Fuge William College. His activities were not confined to academia, rather he was also involved in different spiritual activities too. He was a life member of “Jmate Madina” an Islamic movement dedicated to Sufi practice and preaching Islam.

Besides these, he presented articles and papers in numerous seminars and conferences. These include: The Historic Mecca Series Conferences on Muslim Education of late 90s.

1. The First World Conference on Muslim Education, Mecca, 1977. Sponsored by King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah. Seyd Ali Ashraf acted there as a planner and organizing secretary;
2. The Second World Conference on Muslim Education, Islamabad, Pakistan, 1980. Seyd Ali Ashraf acted there as a planner. The topic of the conference was Curriculum Design;
3. The Third World Conference on Muslim Education, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1981. Seyd Ali Ashraf acted there as a planner and a member of steering committee;
4. The Fourth World Conference on Muslim Education, Jakarta, Indonesia, 1982. The topic of the conference was evaluation. Seyd Ali Ashraf acted there as a planner and a member of steering committee;

⁵⁰The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is an international organization founded in 1969 consisting of 57 member states. The organization states that it is "the collective voice of the Muslim World and works to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony. The OIC has permanent delegations to the United Nations and the European Union. The official languages of the OIC are Arabic, English, and French.

⁵¹ An international organization of the professors' of English Language and literature.

⁵²Nasir Helal, *Borenya*, Dhaka: Darul Ihsan University, 1999, p.105

5. The Fifth World Conference on Muslim Education, Cairo, Egypt, 1987 on evaluation. Seyd Ali Ashraf acted there as a planner and a member of steering committee;
6. International Conference on Islamic Education, Jordan, 1989, organized by Cambridge University.

As a director general of the Islamic Academy of Cambridge, he organized many seminars on various important issues in collaboration with the Department of Education of Cambridge University. These include

1. Religion and Education in Multi Faith Multi-culture Society, 1984;
2. Teaching of Islam in British Schools, 1985;
3. Recourses for Teaching of Islam in British Schools, 1986;
4. Swan Committee Report: An Evaluation from the Islamic Point of view, London, 198;
5. International Workshop on Teaching of Social Studies and Natural Sciences from the Islamic Point of View, 1988;
6. Faith as the Basis of Education on a Multi faith, Multi-cultural Country: A Dialogue between Christian and Muslims, I 1990;
7. Faith as the Basis of Education in a Multi-Faith, Multi-Cultural Country: A Dialogue between Christian and Muslims, II 1990;
8. International Seminars on Spiritual and Moral Education, 1994.

Paper presentation on comparative education

World Conference on the Comparison between Religion and Secularist Theories of Education: The Islamic Perspective;
Montreal, Canada, 1990. Prague, Chekoslavia, 1993.

Paperpresentation on the philosophy of education

World Conference on the Religious Concept of Education. Oxford, UK, 1993

Paperpresentation in the international conferences of commonwealth literature

Commonwealth Literature Conference I, Leeds, UK, 1964;
Commonwealth Literature Conference II, Brisbane, Australia, 1968.

Paper presentation in the International conferences of English Literature.

International Association of the University Professors of English (IAUPE),
Istanbul, 1971;

IAUPE, Los Angeles, 1974;

IAUPE, Prague, 1977.

IAUPE, Aberdeen;

IAUPE, York, UK;

IAUPE, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Paper presentation in the international conferences of Islam and Islamic culture and civilization

International Conference on Islamic Civilization, 1978, London, UK.

International Conference on the Future of Islamic Civilization, Kuala Lumpur, 1990.

Paper presentation in the international conferences on modern languages and literature

Congress of the International Federation of the Modern Languages and Literature, Islamabad, Pakistan, 1968;

Congress of the International Federation of the Modern Languages and Literature, Cambridge, 1972. Title of the paper: "Two Traditions of Bengali Literature";

Congress of the International Federation of the Modern Languages and Literature, Arizona, 1981. Title of the paper "Hindu and Muslim Cultures in Bengali Literature.

D. list of publications

Books and Monographs

General Editor and Planner of six books in Islamic Education Series. All published by Hodder and Stoughton London.

1. Crisis of Muslim Education. By S.S. Husain & Syed Ali Ashraf, 1979.
2. Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education. Edited by S. N. Attas.
3. Social and Natural Sciences: The Islamic Perspective, ed, I. Faruqi, 1980.
4. Curriculum and Teacher Education, ed. Afindi.
5. Philosophy, Literature and Fine Arts, ed. S. H. Nasr.

General Editor and Planner of three books in Islamic Monograph series, 1984.

1. New Horizons in Muslim Education, by Seyd Ali Ashraf, 1984.
2. The Concept of Islamic University, by S. A. Ashraf & Bilgrami, 1984.
3. Introduction to Islamic Sociology, by Ihas Ba-Yunus & Farid Ahmed, 1984.

Religion and Education, ed. with Paul Hirst, Islamic Academy Cambridge, 1984.

Islamic Education Movement: An Historical Analysis, the Islamic Academy Cambridge, 1990.

Language and Literature

1. T. S. Eliot through Pakistani Eyes. ed. Department of English, Karachi University, 1968.
2. The New Harmony: An Anthology of Pakistani Poetry in English, Department of English, Karachi University, 1964.
3. Ed. The Other Harmony: A Book of Verse by Pakistani Poets in English, 1968.
4. Literature, Society and Culture in East Pakistan, Karachi University, 1973.
5. Muslim Traditions in Bengali Literature, The Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, 1982.
6. Homage to Nazrul Islam, Karachi University, 1972.
7. The Prophets, for children.

Editorials & Articles

1. Muslim Education Quarterly, Cambridge, UK. Published by the Islamic Academy Cambridge, since 1983.
2. Islamic Education Quarterly, Mecca, (2 issues), published by the World Center for Islamic Education, 1981-1982.
3. Taj, Published by Islamic Education Society, Karachi, 1967-1972.
4. Venture, (initially a quarterly and later a biannual journal of English Language and Literature), Department of English, Karachi University, 1960- 1972.

Writings in Bengali

PADDA SHAHITTO:

1. Choitra Jokhon (1957)
2. Bisangoti (1974)
3. Hijrat (1984)
4. Rubaiyate Jahini (1991)
5. Prasnottar. (1996)

GADDA SHAHITTO:

1. Kabbo Parichay (1957)
2. Nazrul Jibone Premer ek Oddhay (1964)
3. Bangla Shahitte Muslim Oitijjo (1962)
4. Sangsad Joog.
5. Onnesha
6. Kabber Angik. (1371 Bangabda)

SONKOLON:

1. Kabbo Sonkolon (1967) , Bangla Academy
2. Syed Ali Ashrafer Kobita (1991) , ShilpoToru Prokashoni

Chapter: 2

Spiritual life of Syed Ali Ashraf

Although the spiritual aspect of Syed Ali Ashraf does not fall under the purview of this thesis, yet we found it deserves a special discussion as, to him, spirituality is an integral part of education and he was actively involved in spiritual domain. No systemic attempt has been made to study his spiritual life except for a brief discussion by M.H. Raich Uddin of Rajshahi University in his doctoral thesis.

According to Syed Ali Ashraf, in order to be a true Muslim one should acquire both *ilm az-zahir* (formal academic education) as well as *ilm al-batin* (knowledge which is gained through spiritual experience). This was manifested in the life of righteous Muslims from the early age of Islam. He further asserts that ganging knowledge should be under supervision of scholars who are well versed in knowledge of the Quran and Hadith and follow the prophetic tradition in every aspects of life and also have a high status in spiritual path. He says

Our aim is to acquire sound and comprehensive Islamic knowledge under supervision of an appropriate mentor, to acquire knowledge of different branches for halal earning, to learn the way of remembering Allah all the time, to find the way of liberation from the incitement of the Satan other vices such as greediness, envy, selfishness, anger excreta. And in order to achieve this purity of heart, one should assess his actions consistently. Thus one can become a soldier of Allah under supervision of a mentor.⁵³

Furthermore, a Muslim should try to be a soldier of Allah because Allah has purchased his life and wealth as Allah says in the Quran

إن الله اشترى من المؤمنين أموالهم و أنفسهم بأن لهم الجنة.

Indeed, Allah has purchased of the believers their persons and their property in return for the Heavenly garden they shall have.⁵⁴

A Muslim should attain these qualities because he has to take the responsibilities of the world. Allah has given the highest status and the

⁵³ Syed Ali Ashraf, *Mujahid*, unpublished booklet, (preserved with Dr. Ali Rumman, Syed Ali Ashraf's nephew)

⁵⁴ Al- Tawbah: 111

responsibilities of the world to the group that the Prophet (PBUH) has prepared throughout his life.

In order to purify one's soul, Syed Ali Ashraf suggests a holistic approach separating the process in three domains. These are

One: *Tarbiyyah*

Two: *Tajkiyyah*

Three: *Mujahidah*

He categorizes Tarbiyyah as (1) mandatory knowledge (2) Special training (3) knowledge of *tahzib wa tamaddun* (knowledge of Islamic civilization).

One: *Tarbiyyah*: the knowledge of the Quran & Sunnah

A) Acquisition of knowledge

In order to lead the life according to Islam one should first know the basic principles of Islam and Islamic etiquettes. He should also know the rules of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) as well as the higher objectives of these rules. Secondly he should know the correct recitation of the Quran as well as Arabic language to understand the meaning of the Quran. Thirdly, learning the mother tongue to express his ideas properly. Fourthly, learning mathematics. And fifthly learning at least one foreign language.

Special Training: to master a specific discipline from different branches of knowledge. This is necessary for the society, perhaps not for all individual such as medicine. These sort of knowledge is also necessary for halal earning.

Knowledge of *tahzib watamaddun*: *This* knowledge will help to be familiar with the Islamic civilization and culture such as *seerah* (biography) of the Prophet(PBUH), the history of Islamic caliphates, and other aspects of Islamic legacy and heritage. Study of the biography of righteous Islamic scholars and their works is also necessary as it purifies the soul and refreshes the heart. At the same

time, knowing other civilization and the social systems of non-Muslims is also important.

B) Putting acquired knowledge into action

In order to implement the acquired knowledge in personal and social life, one should put these knowledge into action. Therefore, some practices are recommended such as discussion of the subjects taught, organizing debate, organizing literary discussion to judge literature from an Islamic perspective, organizing Quran recitation competition, publishing articles, physical exercises and defensive training and so on.⁵⁵

Two: *Tajkiyyah*

In order to assess whether one is doing something for the sake of Allah or for worldly gaining, he needs a pure heart, which can only be gained by the constant remembrance of Allah, and the company of righteous people. The way of purifying one's heart is *tajkiyyah*. It is not possible for an educated person to provide such guidance as he does not have the insight, acquaintance with the matters of heart. He, therefore, required to keep in touch with a mentor to be inspired with spiritual light which is also known as to be *murid* (follower).

The key elements in the stage of *tajkiyyah*

A) Following the *Sunnah*: Pledge and Intention

The initial level is to read the biography of the Prophet (PBUH) and to take an oath to follow him. To prepare one's self to put into practice the knowledge learnt through *tarbiyyah*. The purpose is to immerse one's self in following *sunnah*.

B) Following the *Sunnah*: *Istigfar* (repentance)

In order to follow the Prophet (PBUH), one should be strongly committed to it, and the main task will be repentance.

C) Following the *Sunnah*: *Muhasaabah* (self-criticism)

⁵⁵ Ibid

Before sleeping one should think of his daily deeds whether he did it in the light of the Quran and *Sunnah* or not. And he should also ponder upon the fact that it is not certain that he would be alive tomorrow.

D) Following the *Sunnah: khidmat e khalq* (to serve the fellow human beings)

1. To serve the parents and relatives both material and religious;
2. To serve the teachers and mentors;
3. To assist sick and destitute;
4. To help the neighbors;
5. To show mercy to fauna and flora, and to save natural environment.

***Dhikr, Shogul, and Muraqabah* (remembrance of Allah, occupation with good deeds, contemplation)**

Another best way to follow the *Sunnah* is to be immersed spirituality through becoming less involved with the worldly affairs. In this path one also need a mentor however, otherwise it is likely that he would get deceived by the Satan. There are a number of reasons; *dhikr* should be taught in educational institutions. These are:

Firstly: Allah said in the Quran that Muslims should remember Allah by his names and attributes. He also said that He remembers one when he remembers Allah. Therefore, whoever remembers Allah constantly, Allah will have special mercy on him, and he will gain Allah's proximity.

Secondly: once a Muslim utters the word "*Allahu*" he should realize that he is the only one who deserved to be worshipped, everything is worthless except Him, no one can be the real beloved except Him, He is the all in all, Without Him, one's existence has no value, and to become his real slave one should follow the *sunnah*. This is the essence of *tawhid* which purifies our hearts.

Thirdly: If one can instill this *dhikr* in his heart, he will be able to notice the change of heart because of committing a sin, thus he immediately repents to Allah and feels the happiness of *dhikr* again.

Fourthly: In our modern society, there are numerous means which can deceive a Muslim such as radio, television, cinema, theater and so on. Consequently, the worldly life became the focal point in our lives, and we forget the Hereafter. Human beings are tend to live in a state of possibility and therefore become get confused about the true and false and fair and unfair. By constant *dhikr*, one can overcome this confusion and can enter the state of true belief.

Three: *Mujahidah*

Allah said every Muslim should be a *mujahid*. The Prophet (PBUH) also said the best *jihad* is to straggle with the vice of the heart. Tajkiyyah means to get involved with such *jihad*. At the same time, da'wah should be spreadactivity in family, society, and state affairs. This can be achieved by the following programs:

A) To heighten awareness of the importance of *amr bil m'aruf and anhi anil munkar* (encouragement of good deeds and discouragement of bad deeds) educational institutions in students, among family members, among neighbors.

B) To make the Muslim *ummah* aware of the deviated ideologies, their policies, activities, which led the society to the darkness of *jaheliyyah* (ignorance). And to make concerted efforts to eradicate these ideologies ideologically⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Ibid

Chapter: 3

Syed Ali Ashraf in the eyes of important personalities

I have never seen such a person

Abdur Rahman Biswas, Former President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh during 1991- 1996

Nobel people are those who do something for their fellow human beings. Their death leaves a huge void in society. We feel this profoundly after the death of Seyd Ali Ashraf because he was an exemplary role model. There was only one Seyd Ali Ashraf. Not only Bangladesh but also the whole world has lost such a great person. Is there any other personality like Seyd Ali Ashraf in Bangladesh who can represent on behalf of Bangladesh? Seyd Ali Ashraf was a noble person. There are a handful of people in Bangladesh like Seyd Ali Ashraf. He was at once an internationally acclaimed educationalist, a leading personality in the Islamic education movement, a world-renowned Islamic intellectual, a Sufi, a spiritual personality, a poet, a literary personality, and a literary critic. The education policy of Syed Ali Ashraf was a perfect combination of dual education policy. Moreover, he was imbued with high spirituality. He was a vast ocean of knowledge. I ask for forgiveness for his departed soul.⁵⁷

We lost him in a critical moment

Professor Emaz Uddin Ahmed, Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Dhaka

Syed Ali Ashraf was a man of multidimensional qualities. We have many things in common with him. Therefore, I feel his absence profoundly. He was actively

⁵⁷Abdur Rahman Biswas, *Borenya*, Dhaka: Darul Ihsan University, 1999, p. 24

involved in literature, poetry, and in intellectual activities. He devoted his life to formulate an ideal education policy rather than a dual one which prevails in the country. He believed that in order to have better life, both scientific and religious knowledge are essential. His education policy was based on religious values through a combination of natural and human science. He said without a combination of modernity and religious values, our education can produce some unwanted wild plants not the real harvest. He used to say morality leads to a happy and prosperous life. Seyd Ali Ashraf tried to Islamize modernity. His idea was different than others. He has a unique idea about knowledge, and it made him more remarkable. I believe that we all should know his ideas.⁵⁸

A great teacher

Professor M. A. Bari, Vice-Chancellor, National University, Bangladesh

Syed Ali Ashraf was a real great teacher. At the same time, he was a great Sufi in the spiritual realm. His education policy was aimed to bridge the gap between the dual education system prevails in our society. In his education policy, both the religion and science have equal importance. Many researches are being carried out on his education policy all over the world. He demonstrated the perfect harmony between religion and science rather than any contradiction. His education policy ushered in a new horizon in educational domain, and provided a solution to the greatest problem that exists for ages. It is hard to find such a knowledgeable person like Seyd Ali Ashraf. We feel his absence so profoundly.⁵⁹

⁵⁸Professor Emaz Uddin Ahmed, *Borenya*, Dhaka: Darul Ihsan University, 1999, p. 24

⁵⁹Professor M. A. Bari, *Borenya*, Dhaka: Darul Ihsan University, 1999, p. 25

Unparalleled contribution to diffusion of Islamic knowledge

Professor Shamsur Ali, Former Vice-Chancellor, Bangladesh Open University

Syed Ali Ashraf was a man with versatile qualities. It is hard to find such a learned person. He was a rare personality. He was acclaimed worldwide because of his Breadth of knowledge and insight. He was more renowned abroad than his native country. The light of his knowledge has illuminated the darkness. However, the people of his native land have failed to recognize it. He has dedicated his life to serve the nation and diffuse the correct knowledge. Yet his main focus was the Islamisation of knowledge movement. Despite his efforts, he could not see the desired result. Therefore, we all should continue our effort to fulfill his dream.⁶⁰

Islamic education movement was the focal point of his life

Mawlana Obaedul Haque, Formar Kahatib of Baitul Mukarram Mosque, the National Mosque of Bangladesh

By the death of Syed Ali Ashraf, the world has lost a great personality with multidimensional qualities. And Bangladesh has lost a devoted extraordinary talented citizen of the nation. He was regarded as the pioneer of the Islamization of Knowledge movement. He led a very simple life, and dedicated all of his wealth for the sake of Islamic Education Movement and for the humanity at large. The establishment of Darul Ihsan University is the most remarkable achievement of Syed Ali Ashraf. He always refutes the idea of secularism and materialism by his

⁶⁰Professor Shamsur Ali, *Borenya*, Dhaka: Darul Ihsan University, 1999, p. 26

writing and speech. Syed Ali Ashraf was great literary, a genius literary critic, a prominent poet, and a well-known organizer.

He deeply realized that any branch of knowledge is defective unless it is Islamized. By his death, the nation has lost a remarkable sage in the Islamic knowledge and intellectual domain. May Allah grant him high status in the Jannah.⁶¹

He dedicated all of his wealth

Justice Mustofa Kamal, Chief Justice, Bangladesh Supreme Court

Although Seyd Ali Ashraf was imbued with Islamic ideology and spirituality, yet he was acquainted with modern western thoughts. He always desired to combine Islamic ethos with modernity in order to prevent the current moral decline, so that the mankind will attain excellence in knowledge and education as well as in moral values. This is why he tried to combine the dual educational system. And Darul Ihsan University is the product of this idea. He attempted to familiarize the western-educated populous with the Islamic thoughts by the establishment of Darul Ihsan University. In order to propagate his unique idea, he devoted everything he possessed. It is hard to find such a remarkable person. All educationalists, intellectuals, and people from all walks of life should contribute to fulfill his unaccomplished work. His death was a great loss for the nation. May Allah grant him the highest position in the Jannah.

⁶¹Mawlana Obaedul Haque, *Borenya*, Dhaka: Darul Ihsan University, 1999, p. 26,27.

Chapter: 4

Syed Ali Ashraf's view on education

Syed Ali Asraf argues that in order to appreciate the Islamic concept of education, one should know the Islamic concept of man's nature. According to Islam, man is composed of two elements: a soul and a body. The soul is a spiritual entity. It is divine and everlasting. The body is composed of matter. After death it loses its separate identity and gets mixed with the matters that the universe is composed of. Sensory experience and spiritual experience is entirely different.

Reason (*aql in Arabic*) is the most valuable possession because with the help of reason man acquires knowledge and knows and understands the realities of this world. Reason controls other faculties including the body, gets the assistance of the body in acquiring knowledge and in guiding action. Reason can conceptualize on the basis of experience, but man's experience of the body and soul are various, confusing contradictory and continuous.

However, another way of gaining knowledge is spiritual experience. It is not the sensory experience of the world about us nor it is a purely intellectual idea conceptualized either from sensory data or from an imagined experience. In fact, it is a connection between the human personality and God. This is possible because the spirit of man has its origin in the spirit of God. As the spiritual experience of an individual varies based on his/her innate ability, this God-man relationship has to be assessed with reference to some common norms. And this is where Prophetic consciousness becomes a necessity. Islam posits Prophet's knowledge of the reality as the governing norm.

This assertion denotes that so far as the faith of God, the finality of prophethood, the completion of God's message to the mankind through prophets, the

finality and the completeness of the revelation, the last Day of Judgment and Heaven and Hell are concerned, there is no scope of verification except through spiritual experience. This experience is possible. No one prevents anyone from exploring the truth experience, but then he has to proceed through the spiritual path to verify the truth and see how far that consciousness is a justifiable norm. It has its own criteria of assessment and its own method of finding out how far the experience is true or false, genuine or fake. For society as a whole and for the most of the people, this is not possible nor they have any desire to renounce the world and plunge into the mastery of the spiritual. That is why this aspect of human knowledge has never been emphasized by the Muslim educationalists as a part of school or university curricula.

If we exclude the over mentioned aspect of knowledge from the sphere of education, so what is the character of education according to Islam? The answer is with the idea of creation of human beings as to be the vice-regent (*kahlifah*) as Allah says

وإذ قال ربك للملائكة إني جاعل في الأرض خليفة قالوا أتجعل فيها من يفسد فيها ويسفك الدماء ونحن نسبح بحمدك ونقدس لك قال إني أعلم ما لا تعلمون.

I am placing a representative (a temporary god) on Earth." They said, "Will You place therein one who will spread evil therein and shed blood, while we sing Your praises, glorify You, and uphold Your absolute authority?" He said, "I know what you do not know."⁶²

هو الذي جعلكم خلائف الأرض و رفع بعضكم فوق بعض درجات لئبلوكم في ما آتاكم إن ربك سريع العقاب و إنه لغفور الرحيم.

⁶² Al-Baqarah : 30

He it is Who hath placed you as viceroys of the earth and hath exalted some of you in rank above others, that He may try you by (the test of) that which He hath given you. Lo! Thy Lord is swift in prosecution, and Lo! He verily is Forgiving, Merciful.⁶³

In order to be a vice-regent of Allah, a Muslim should acquire knowledge as Allah taught all the prophets from Adam (a) to the last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and subsequently they all fulfilled their duties by defusing the true knowledge among all human beings.

Syed Ali Ashraf elaborates the idea as follows

Islam conceives the goal of a man to become a vice-regent of God on the earth. This implies first, that man must have knowledge and second that he is able to use that knowledge for his own good and the good of the entire creation, including mankind, other creatures, and external nature. Islam therefore does not put a barrier to the acquisition of knowledge. In order to fulfill the second condition man must know and follow the process by which he comes to know what is 'good' and how to use knowledge to achieve that end. Man must therefore be able to distinguish between useful knowledge and useless and harmful knowledge. This he can do not on the basis of majority opinion or personal choice, experiments and analysis without any norm, but on the basis of the fundamentals provided in the Quran and the Sunnah. Those fundamentals cover all branches of life.⁶⁴

Another aspect of the concept of educational concept is its vision of totality. And in order to achieve this, plan of education and curricula from primary to the tertiary stage must be interdisciplinary. All disciplines of the human knowledge can be integrated with the Islamic approach by two ways. In the first place it requires that all fundamental values of life regarding man's relationship with God,

⁶³ Al-Ana'am : 165

⁶⁴ Syed Ali Ashraf, *Islamic Concept of Education*, The Islamic Academy Dhaka, 1981, p. 4

man and the universe surrounding man should be at the roots of all disciplines so that their theories about society, politics, economics, etc., are governed by those values. Secondly Islam wants man's spiritual, intellectual, emotional and imaginative powers to grow up in such a way that a child does not grow up as an imbalanced person.

Islam categorizes the discipline and gives the highest category to the discipline that involves with the human spirit. The training of the intellect and the discipline of imaginative and emotive powers come next.

Thus a child is expected to have food for its spirit but only through the religious environment of the school and action within the school.

As far as education is concerned, Syed Ali Ashraf draws a parallel between the two Arabic terminology *tarbiyyah* and *ta'lim* both of them simply translated as Education. *Tarbiyyah* helps a person's holistic growth whereas the role of *ta'lim* is confined to train a person or group of people in a given professional domain. For instance, a person can be a great general or a professional carpenter or a pilot or a lawyer or an engineer or an accountant, yet he can remain half cultured, unjust, and bad mannered. Or a person can be a brilliant artist and at the same time he can be extremely selfish who simply ignores his responsibility toward his neighbor or even to his family. Therefore, those who are professional in any given field can be considered as educated yet they cannot be considered as cultured in its true meaning.

On the other hand, people who fulfill their responsibility towards family neighbor, and at the same time have basic knowledge to lead a decent life should be regarded as cultured though, perhaps, have not extensive knowledge in a given

domain. Not having experience does not prevent us to designate him as a good person.

A good person, however, is not necessarily a complete person as there is no limit to improve one's personality. And comprehensive knowledge help grow someone's personality provided that he knows how to incorporate knowledge in action. In order to achieve this a person needs some values.

Tarbiyyah helps sustaining the infrastructures of a society by sustaining all important values and norms and to transmit them into next generation and to determine culture whenever any decline occurs in the value. Syed Ali Ashraf contends that *ta'lim* should be regarded as a part of *tarbiyyah*. Therefore *tarbiyyah* is wider than *ta'lim*. And *tarbiyyah Islamiyyah* is to a comprehensive spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical growth that encompasses every aspects of life.

What is the purpose of education? Syed Ali Ashraf argues both secular and religious educationalists agree with the idea that the purpose of education is to crate true human being. Education is not merely acquisition of knowledge; rather it should also purify one's manner as Islam wants to build an ideal human being who would strive to reform his / her family and the whole mankind. The revelation, therefore, is essential for man to protect his intellect from deviation, and divine law requires intellect to comprehend the divine law.⁶⁵

Syed Ali Ashraf further elaborates that the ideal education should encompass both Islamic and modern knowledge, and it must not be confined to the academic curriculum, rather there should be holistic Islamic environment in home, educational institutes, in society at large.

⁶⁵ Muhammad Assayed Assayed Assafti, *Awdau ala islamiyyit ta'lim min manjur addaktur syeed Ali Ashraf*, Dhaka: Darul Ihsan University, 2003, p 35

This is about the Islamic view on education. On the contrary, as Syed Ali Ashraf contends, the aim of secular education is to attain worldly benefits and to develop theories in different domain to facilitate success in worldly life. Consequently, it ignores the development of spiritual aspect of human life in the light of divine guidance. Furthermore, by virtue of this secular educational system which bypasses religion and ethics the Western people became arrogant and wants to dominate the whole world even by destroying the humanity entirely. Due to this secular education, they demolished many territories. They want to sustain their domination in Orient to looting their wealth. They do not even have any mercy for the children, woman and the elderly. Thus the secular education has produced a generation who excel in their different professional domain though they are lascivious in nature.⁶⁶

The concept of knowledge: A few considerations

The idea of liberal education was originated in Greece. And it was upheld both by Plato and Aristotle. One of the fundamental concepts of the liberal education was the truth of an object lies not in the external manifestation of the object but in the inherent idea that the object manifests. The concept of horse is the truth about the horse; a particular horse may suffer from accidental shortcomings.

Universality and objectivity belong to the idea of the horse and not to that particular object that exist only in time and space. Man can reach this idea with the help of his intellect. Both Plato and Aristotle considered this rational element in man as his most precise faculty. When rightly used, man comes to know comes to know the essential nature of things and apprehends what is ultimately real and

⁶⁶ Ibid p. 35

immutable. From the knowledge of particulars he attains the knowledge of the pure beings. By achieving knowledge, man attains the good of mind, and by doing so, he achieves good life as whole. Education is, therefore, a process that is concerned with the pursuit of knowledge. It is the development of mind, be it skills or virtues or other characteristics that leads man to the realization of the ultimate principles that is considered the greatest good for the man and the job of education is to help man in reaching this limit.⁶⁷

St. Tomas Aquinas, a thirteen century Christian metaphysical, Christianized the concept and considered the angles as intellectual being resembling God in this activity because God knows all things by knowing His own Essence. At the end of its reasoning, man's mind approaches the angelic intellect in gathering up a multiple of truths in the unity of simple principles and ideas. Keeping this gradual growth of mental power from the power to reason to the power to intellect, St. Tomas Aquinas states: Consequently the fitting order of learning will be the following: First, boys should be instructed in logic, because logic teaches the method of whole philosophy. Second, they are to be instructed in mathematics, which does not require experience and does not transcend the imagination. Third, they should learn the natural sciences, nevertheless require experience. . Fourth, they are to be instructed in moral sciences, which require experience and a soul free from passion. Fifth, they are to learn, metaphysics and divine sciences, which transcend the imagination and demand a robust intellect.⁶⁸

Muslim philosophers, on the other hand, such as Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Averroes, from the ninth century onwards had interpreted and reinterpreted Plato and Aristotle. They also divided knowledge into Aristotelian division of

⁶⁷ Syed Ali Ashraf, "Islamic Curriculum for Muslim Education", *Islamic Education Quarterly*, October 1981, Vol. 1, No. 1. P. 64

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 65

theoretical, practical and productive sciences, and regarded metaphysics as the highest branch of knowledge.

One of the earliest and most influential classifications was that of Al-Farabi in his Enumeration of the Sciences (*Ihsa al-Ulum*) known in the West as *De Scientiis*. Though his successors Avicenna become more well-known, Avicenna and his student Averroes adopted his classification with minor changes. Dr. Osman Bakar has made an attempt to systematically study the Muslims' classification of knowledge and devoted a part of his *Classification of Knowledge in Islam* to Al-Farabi. Professor Osman Bakar observes: Al-Farabi has three criteria by means of which the hierarchy of sciences can be established.

The first, the nobility of the subject matter (*shara al-mawdu*), is derived from the fundamental principle in ontology that the world of beings is hierarchically ordered. According to Al-Farabi, astronomy fulfills the criterion of having a noble subject matter because it deals with the most perfect of bodies, namely the celestial bodies. The second criterion, the profundity of the proofs (*istihsa al-barahin*), is based upon the view that systemization of truth claims in the different sciences is characterized by different degrees of clarity and certainty. According to this view, the method of discovering truth claims and of proving them are more perfect and vigorous in some sciences than in others. On the basis of second criterion, Al-Farabi considered geometry to be superior to many other sciences.

As for the third and last criterion, namely the magnitude of the benefits (*Izam al-jadwa*) which can be derived from the science in question, it is based upon the fact that both practical and spiritual needs which concern the volitional aspects of the soul are also hierarchically ordered. For Al-Farabi, the question of

practical human needs and of the benefits or usefulness of objects (including the sciences and arts) and human acts belong to the ethico- legal domain. It is significant that he mentions the science of *Shari'ah* as an example of knowledge which is deemed excellent on account of its usefulness. This is because, in Islam, the idea of hierarchy of human needs and of value of human acts in all spheres of life is based upon the ethico- legal teaching of the *Shari'ah*.⁶⁹

Another classification of knowledge as Syed Ali Ashraf states that Al-Farabi classified knowledge as follows: (a) Science of language: syntax, grammar, pronunciation and speech, poetry; (b) Logic : the division, definition and composition of simple ideas ; (c) the propaedeutic science: Arithmetic, Geometry, Optics, Science of heavens, Music, Science of weights, Science of tool-making; (d) Physics, (science of nature); Metaphysics (science concerned with the Divine and the principles of things); (e) Science of society: Jurisprudence, Rhetoric. Al-Farabi thus incorporated religious studies under metaphysics and the science of society. What Al-Farabi and other philosophers and thinkers introduced was an attempt at integrating religious knowledge within the fold of their total plan.⁷⁰

Ikhwan al-safa divided knowledge into three classes : (a) Preliminary : writing , reading , language arithmetic, poetry and prosody, knowledge of omens and magic, crafts and professions; (b) Religious or positive: the Quran, allegorical interpretation, tradition, history, law, tasawwaf (mysticism) and interpretation of dreams; (c) Philosophical or factual (*haqiqi*): Mathematics – theory or numbers,

⁶⁹ Osman Bakar, *Classification of Knowledge in Islam*, , Kuala Lumpur: Institute dor Policy Research , 1992, p 46,47

⁷⁰ Syed Ali Ashraf, "Islamic Curriculum for Muslim Education", *Islamic Education Quarterly*, October 1981, Vol. 1, No. 1. P. 66

geometry, astronomy, music; logic with rhetoric and sophistic; physics - principles (matter and form), the heavens, elements, meteorology, geology, botany, zoology, metaphysics (theology) – God ; intelligence; soul (from the spheres down words); government- prophets, kings, general, special, individual the hereafter. ⁷¹

Al- Kindi tried to reconcile philosophy to religion by saying that philosophy is based on human knowledge and therefore it cannot reach as far as revelation can. Philosophy's proper subject matter is defined as the science of haecceity, the essence and causes of things to the limit of human power.

Al-Farabi goes a step further and openly asserts that philosophy is prior to religion in time, religion is an imitation of philosophy, the perfect philosopher is the ruler one of whose function is to impart religion. He finds that the knowledge that religion brings is not sufficient. This tradition was maintained by Averroes and Mutazilites.

Al- Ghazali, however, reasserted the dominion of spirit and gave primacy and superior status to revelation as a source of knowledge. In *Tahafutul Falasifah (Incoherence of Philosophers)* he proved that sense, reason and intellect without the assistance of revealed knowledge cannot attain certainty.

Al- Ghazali divided knowledge according to three criteria. The first is the criterion of obligation: (a) requisite for every individual: the five pillars of Islam; ideas and actions permitted and prohibited in Islam; *ilm al- muamalat*- beliefs and actions relating to the status of soul or Islamic ethics including basic social and civil laws; (b) *Fard Kifaya* -socially requisite: needed for the community hence specialization such as engineering or medicine. The second criterion is applied to this branch of knowledge and he subdivided it into two according to their sources:

⁷¹ Ibid, p 67

Ulum Shariyya and Ulum ghayr Shariyya. Under Sharia science come jurisprudence (*fiqh*), ethics and Arabic language. And under non sharia comes philosophy. Another classification of *Fard Kifaya* knowledge is into praiseworthy and blameworthy sciences. Praiseworthy are those that are beneficial for the society and blameworthy are those that are forbidden and that harm individuals and the society. Medicine and arithmetic are praiseworthy for example and astrology and magic are blameworthy.⁷²

The above discussed was about the impact of Greek liberal education on the Muslim world which lies with the supremacy of reason and intellect. However with the advent of Al- Ghazali, the Greek influence has been eliminated.

But according to Seyd Ali Ashraf, the negative impact of the Western liberal education still dominates the Muslim societies and unlike Greek ideology it was not possible for Muslims to reconcile between Islamic and Western concept of knowledge.

Seyd Ali Ashraf asserts

When Muslim world accepted modern Western sciences, it was no longer possible to find a common ground for an integrated curriculum. As a result Islamic education got separated from the modern education and the two different systems started functioning in Muslim countries.⁷³

⁷² Syed Ali Ashraf, "Islamic Curriculum for Muslim Education", *Islamic Education Quarterly*, October 1981, Vol. 1, No. 1. P. 69

⁷³ Syed Ali Ashraf, "Islamic Curriculum for Muslim Education", *Islamic Education Quarterly*, October 1981, Vol. 1, No. 1. P. 69

Syed Ali Ashraf's understanding of knowledge

Syed Ali Ashraf contends the word *ilm* in Arabic means *m'arifa* or knowledge in its broader sense though there are clear variations in their uses. For instance, *ma'rif* refers to acquiring knowledge by experience and observation having prior ignorance. It is, however, not possible to apply the very meaning to Allah as *ilm* is regarded as one of the basic seven attributes of Allah. Therefore when it is used with Allah it denotes inclusive knowledge ⁷⁴(عالم الغيب و الشهادة) Who knows (all things) both secret and open. ⁷⁵

The Prophet (PBUH) used to pray Allah for *ilm*. (رب زدني علما) My Lord increase me in knowledge. ⁷⁶

In fact, Quran itself is a book of knowledge. And the very idea has been reinforced by many Hadith of prophet (PBUH) as we notice that spiritual power of the Quran and Hadith motivated Muslims, without any external pressure, to read and write. This desire for knowledge subsequently spread into the entire Muslim world. And their quest for knowledge encompassed every branch of scholarships. Thus it covered three aspects of knowledge

1. Ethical (including education)
2. Historical (including psychology)
3. Experimental (scientific)

⁷⁴ Syed Ali Ashraf & Hamid Hasan Bilgrami, *The Concept of an Islamic University*, tr. Dr. Abdul Hamid Muhammad, Jeddah :al- Kharibi Sharika al-ukkaj, 1983, p. 21

⁷⁵ Al- Hashr: 22.

⁷⁶ Ta Ha : 114

Ethical aspect deals with the fundamental principles of belief, actions and manners for individual and community alike in order to provide an integrated system for life to guarantee wellbeing Here and Hereafter.

The historical and psychological aspects deal with the attitude of people and their way of thinking regarding accepting or denying the divine truth as well as their consequences accordingly.

And the experimental method is regarded as the main approach to acquire knowledge about things and the interrelation among them as well as their relation with the Creator. This method is different from the modern scientific method which rolls out the metaphysics and tent not to deal with anything beyond the physical world.

It is worth mentioning that the above mentioned three aspects of knowledge is considered to be a means to make the principles of *tawhid* as the focal point in human intellectual and emotional life which is the ultimate spiritual basis for Islam as well as for Islamic education.

A Muslim believes that one can achieve the comprehensive concept of knowledge only through the guidance of the Quran and *Sunnah*. In fact, there has been emphasis on the different aspects of knowledge throughout the Islamic history. However, different circumstance requires special focus on a specific aspect although the pattern remains the same. Thus Muslims managed to comprehend one reality from various different perspectives.

In order to appreciate the different ramifications of knowledge, Syed Ali Ashraf presents the above mentioned overview of Islamic education and Muslim scholars focus on different branches as result of political, social and economic influences .

Chapter: 5

Syed Ali Ashraf's contribution to Islamization of knowledge

Syed Ali Asraf is regarded one of the pioneering Islamic scholars who devoted his whole life to heightening awareness about the need for Islamization of knowledge. He was also one of the organizers in the historical World Conference on Muslim Education also known as Mecca conference in 70s. In order to facilitate the implementation of the idea of Islamization of knowledge he was actively involved in a wide variety of initiatives including working as the director in the World Center for Islamic Education, establishment of Islamic Center in Cambridge, establishment of Darul Ihsan University in Dhaka.

The World Conference on Muslim Education is considered to be the beginning of Islamization movement in the Muslim world and it had ushered in a new chapter in the Islamic educational realm although more efforts are need to implement the idea of Islamazation on a large scale.

However, it is of paramount importance to discuss the historical background of the World Conference on Muslim Education in order to understand the role and contribution of Syed Ali Ashraf to the Islamic education.

How was the first conference organized?

Seyd Ali Ashraf narrates: When Sehaikh Hassan Al-i- Shaikh, the Education Minister of Saudi Arabia, was returning from America, he was interviewed by some British journalists. The report that came out in the British paper was rather sarcastic. Al-i- Shaikh had talked to the journalists of expansion and modernization of education in Saudi Arabia and had asserted that the country as a whole was so

Islamic that this expansion of education would not erode the Islamic sensibility of the pupils. The journalists commented that this was a blinkered attitude produced by a mind not aware of modernization and still trying to adhere to an outmoded way of life.

It was this comment that prompted me, and my friend Dr. Motiur Rahman to write a letter to King Faisal, saying that unless steps were taken from now on, Saudi Arabia would fall into the same trap that Pakistan had fallen into. When Pakistan came into existence in 1947, the Education Minister of Pakistan Mr Fazlur Rahman invited all Muslim educationalists to give an Islamic character to the education system inherited from the British. The only solution suggested by them was the introduction of the teaching of *Islamiyat* (Islamic studies) as an obligatory subject at all levels of education. They had failed to see the basic anti-religious, secularist approach that governed all other branches of knowledge. Pakistani educationalists did not delve into the matter, and had accepted or adopted a superficial compromise.

Syed Ali Ashraf further contends, in the seventeen years that I had worked in Karachi University as a head of the Department of English, from 1956, I had seen the gradual erosion of the religious sensibility among the young, in spite of the obligatory teaching and learning of Islamic Studies at the undergraduate level.

Our letter was sent in April 1974.

After I joined King Abdul Aziz University Makkah, I showed a copy of that letter to Dr. Abdullah Omar Nasseef, who was then, Secretary General of the University. He put me in touch with Professor Muhammad Qutb. Then started our almost daily gathering at the flat of Professor Qutb, who brought in Professor Mubarak, a senior Syrian scholar. Professor Mubarak brought in Dr. Abdullah

Zaid, Head of the Department of Education. Professor brought in Dr. Hussain Hamed, the Head of the Post-Graduate Section of the Shariah Faculty of the Makkah branch of the University.

After detailed discussion, I was assigned to the task of preparing a memorandum and the total conference plan. Officially, Dr. Abdullah Omar Nasseef presented it to Dr. Abdo Yamani, the President of King Abdul Aziz University. This happened in March, 1975. Later on, at the convocation, Dr. Abdo Yamani suddenly announced that the First Conference on Muslim Education would be held soon. We persuaded Dr. Abdo to become the Chairman of the Organizing committee. Dr. Khoja was appointed as Vice-Chairman, myself and Dr. Abdullah Zaid, as Secretaries, Professor Qutb and Professor Munarak and a few others as a Members. The steering Committee was set up nearly six months after the setting up of the Organizing Committee.⁷⁷

After determining the basic principles of the conference including aims and objectives, selecting paper writers, formulation review committee, finalizing final reporting and recommendations, the First Conference on Muslim Education was held thanks to these dedicated Islamic scholars including Syed Ali Ashraf. And it was Syed Ali Ashraf who submitted to the follow up committee the proposal to hold three other conferences in order to set the entire ideal-real plan for the total educational reform.

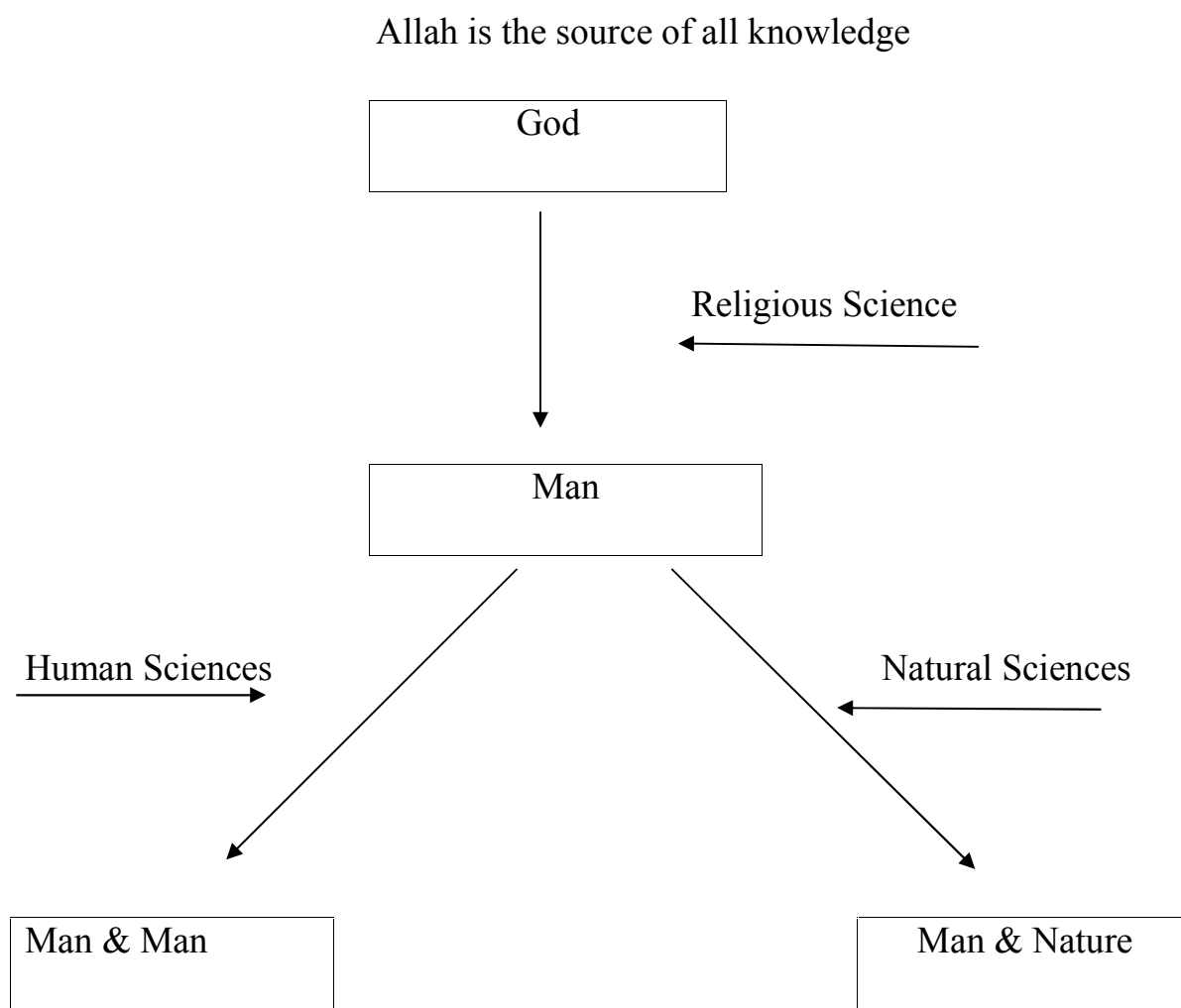
From the above mentioned narration, it is clear that organizing such a big conference on a relatively less common topic was not an easy task at all. And sooner after the Conference, the leaders of the Muslim countries had shown a positive attitude towards the idea. The first country to show their interest was

⁷⁷ Syed Ali Ashraf, *Islamic Education Movement An Historical Analysis*, Cambridge: Islamic Academy Cambridge, 1990, p.5-7

Pakistan. President Ziaul Haq of Pakistan had agreed to inaugurate the Second World Conference, and likewise President Zaiur Rahman of Bangladesh also agreed to inaugurate the Third one. Thus the Movement spread all over the world. It also led to the establishment of few important organizations such as Islamic Scientific, Educational, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and World Centre for Islamic Education. And for both the organizations, Syed Ali Ashraf was asked to prepare the constitution and budget and submit it to OIC.

The concept of Islamic university according to Syed Ali Ashraf

In order to elaborate the outline of an Islamic University, it is important to discuss Syed Ali Ashraf's view on the relationship of human being with Allah, nature and fellow human beings with regards to source of knowledge as human being is the central figure for whom education is planned. These relationships are shown below:



While establishing Islamic university, these three relations should be taken into consideration, and all branches of knowledge should be included under the framework of three divisions. Division of Religious Sciences can be established on

the basis of relationship between God and man. And it should oversee the other two divisions. On the basis of relation between man and man, Human Sciences division should be established. And finally, on the basis of relationship between man and nature, Natural Sciences division should be established.

According to Syed Ali Ashraf, the principal objective of Islamic university is to implement the process of Islamization in all branches of knowledge. He finds establishment of Islamic university is of paramount importance and therefore he provides a detail outline for this.

Prerequisites of the establishment of Islamic university: There are a number of issues that should be taken into consideration before establishment of an Islamic university so that the objective can be achieved. These are as follows:

A) Formulation of concept

Indeed, Islamic university cannot be established by means of provision of funds, rules and regulations, infrastructure or a good numbers of experts in different educational disciplines. Rather it depends on formulation of the concept of knowledge in the light of Quran and Sunnah by Islamic scholars. And the best way to do this is to establish centers and institutions in order to carry out comprehensive research on all branches of knowledge.

B) Faculty members

The faculty members of Islamic university should have high respect for Islam and its values. They should also be able to interpret the theories of different subjects and sciences from an Islamic perspective. Furthermore, they should be able to

enlighten the spirit and intellects of students. Selflessness, sincerity is also important elements of teaching learning profession.

C) Selection of students

The success of Islamic university depends on the quality of its students and their selection to large extent. Particularly they are living in a time when immorality and unethical practice became rife. Therefore, to them success in life lies in material gain not in personality and academic research. However, there are still a good number of students who follow the Islamic teachings despite many difficulties and obstacles.

Syed Ali Ashraf also suggests that the half of the total number of students should be from different Islamic country other than the students of the country where the university is located.

D) Administration

The chancellor of the university plays an important role in its development by innovative plan. The chancellor, therefore, should be chosen carefully who has vast familiarity with educational domain as well as with the idea of Islamization of knowledge. Likewise, the administrators should also be experts and dedicated Muslims in order to facilitate the Islamization process. Syed Ali Ashraf also suggests that the chancellor assume the responsibility for a long period until the age of retirement or, if it is not possible, for at least ten years. Further, he should be given the full freedom to make decisions within his jurisdiction in order to reach the ultimate goal of the university.

E) Planning for Islamization of Knowledge

The core objective of the establishment of Islamic university is to Islamize all branches of knowledge along with teaching method. Students, therefore, should be trained from the beginning intellectually so that it will inculcate a sense of high respect of Quran and the Prophet (PBUH) among them. In traditional system, a child learn Islamic knowledge based on the method that had been continuing from the time of Prophet (PBUH) and Muslims all over the world have accepted it overwhelmingly. As for the other knowledge, there is necessity for verification and Islamization.

F) Curriculum

An Islamic university requires a curriculum based on the knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah as principal source of knowledge and therefore in formulation of curriculum process a group of Islamic scholars should be involved alongside the curriculum committee so that they will be able to formulate a curriculum which is connected to the basic knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah.

The focal point of the development of the curriculum, from Islamic point of view, is the principal of *tawhid* as the concept of curriculum which is developed under the Catholicism and influenced by different philosophies does not match with the Islamic principles.

G) Establishment of institutes

Islamic university can be established as an institute initially which will recruit students for advanced study in all disciplines. Then a group of exemplary students would be chosen based on their desire for this kind of ideas. And this requires the following things:

1. To establish model institutes in elementary and secondary levels.
2. To formulate an integrated curriculum for those levels.
3. To prepare syllabus and study materials.

H) Teachers training

The university cannot provide education without establishing a proper teaching methodology. In fact, it is not the subject rather the way the subject is taught would help to implement the idea of the university in every branches of knowledge.

The Islamic scholars put emphasis on the importance of teaching methodology in the past. Ibn Khaldon has explained in his *Muqaddimah* (prolegomena) a unique teaching methodology.

Islamic university vs. western university

An Islamic university is different from a Western university because of the difference of the concept of knowledge between the two. The first Islamic institution was established first in Madina by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which provided complete education inculcating spirituality and Islamic virtues among students through which they achieved the objective of education.

As for the Western universities, they had gone through different phases. Bertrand Russell describes the Western universities are transforming to the situation which is similar to the Medieval period as the universities became like a training institution of different professions such as law medicine etc and the high emphasis is given to technical subjects compared to liberal education. And this reality is also true in universities of Muslim countries.

Recommendation regarding curriculum

Syed Ali Ashraf thinks Islamization should begin from very early stage of learning i.e. elementary and should continue to tertiary level. And in order to do so, a comprehensive curriculum is needed which will facilitate the Islamization process. Therefore, he suggests some core subjects for grade nine and ten for the Model School of Islamic university. These are as follows:

1. Lesson of the Qquran
2. Lesson of the Hadith
3. *Fiqh & Usulul fiqh* (jurisprudence & principles of jurisprudence)
4. Arabic Language
5. Urdu
6. Social Sciences
7. Islamic History
8. English language
9. General Sciences
10. A subject from a wide range of industry, mechanics, electricity, wood industry, commerce and agriculture.

The elective subjects are considered very important particularly in country where employment opportunity is very limited. It will enable students to lead a decent life.

Middle section

The following subjects can be added to middle section:

A) Mandatory

1. Tafsir

2. Hadith
3. *Fiqh & Usulul fiqh* (jurisprudence & principles of jurisprudence)
4. Arabic language
5. English language
6. Urdu

B) Elective

1. General Sciences
2. Economics
3. Philosophy
4. Islamic History
5. Social Sciences
6. Another subject that suits student's interest.

In middle section more focus should be given to religious studies. Teachers need to help students think critically while teaching the Quran, Hadith and Fiqh.

As for bachelor level, the following are recommended:

A) Mandatory

1. *Tafsir & usulu tafsir*
2. Hadith & its sciences
3. *Fiqh & Usulul fiqh* (jurisprudence & principles of jurisprudence)
4. Islamic History
5. Arabic Language
6. Functional English Language

B) Elective (1):

Any one subject from the following:

- Philosophy

- Economics
- *Ilm al-kalam* (scholastic theology)
- Advanced Arabic language
- Advanced English language
- Advanced Urdu
- Elective (2)

Any two subjects from the following:

- Natural sciences
- Chemistry
- Mathematics
- Biology

Syed Ali Ashraf emphasis here on the importance of establishing relation among all disciplines as well as with the principles of tawhid. The calcification of knowledge into Islamic studies, humanities and sciences would result in divination among different branches of knowledge from Islamic point of view. It is required to go back to the idea of unity of knowledge in all academic institutions.

As for Master's level, the main focus should be given to Islamic studies and there should be different departments for different Islamic subjects such as Quran, Hadith, Fiqh, Arabic language, Islamic History etc. Like the previous levels the interdisciplinary coordination should be maintained. Along with three given subjects, students have to complete a Master's thesis consist of 70 to 100 pages.⁷⁸

Establishment of Darul Ihsan University

One of the remarkable achievements of Syed Ali Ashraf was the establishment of Darul Ihsan University in Dhaka. It was an attempt to implement the idea of faith based education which was discussed in the World Muslim Education Conference in Makkah. It is regarded as a stepping stone towards Islamization of knowledge.

Darul Ihsan University is completely different from any other university by virtue of the fact that it tries to demonstrate that modern education also can be taught

⁷⁸ Syed Ali Ashraf, *The Concept of Islamic University*, tr. Dr. Abdul Hamid Muhammad ,Jeddah:Al-Kharibi, *Sharikat Ukkaj*, 1983, p. 85-89

from faith based education system through which a man can become a complete man and our offspring can get rid of the grips of secularism.⁷⁹

In 1988, an international curriculum committee has been formed by Bangladesh Islamic Academy which was sponsored by Muslim World League of Makkah. Syed Ali Ashraf was the President of the committee. The other members of the committee were National Professor Syed Ali Ahsan, Dr. Aiub Ali, Dr. Mustafizur Rahman, Dr. Hashim Mahadi, Sheikh Burhan Uddin, Dr. Abul Hasn al-Nadwi. Darul Ihsan Trust has hold fifteen consecutive meetings in Dhaka and formulated a complete curriculum from Islamic perspective. In order to implement this curriculum, an institute has been set up in 1989 called “Institute of higher Islamic Studies”. In 1989 the first meeting of the governing committee of the institute was held. Then President Hossain Muhammad Ershad has inaugurated the first campus of Darul Ihsan University in Savar, Dhaka.⁸⁰

Then in 1990, Darul Ihsan University has been established as the first private university in the country. Subsequently it has been recognized by the government of Bangladesh in 1993.

Structure of the university

Faculty of Religious Sciences: This faculty is based on the concept of man’s relation with God as discussed in above chapter. The followings are the departments of the faculty:

- A) Department of Islamic Studies and Da’wa: It offers BA (Hons) and MA. The former Dean of the Faculty of the Religious Science Dr. Badruddin was the founder Chairman of this Department. It used to offer a Diploma in Islamic Studies.
- B) Department of Arabic Language and Literature: The Department was established in 2002. Dr. Ihsanullah Miah was the founder Chairmen of the Department.

⁷⁹Board of Editors, *Borenno*, Dhaka, Darul Ihsan University, 1999, p 181

⁸⁰MM. Raich Uddin, *Life & Work, Syed Ali Ashraf*, an unpublished PhD thesis submitted to the Department of Islamic Studies, University of Rajshahi, , 2007, p. 80-81.

Faculty of Human Sciences: The followings are the departments of this faculty:

- A) Department of English Language and Literature: it offers BA and MA. Professor Dr. A.K. M. Muhiuddin was the founder chairman of the Department.
- B) Department of Business Studies: Dr. Md. Abbas Ali was the founder chairman of the department. He was also the Dean of the Faculty of the Human Sciences.
- C) Department of Library and Information Science: it was established in 2003.

Faculty of Natural Sciences: the followings are the departments of this faculty:

- A) Department of Computer Science and Engineering
- B) Department of Information and Technology

Dr. Md. Alam was the founder Dean of the Faculty of the Natural Sciences.

In addition to the over mentioned programs, the university also offers Bachelor of Arts in Education (B. Ed) and Masters of Arts in Education (M.Ed.).

Regarding the B. Ed and M.Ed. course, Syed Ali Ashraf contents that the nature of our programs and that of Dhaka University is quite similar. We, however, teach educational theories from an Islamic point of view, as well as discuss the Islamic concept of education. In the teachers training colleges of Bangladesh, they only teach the history of education in India, whereas in our university we cover world history of education and its evolution. So that it will broaden students' outlook. We also focus on relation between values and education. Therefore, our students would get rid of the influence of secularism and a society can be built on the universal values.⁸¹

⁸¹ Ibid, p 83-85

Establishment of model school and madrasa under Darul Ihsan University

Syed Ali Ashraf established a model school and a madrasas. Concerning the objectives of school and madrasa, Syed Ali Ashraf says: since we want to implement a new educational system, we established the Drul Ihsan Model School. And for this school we have prepared new English books for the students of five years to twelve years. They also learn Islamic Studies and Arabic with Egyptian teachers.

As for the madrasa, students are expected to memorize the Quran from the age of seven to twelve. Alongside memorization, they also study Arabic, Bengali, Mathematics and English. From twelve to nineteen, they will complete *Alim* (Higher Secondary level in Bangladesh). Here we follow the curriculum of Al-Azhar. The system of our education is recognized by Al-Azhar, and therefore, after completion of *Alim*, they can directly enter to Al-Azhar University.⁸²

⁸² Ibid, p 86

Chapter: 6

Concluding remarks

We would like to cite Muhiuddin Khan's⁸³ remark here as it precisely articulates the significance of Syed Ali Ashraf's work in a single sentence. He says

He has ushered in a vast world of endeavor and struggle. However, we can assess the extent of the loss of the nation by the death of such a leader only when we see all the activities initiated by him would start languishing gradually because of the lack of his wise guidance⁸⁴.

Undoubtedly we see the reflection of Muhiuddin Khan's remark in recent times. However, it is the duty of the Muslim Ummah to carry out his mission in order to reach the destination he used to envisage particularly the implementation of Islamization in the realm of education. It is also the ummah's responsibility to present his ideas and contribution to the world, and to do so more academic research is required. Unfortunately, not much systematic effort has been made to analyze his work, and this is why he is not discussed widely compared to other scholars in the field of Islamization of Knowledge despite his massive efforts and contribution. In addition to these, his personal interest in spiritual path and his influence over a large number of individuals is also a significant aspect of his life which is still discussed by some of his followers and relatives including Dr. Ali Rumman⁸⁵ who shared a few inspiring ideas regarding his spiritual life.

Therefore, we humbly request the young researchers to carry out further meticulous research on different aspects of Syed Ali Ashraf's life in order for the Muslim ummah to benefit from his ideas and thoughts. It will also inspire the ummah to establish new educational institutions all over the globe to implement the idea of Islamization as Syed Ali Ashraf and his fellow scholars used to envisage and attempted by establishment of Darul Ihsan University in Dhaka, International

⁸³ A prominent Islamic scholar of Bangladesh who is commonly known as the editor of *Mashik Madina* a leading Islamic magazine in the country. He also served as a member of the World Muslim League for a long period.

⁸⁴ Muhiuddin Khan, *Borenya*, Dhaka: Darul Ihsan University, 1999, p.100

⁸⁵ Nephew of Syed Ali Ashraf who shared some significant incidents of his spiritual life in a personal discussion with him on his residence at Wari Dhaka on 12 / 08 / 2016.

Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization in Malaysia, and International Institute of Islamic Thought in the USA.

PartTwo:
Syed Naqib Al-Attas

Chapter: 1

Biography

“Professor Syed Muhammad Naqib Al-Attas is a prominent Muslim philosopher and thinker from Malaysia. He is one of the few contemporary scholars who is thoroughly rooted in the traditional Islamic sciences and who is equally competent in theology, philosophy, metaphysics, history and literature. He is considered to be the pioneer in proposing the idea of Islamization of knowledge. Al-Attas’ philosophy and methodology of education have one goal: Islamization of the mind, body and soul, and its effects on the personal and collective life on Muslims as well as others, including the spiritual and nonhuman environment.”⁸⁶

Syed Muhammad Naqib bin Ali bin Abdullah bin Muhsian al-Attas was born on 5 September 1931 in Bogor⁸⁷, Java⁸⁸. His genealogical tree can be authentically traced over a thousand years through the *Ba’Alawi sayyids* of Hadaramaut and all the way back to the imam Hossain, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The official *nasab* of al-Attas family in his collection shows that he is separated from the Prophet (PBUH) thirty seven generations.⁸⁹ His earlier illustrious ancestors include saints, scholars and savants, one of whom, from his maternal side, was Syed Muhammad al-‘Aydarus, the teacher and spiritual guide of Syed Abu Hafs ‘Umar ba Syaiban of Hadaramaut, who initiated one of the most prominent scholars in the Malaya world, Nur al-Din al-Raniri into the Rafiyyah order. Syed Muhammad Naqib’s mother Sharifah Raquan al- ‘Aydarus, from her maternal side, come from Bogor, Java, and was a descendent of the Sundanese royal family of Sukapura. His parental grandfather, Syed Abdullah bin Muhsin bin Muhammad al-Attas was a saint from Java whose influence was not confined only to Indonesia but extended to Arabia as well. One of his disciples, Syed Hasan

⁸⁶ See <http://casistudentssociety.blogspot.com/2011/02/architects-of-islamic-civilization-syed.html>

⁸⁷ Bogor is a city in the west Java province, Indonesia. Located 60 kilometers south from the national capital of Jakarta. Bogor is an important economic, scientific, cultural, and tourist center as well as a mountain resort.

⁸⁸ Java is an Island of Indonesia. It is home to 56.7 percent of the population of Indonesia, and the most populous island on the earth. The Indonesian capital city is located on western Java. Much of Indonesian history took place in Java.

⁸⁹ Wan Daud, Wan Mohd Nor, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Naqib Al-Attas An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1998, p 1, (foot note: 2)

Fad'ak was the religious advisor to Amir Faisal, brother of king Abdullah of Jordan, and a contemporary of the famous Lawrence of Arabia. His paternal grandmother, Ruqayah Hanun, a Turkish lady of aristocratic lineage, was married to Ungku Abdul Majid, the younger brother of Sultan Abu Bakar of Johore, while her sister Khadijah was married to the Sultan himself, and became the Queen of Johore. When Ungku Abdul Majid passed away, leaving two sons, Ruqayah married Syed Abdullah al-Attas and later gave birth to their only child, Syed Ali Attas, the father of Syed Muhammad Nqib al-Attas.

Syed Naqib Al-Attas is the middle child among three siblings. His elder brother was Syed Hussein.⁹⁰ And younger brother is Syed Zaid, who is a chemical engineer and the founder lecturer at MARA Institute of Technology.

His early life and education

Family background shaped positively Syed Naqib Al-Attas' basic education. From the family in Bogor, he received education in Islamic science, while from his family in Johore he developed the foundation for Malaya language and literature, and culture. This nurtured in Al-Attas an exquisite style and precise vocabulary that were unique to his Malaya writings.

At the age of five, his parents sent him to Johore for formal primary education, at Ngee Primary School (1936-1941), during which period he stayed with his uncle Ahmad, and later with his aunt Azizah, children of Ruqayah Hnun and Dato Jaafar bin Hajj Muhammad, the first chief Minister of modern Johore during the Japanese occupation of Malaya. Syed Naqib then return to Java to continue his education at madrasah *Al-Wuthaqa -i- Wutaqa* (1941- 1945). After Second World War, he returned to Johore to continue his education, first at Bukit Zahrah School, and then at English College (1964- 1951). During this period he lived with his uncle Ungku Abdul Aziz bin Ungku Abdul Majid who was the sixth Chief Minister of Johore.

⁹⁰ Syed Hussein (1928- 2007) was academician, socialist, founder of many social science organizations. He was the vice-Chancellor of the University of Malaya in the 1980s. He also served as the Head of the Department of Malaya Studies at the National University of Singapore form 1967 to 1988. He has authored many books on corruption, multiracialism, imperialism, and intellectual captivity as part of colonial and postcolonial project. His key publications include *the Myth of the Lazi Native* (1977), *Corruption* in Oxford Companion to Word Politics, New York (1993), *Reflections on the Theories of Religion* (1963), *Intellectuals in Developing Societies* (1977),

Ungku Abdul Aziz kept a good library of Malaya manuscripts primarily on Malaya literary and historical subjects. Syed Naqib Al-Attas spent much of his time reading and pondering over these manuscripts on history, literature, and religion as well as on Western classic in English that were available in the collection of other family members. His involvement in the manuscript in those formative years made a lasting and important impression on his life. He has in his personal collection to this day several Arabic and Malaya manuscripts which are not even listed in Van Ronkel's Catalogue. Some of these include *Rislatu -I- Ahadiyyah* or also known as *Rislatu I- Ajwibah*, attributed to Ibn Al- Arabi, the *al- Thufat al – Mursalah ila n-Nabi* by Fadl Abdullah al-Burhanpuri, and treaties by Wali Raslan al- Dimashqi. The manuscript of Burhanpuri in Malaya which is thought to have been lost; the only available copy of such a work is the Javanese translation of the Malaya text.

Upon completion of his secondary education in 1951, Al-Attas entered the Malay Regiment as Cadet Officer. Then he was elected by the British High Commissioner of Malaya General Sir Gerald Templer for military education first at Eton Hall, Chester, Wales, then at the Roil Military Academy, Sandhurst, England (1952-1955). There he developed a keener understanding of the spirit and style of an influential segment of the British society. While at Sandhurst, he also developed lasting friendship with colleagues, one of whom is Sharif Zayed Bin Shakir of Jordon, a cousin of king Hossein who became Chief of the Jordanian Armed Forces and later Prime Minister of Jordan.

Al- Attas traveled extensively to many parts of the Europe, especially Spain, and to North Africa where the Islamic intellectual, artistic and architectural heritage left a lasting impression on his mind. It was in North Africa then he met Moroccan leaders who were struggling for independence from the French and the Spaniards such as Alah al- Fasi, Al- Mahdi, Bennouna, and Sidi Abdullah Gannoun al-Hasni. It is significant to note that it was while at Sandhurst that Al-Attas firstt became drawn to metaphysics of the Sufis, particularly as expounded in the works of Jami which he found in the library of the Academy.

After graduating from Sandhurst, Al-Attas received the King's Commission to serve as an officer in the Roil Malaya Regiment, Federation of Malaya, where he saw active duty against the Communist terrorist in the Malayan jangle. Yet his strong desire for learning and scholarly involvement necessitated his voluntarily resigning from the Commission to study at the University of Malay in Singapore from 1957-1959.

While still an undergraduate at the University of Malaya, he wrote two books. The first is *Rangkaian Ruba'iyat*, a literary work that was among the first ever published in 1959 by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur. The second is now the classic work, *some aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practiced Among the Malays*, later published by the Malaysian Sociological Institute in 1963. To gather the necessary materials, he travelled throughout the country and met all the important Sufi leaders to enquire about their respective doctrines and to observe their practices. Largely because of the merit of his later book, the Canadian Government awarded Al-Attas in 1959 the coveted Canada Council Fellowship for an unprecedented three consecutive years to study at the Institute of Islamic Studies founded by Wilfred Chantwell Smith at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. (1960). There he became acquainted with several noble scholars such as Sir Hamilton Gibb from England, Fazlur Rahman from Pakistan, Toshihiko Izutsu from Japan and Syed Hossein Nasr from Iran. Based on his thesis entitled "Raniri and the Wujudiyah of 17th Century Aceh", he was awarded the M.A. degree with distinction in Islamic philosophy in 1962. A year later, with the encouragement of eminent scholars and orientalist such as Professor A. J. Arberry of Cambridge, Sir Mortimer Wheeler of British Academy and Sir Richard Winstedt also of British Academy and president of the Royal Asiatic Society, Al-Attas transferred his doctoral studies to the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. There he worked with Professor Arberry and Dr. Martin Lings. His two volume doctoral thesis on *the mysticism of Hamza Fnasuri*, which is the most important and comprehensive to date on one of the greatest and perhaps the most controversial Sufi scholar in the Malaya world, earned him the PhD. degree with distinction from that institution in 1965. It is worth mentioning that Al-Attas was very active in correcting the misinterpretations of Islam and spreading its genuine message, so much so that, with the grace and guidance, several people have embraced Islam.

On his return to Malaysia in 1965, as among the first few Malaysians to hold the degree of the Doctorate of Philosophy, and the first from the University of London, Dr. Al-Attas was appointed as Head of the Division of Literature in the Department of Malaya Studies at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. From 1968 to 1970, he became the Dean of the Faculty of Arts at that University where he reformed the academic structure of the Faculty, requiring each department to plan and organize its academic activities in consultation with each other, rather than independently, as had hitherto was the practice. He was also the leading voice that

was directly responsible for the implementation of Malaya as the language of the instruction in the Faculty and the University despite intense opposition from the majority of the lecturers, then mostly expatriates. He was also responsible for the conceptualization of the original philosophical basis of the University as well as the establishment of the Faculties of the Science and Islamic Studies. In the same year, as the head of the Department of Malaya Language and Literature, he proposed a new concept and method of studying Malaya language, literature and culture, such that the role and influence of Islam and its true relationship with other indigenous regional and international languages and cultures would be properly studied.

His academic achievements

Syed Naqib Al-Attas is regarded as a versatile man. He is competent in several academic areas including theology, philosophy and mysticism, history and literature and had contributed to original and authoritative works of significance particularly in the field of Islamic and Malaya civilizations. He is also a skilled calligrapher and his work has been exhibited at the Tropen Museum in Amsterdam in 1954. He published three *basmallah* renditions on a living subject (kingfisher, 1070; chanticleer, 1972; fish, 1980) in some of his books. He also designed the building of International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in 1991, the unique scroll of the Al-Ghazali Chair in 1993, the auditorium and the Mosque of ISTAC, as well as their landscaping and interior decoration, imbuing them with a unique Islamic traditional and cosmopolitan character. Numerous local and foreign scholars have visited ISTAC and expressed their admiration the serious and contemplative mode of ISTAC, including Gulzer Haider, a well-known Professor of architecture from Carleton University of Canada, and Professor Syyed Hossein Nasr of George Washington University.

Al-Attas has won numerous international recognition by orientalist and scholars of Islam and Malaya civilizations. For instance, he chaired the panel on Islam in Southeast Asia at the 29th *Congress International des Orientalists* in Paris in 1975, he was conferred Fellow of the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, whose other fellows include eminent scholars such as Professor Henri Corbin, Syyed Hossein Nasr, and Toshihiko Izustu. He was a Principal Consultant to the World of Islam Festival held in London in 1976, and was speaker and delegate in the International Islamic Conference held concurrently at the same place. He was

also a speaker and active participant at the First World Conference on Islamic Education held in Mecca in 1977, where he chaired the Committee on Aim and Definition of Islamic Education. From 1976 to 1977 he was a Visiting Professor at Temple University in Philadelphia. In 1978, he chaired the UNESCO meeting of experts on Islamic History held at Aleppo Syria, and in the following year the President of Pakistan, General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq, conferred upon him the Iqbal Centenary Commemorative Medal.

Al-Attas has attended and chaired important sessions at numerous international congresses organized by UNESCO and other academic bodies. He occupies a position of intellectual eminence in his country as the first holder of the Chair of Malaya Language and Literature at the National University of Malaysia, and as the first holder of the Tun Abdul Razak Chair of Southeast Asian Studies at Ohio University, USA, and as the Founder Director of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (since 1987). He has delivered more than 400 lectures throughout Europe, the United States, Japan, and the Far East, and the Muslim World. In 1993, in recognition of his many important and far-reaching contributions to contemporary Islamic thought, Datu Seri Anwar Ibrahim, as the Chairman of ISTAC and the President of the International Islamic University of Malaysia, appointed Al-Attas as the first holder of the Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali Chair of Islamic Thought at ISTAC. King Hussein of Jordan made him a member of the Roil Academy Jordan in 1994. In June 1995, the University of Khartoum conferred upon him the degree of Honorary Doctorate of Arts (D.Litt).

Apart from many formal activities, he also inspired numerous Muslim youth in Malaysia, and founded different organizations such as Islamic Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM), and Muslim Writers' Association of Malaysia (GAPIM).⁹¹

⁹¹ Most of Al-Attas' biography was taken from Wan Daud's *The Educational Philosophy* as well as some web sites in the internet such as salaam.co.uk.

His publications

A. Books and monographs

Al-Attas has written 27 books and monographs in English and Malaya, many of which have been translated into other languages such as Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Malayalam, Indonesian, French, German, Russian, Bosnian, Japanese, Hindi, Korean and Albanian.

The most recent list of his publications is as follow:

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2. *Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practiced among the Malays*, Malaysian Sociological Institute, Singapore, 1963.
3. *Raniri and the Wujudiyah of 17th Century Aceh*, Monograph of the Roil Asiatic Society, Malaysian Branch, No. 111, Singapore, 1966.
4. *The Origin of the Malaya Sha'ir*, DBP, Kuala Lumpur, 1968.
5. *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malaya-Indonesian Archipelago*, DBP, Kuala Lumpur. 1969.
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9. *Islam Dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu* (Islam in Malaya History and Culture), Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1972. Partly translated into Russian and French with a version in Indonesian.
10. *Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslimin* (Message to the Muslims), unpublished type-written monograph, 286 pp, dated Feb-March 1973.
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12. *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM), Kuala Lumpur, 1976. Trans. into Korean, Japanese, and Turkish.
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22. *The Intuition of Existence*, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1990. Trans into Persian.
23. *On Quiddity and Essence*, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1990. Trans into Persian.
24. *The Meaning and experience of Happiness in Islam*, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1993. Trans into Arabic, Turkish and German.
25. *The Degree of Existence*, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1994. Trans into Persian.
26. *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1995. Trans into Russian.
27. *Historical Facts and Fiction*, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), 2011.

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1. Note on the Opening of Rationales between Malaya and China, JMBRAS, vol. 38, pt, 1, Singapore, 1965.
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Chapter: 2

Syed Naqib Al-Attas' view on education

Prior to discuss Syed Naqib Al-Attas' idea on education, it is important to shed light on some the key remarks regarding the crisis in Muslim education which are meant to remind us of what we might have forgotten in the way of methodology and the correct application of linguistic symbols.

According to Syed Naqib Al-Attas, language is an important element with regard to the idea of Islamization as he defines it as follows

Islamization is the liberation of man from magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural tradition, and then from secular control over his reason and his language.⁹²

In my humble estimation, Syed Naqib Al-Attas was the first one to coin the term “Islamization of language” as Arabic language which is the language of Islam had undergone a rapid process of corruption at the time of the revelation of the Quran and the advent of Islam. In fact the revelation of the Quran in Arabic caused a revolution in the language. The Arabic of the Quran sounded strange and completely magical to the *Jahili* (The Arab populous at the time of the revelation of the Quran) minds. Although the words casts were the same as they knew them before, yet now they no longer serve to describe the semantic fields in the vocabulary known to them. One example of this is the word *karim* كريم , which was a key term in the *Jahili* vocabulary and which as such meant nobility of lineage which went hand in hand with generosity. For the *Jahili*, the concept of *karam* كرم was very much the contrary of *bukhl* . The Quran, however, altered the semantic field of *karam* as known to *jahili* , and made it to denote *taqwa* تقوى which is completely unknown to them. Although the words used in the Quran are the same as those used in pre-Islamic times, the concept they project and the role they play in the framework of the semantic vocabulary did not evolve from the *jahili* worldview.

⁹² Syed Naqib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education* Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1999, p. 45

The scientific nature of Arabic language

Allah says

ولقد يسرنا القرآن للذكر فهل من مدكر؟

We made the Quran easier to learn. Does any of you wish to learn⁹³?

Since the Quran is regarded the main source of knowledge, and was revealed in Arabic, it therefore is safe from all kinds of deviation both in terms of language and theme as Allah has declared in the Quran itself. Syed Naqib Al-Attas further elaborates:

When God, Glorious and Most Exalted, says that the holy Quran in Arabic contains no crookedness (قرآنا عربيا غير ذي عوج لعلهم يتقون) , what is implied with reference to the language is that since the Holly Quran is the fountain of the true knowledge, the linguistic form through which that knowledge flows and by which it is made to flow, must also be of such a nature that it too is not susceptible of crookedness عوج that is, of deviations from the 'straight' قيم course , from the right meanings that convey truth directly, without swerving elsewhere, without distortion.⁹⁴

Languages are vulnerable to semantic change due to the vicissitudes of history and society. As such language presents no guarantee of scientific precision with respect to meaning. However, with respect to Arabic language, it does not belong to the same category insofar as its semantic structure is concerned. This is because of the fact that its linguistic structure is established upon a firm system of roots; and its semantic structure is governed by a clearly defined system of semantic fields that determine the conceptual structures ; and that its words, meanings and grammar has been scientifically recorded so as to maintain semantic permanence.

Arabs, on the other hand, made tremendous efforts to preserve their language from the earliest period of Islam and Muslim lexicologists as Syed Naqib

⁹³ Al-Qamar :17

⁹⁴ Syed Naqib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education* Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1999 p 2

Al-Attas contents that the Arabs were the first people to in the history of mankind to compile lexicons, pertaining to their language.

For an uninterrupted period of over 1000 years, from the time of Ibn Abbas down to about 200 years to our present time learned Muslims have labored and produced voluminous lexicons, some extending to more than 20 volumes, and some intended to extend to more than 60 volumes, in order to preserve purity and authoritative meaning in Arabic. Some of the exclaimed lexicons that were compiled after *hijrah* include the *Kitab Al-Ayn of al-Khalil*, the *Jamharah of Ibn Durayd*, the *Tahdib of al-Azhari*, the *Muhit of Ibn Abbad*, the *Mujmal of Ibn Faris*, the *Sihah of al- Jawhari*, the *Jami of al-Qazzaz*, the *Muab of Ibn Tamam*, the *Muhkam of Ibn Sayyidih*, the *Asas of al-Zamakhshari*, the *Mughrib of al- Mutarizi*, the *Ubab of al- Saghani*, the *Lisan al- Arab of Ibn Manzur*, the *Tahdhib al- Tahdhib of al- Tanukhi*, the *Misbah of al- Fayyumi*, the *Mughni of Ibn Hisham*, the *Qamus* and the *Lami of al-Fayruzabadi*, and the *Taj al- Arus of al- Zabidi*.

Al-Attas futher says

During this time, then, the process of testing the authenticity of the meaning, and of establishing the highest authorities with respect to Arabic language was already underway; and by the second century after *Hijrah*, the methodological division into four groups, designed to determine and establish authentic authorities on all aspects of Arabic language, such as the *Jahili*, the *Mukhadraman*, the *Islami*, and the *Muwallad*, was completed.⁹⁵

The above mentioned discussion would help us to realize that the efforts recording the meanings and uses of the Arabic-Islamic vocabulary for an uninterrupted period spanning over a thousand years from the earliest period of Islam is a clear testimony of the scientific nature of that language that defines reality and truth according to the worldview of Islam which guarantee semantic precision and permanence. Indeed, it was because of the scientific nature of the structure of the language that the science of exegesis and commentary (tafsir- تفسیر) became possible.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p 3

The semantic field in the context of Islam

The semantic field, as Syed Naqib Al-Attas explains, is the field of meaning within which the conceptual structure symbolized by a central word or term is described. A semantic field usually overlaps other such fields, so that the inherent conceptual structure is interrelated with other such structures which is governed by the Quranic worldview. The word must be correctly applied within the context of its semantic field, its field of meaning that governs its usages and that bears considerable influence on other fields of meaning that overlap upon each other.

Al-Jahiz has given an example of this in his *kitab al-Bukhala*, where he described the concept of greed or miserliness (*bukhl*). In defining this concept, he progressively settled the limits within which the word *bakhil* is applied: it is a word that is generally applicable to animal species; and among the animal species, to man alone, and among the mankind, to the male; and among the male, to the mature; and among the mature, to the sane; and among the sane, to the wealthy—and so on.⁹⁶

As for the non-Arabic language of Muslim peoples, the same process of Islamization was effected in the conceptual and semantic network; and in order that the Islamized conceptual and semantic network become an established principal in governing authentic and authoritative meaning and correct usage, as well as, in projecting Islamic worldview, each language of Muslim people has been infused with Islamic basic vocabularies. And, by Islamic vocabulary, as Syed Naqib Al-Attas say, is not meant all the Arabic words arranged in alphabetical order as in a dictionary; it is meant rather to signify all the Arabic terms that are interrelated in meaningful pattern, projecting a worldview that is distinctly Quranic.

Further, he introduces another concept called Islamic language, that there is such a thing as Islamic language. Language that can be categorized as Islamic does exist in the common Islamic basic vocabulary inherent in each of them, the key terms and concepts in the basic vocabulary of each of them ought indeed to convey the same meanings, since they are all involved in the same conceptual and semantic network. Therefore, semantic precision with regard to the application of

⁹⁶ Ibid, p 7

the Islamic key terms and concepts is of paramount importance, For instance, the term *ilm* , which is a major key terms in the basic vocabulary of all Islamic languages, conveys different connotations in each member of the family of Islamic languages, caused by confusion and ignorance due the loss of *adab* which undermines spiritual and intellectual authority; and to the infusion of alien concepts which causes displacements in the network of semantic fields and conceptual relations. Many major key terms in the Islamic basic vocabulary of the languages of Muslim peoples have been displaced, which is causing the confusion of Muslim minds and what Syed Naqib Al-Attas designates as *deislamization* of language. The difficulty of the problem is that it is not simply a matter of language, but a matter of worldview. Semantic confusion as a result of misapplication of key concepts in the Islamic vocabulary can affect our perception of the Islamic worldview. The concept of education is one of the key concepts in the Islamic basic vocabulary which is now connoted by the term *tarbiyah*(تربية) .

The concept of education according to Al-Attas

Before we discuss the Islamic view point regarding Islam, we would like to shed light on another concept which is center to education and educational process, namely the concept of *adab* (أدب).

Adab as Syed Naqib Al-Attas defines it as recognition and acknowledgement of the reality that knowledge and being are ordered hierarchically according to their various grades and degrees of rank, and of one's proper place in relation to that reality and to one's physical, intellectual, and spiritual capacities and potentials.⁹⁷

Recognition here means discovering the proper place in relation to what is recognized; and acknowledgement means concomitant action (*amal*) resulting from discovering the proper place in relation to what is recognized. Recognition alone without acknowledgement is mere arrogance. Likewise acknowledgement alone without recognition is mere ignorance. For Islam, there is no worthwhile

⁹⁷ Ibid, p 27

knowledge without action accompanying it, nor worthwhile action without knowledge guiding it.

As *adab* refers to recognition and acknowledgment of the right and proper place, its actualization in one and in society as a whole reflects the condition of justice⁹⁸. Justice itself is a reflection of wisdom (*hikmah*)⁹⁹. The condition of being in the proper place is justice; and *adab* is the method of knowing by which the condition of being in the proper place is actualized. *Adab*, therefore, is also the reflection of wisdom; and in respect to society *adab* is the just order within it.

On the other hand, *adab* in the original basic sense is the inviting to a banquet. The idea of a banquet implies that the host is a of honor and prestige and that the people present are those who in the host's estimation are deserving the honor of the invitation, and they are therefore, people of refined qualities and upbringings who are expected to behave as befits their station, in speech conduct and etiquette. In the same sense that the enjoyment of the fine food in a banquet is greatly enhanced by noble and gracious company, and the food be partaken of in accordance with the rules of refined conduct, behavior and etiquette, so is knowledge to be extolled and enjoyed, and approached by means of conduct as befits its lofty nature. Knowledge is analogically the food and life of the soul. In virtue of this, *adab* also means the discipline the mind and soul; it is to perform the correct as against the erroneous action, of right against wrong.

So what is the correlation between invitation of banquet and knowledge and education which is the focal point of the current discussion? Syed Naqib Al-Attas answers:

The analogy of invitation to banquet to partake of fine food, and to knowledge to imbue the intellect and soul with sustenance from it is significantly and profoundly expressed in a hadith narrated by Ibn Mas'ud, may God be pleased with him:

⁹⁸ Justice (*adl*) عدل means a harmonious condition of things being in their right or proper place.

⁹⁹ Wisdom (*hikmah*) means the knowledge by God, by which the recipient is able to effect the correct judgment as to the proper place of things.

إن هذا القرآن مأدبة الله في الأرض فتعلموا من مأدبته¹⁰⁰

The Holy Quran is God's invitation to a spiritual banquet on earth, and we are exhorted to partake of it by means of acquiring real knowledge of it. Ultimately, real knowledge of it is the testing of its true flavor and man receive spiritual knowledge and wisdom from God by direct insight, the experience of which almost simultaneously unveils the reality and truth of the matter of his spiritual vision (*kshaf*).¹⁰¹

So, from the foregoing discussion, the conceptual connection between the term *adab* and knowledge is established. Moreover, it is also clear that Syed Naqib Al-Attas puts emphasis on *adab* which, to him, is the more appropriate to denote education rather than *ta'lim* that will be discussed in the upcoming chapters. And it is necessary to demonstrate the connection between *adab* and knowledge as without grasping the term properly it is difficult to understand the concept of education from Islamic perspective. It is also understood from the definition of *adab* that the faculty of recognition and acknowledgement as manifested in man's covenant with God even before he assumed physical form. When man was asked by his God ألمست بركم؟ Am I not your lord? He affirmed by yea.... بلى (*bala*) through his intellectual power of speech.

However, it also important to know the application of term *tarbiyah* to denote education in our current time. As mentioned earlier that there are some semantic confusion in the term *tarbiyah* as a result of misapplication of key concepts in the Islamic vocabulary can affect our perception of the Islamic worldview. That is why Syed Naqib Al-Attas put emphasis on the proper application of the Islamic vocabulary. Therefore, he presents a detailed observation regarding the term *tarbiyah* demonstrating its usages in the Quran in different contexts. And put forwards the alternative to refer to education in the light of the Quran and classical Arabic connotations.

Al-Attas presents several examples of how the notion of *adab* is manifested in the various levels of human existence. *Adab* toward one's self refers to the idea

¹⁰⁰ Abu Abdullah Al-Hakim, Mustadrak, Kitab: Fadailul Qura'n, Bab: Akhbar fi Fadailil Qura'n, Hadith no: 836

¹⁰¹ Syed Naqib Al-Attas, ed. *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education, Islamic Education Series*, Jeddah, Hodder and Stoughton & King Abdul Aziz University, 1979, p. 36.

of acknowledging the dual nature of human soul i.e. the rational and the animal. This is the initial stage. Then in order to maintain *adab* one should control the animal one by the rational one. Thus one can put both of them in their proper place.

When *adab* is referred to human relation, it means that ethical norm which are applied to social behavior should follow certain requirements based on the Quranic criteria. If one displays sincere humility, love, respect, care, charity etc., to one's parents, elders, and children, neighbors and community leaders, it shows that one knows one's proper place in relation to them. When *adab* refers to knowledge, it means an intellectual discipline which recognizes and acknowledges the hierarchy of knowledge based on the degree of perfection and priority, in a way that which is based on revelation is recognized and acknowledged as more perfect and of a higher priority than those based on human intellect. In other words to recognize the priority of *fard ain* over *fard kifayah*.

For the natural world, *adab* means the discipline of the practical intellect in dealing with the hierarchical program that characterizes the world of nature such that a person can make a proper judgment concerning the value of things, as God's signs, as sources of knowledge, and things useful for the spiritual and physical development of man. As far as language is concerned, *adab* means recognition and acknowledgment of the rightful and proper place of every words in a written or oral sentence so as not to produce a disharmony of meaning, sound and concept. As for the spiritual world, *adab* means the recognition and acknowledgement of the various spiritual station (*makam*) based on the acts of devotion and worship; the spiritual discipline which rightly submits the physical or animal self to the spiritual or rational self.

According to Al-Attas, the meaning of *adab* can be summarized as involving the followings

1. action to discipline the mind and soul;
2. acquisition of good qualities and attributes of mind and soul;
3. performance of correct and proper action as opposed to the errorness and wrong one;
4. knowledge that preserves man from errors of judgment and disgrace;

5. recognition and acknowledgment of right and proper places;
6. a method of knowing by which the condition of being in the right and proper place is actualized;
7. spectacle (*mashhad*) of justice (*adl*) as it is reflected by wisdom.¹⁰²

TARBIYAH VS. T'ADIB

The term *tarbiyah* was first coined by those who support and are influenced by the Modernist thought to denote education without taking its precise nature into consideration. Those who coined the term *tarbiyah* to mean education were in reality reflecting the Western concept of education, for the term *tabiyah* is a transparent translation of education in the Western sense. Semantically *tarbiyah* is neither appropriate nor adequate in conveying the conception of education in the Islamic sense which will be demonstrated in the following chapters.

Syed Naqib Al-Attas presents three instances from the Quran to demonstrate that the term *tarbiyah* understood in the sense of education as used today is not found in any great Arabic lexicons.

First Instance: Al-Jawhai said that *tarbiyah* as mentioned by Asma'i means to feed, to nourish, to nurture, and this meaning refers to all things that grow like children, plants. Basically *tarbiyah* means to nurture, to bear, to feed, to foster, to cause to increase in growth, to rear, to bring forth mature produce, to domesticate. Its application to Arabic language is not restricted to man alone, and its semantic fields extend to other species: to minerals, plants, and animals. But education in the Islamic sense is something specific only for man. Therefore, the above mentioned point is sufficient to demonstrate *tarbiyah*, being a term and concept applicable to many species and not restricted to man, is not suitable to denote education in Islamic sense, which applies to man alone.

Moreover, *tarbiyah* also refers to the idea of possession such as the possession of the children by their parents; and it is usually the possessors- parents

¹⁰² Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud , *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Naqib Al-Attas An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1998, p 141, 142

who exercise *tarbiyah* on the objects of possession such as the children. And this idea is referred by the term *ar-rabb* which primarily means Allah as He is the real possessor, yet it denotes a borrowed possession when applied to man and animals. What they do with this possession is *tarbiyah* if what they do is nurturing, rearing, feeding, fostering, causing to increase in growth, bringing mature produce, and domestication; it is certainly not educating if by education we mean inculcating of knowledge to man alone. Since the essential intellectual element is not inherent in the concept of *tarbiyah*, the educational process that makes man recognize and acknowledge his position in relation to God, and that makes him act in accordance with that recognition and acknowledgement, is in reality not a matter of *tarbiyah*, but a matter of *t'adib*.

Second Instance: with reference to the argument that *tarbiyah* conceived as education is evolved from the Quranic usage relating to the term *raba* and *rabbado* not naturally denote the essential elements of knowledge, intelligence, and virtue which are the key elements in true education. We can get this idea from Quran itself when Allah orders us to lower the wings of humility out of loving kindness to our parents, and to say: My lord! Bestow on them thy mercy as they have cherished me in childhood.

و اخفض لهما جناح الذل من الرحمة و قل رب ارحمهما كما ربياني صغيرا¹⁰³

And lower for them you're the wings of humility, and kindness, and say "My lord have mercy on them, as they nourished me when I was a little child.

The term *rabbayani* there means *rahmah*, signifying mercy or loving kindness. It refers to the cherishing that parents bestow upon their children. When it is God Who creates, nourishes, sustains, provides, cherishes and possesses, such acts, by which God is called *al-rabb*, are acts of *rahmah* or mercy. When it is man who by analogy do similar acts to his offspring, it is called *al-tarbiyyah*. On the other hand, *ilm* or knowledge is different from *rahmah* or mercy which is evident in the Quran itself when it says that God encompasses all things in *rahmah* and *ilm*:

¹⁰³ Bani Israeel: 24

وسعت كل شئ رحمة و علما¹⁰⁴

Oh Lord! Your mercy and your knowledge encompass all things.

From Arabic linguistic perspective the use of the Arabic letter “*wao*” indicates that mercy or *rahmah* and *ilm* or knowledge is two different things. Besides, *rahmah* refers to Gods bestowing of existence (*wujud*) to the creatures. Thus when we say that *tarbiyah* means bringing a thing to a state of completion, we understand the completion refers more to physical and material condition rather than to the rational and intellectual. The rational and intellectual completion necessitates the inculcation of knowledge which is not inherent in *tarbiyah*. So when *Fir’awn* said to the Prophet Musa (PBUH) “Did we not cherish thee as a child among us? (ألم نربك فينا وليدا) we do not understand from the verse that *Fir’awn* educated the Prophet, despite of the fact that *Fir’awn* exercised *tarbiyah* over Prophet Musa. *Tarbiyah* simply means cherishing without necessarily including the inculcation of knowledge in the cherishing.

Third instance: Even if it may be conceded that a meaning pertaining to knowledge can be infused into the concept of *rabba* that meaning refers to possession of knowledge and not to its inculcation and hence it does not refer to education in the sense it is understood in general. Syed Naqib Al-Attas prefers the term *rabbani*(رباني), which is used to mean wise men learned in the knowledge of the Lord. *Sibawayh* said that *alif* and *nun* in the term *rabbani*(رباني) are added to indicate specialization in knowledge of the Lord.¹⁰⁵

Based on the forgoing discussion Syed Naqib Al-Attas argues that *tarbiyah* in its original signification, and in the way in which it was applied and understood by Muslims of the earlier time, was not intended to denote either education or educational process. He, therefore, thinks *t’adib* is the precise and correct term to denote education in the Islamic sense as it includes within its conceptual structure the elements of knowledge (*ilm*), instruction (*ta’lim*), and good breeding (*tarbiyah*), so there is no need to refer to the concept of education in Islam as *tarbiyah – ta’lim- ta’dib* al together.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Mu’min: 07

¹⁰⁵ Syed Naqib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1999, p. 32

The nature of knowledge

Prior to discuss the nature of knowledge according to Syed Naqib Al-Attas, it is important to shed light upon some key concepts which are fundamentally interrelated and these concepts should form the essential elements of the Islamic system of education. They are

1. The concept of religion (*din*);
2. The concept of man (*insan*);
3. The concept of knowledge (*ilm*);
4. The concept of wisdom (*hikmah*);
5. The concept of justice (*adl*);
6. The concept of right action (*amal as adab*);
7. The concept of the university (*kulliyah- jami'ah*).

In terms of practical application, the first refers to the purpose of seeking knowledge and involvement in the process of education; the second to the scope; the third to the content; the fourth to the criteria in relation to the second and third; the fifth to the deployment in relation to the fourth; the sixth to the method in relation to the first down to the fifth; and seventh to the form of implementation in relation to all that precedes it.¹⁰⁶

However, the upcoming discussion of knowledge will not focus on philosophical or epistemological definition of knowledge, but on its general classification designed to be applied to a system of order and discipline that describes the Islamic educational system.

Since the idea of *din* which is translated into English as religion has different connotation from the Islamic viewpoint, we will start the discussion with the concept of religion.

¹⁰⁶ Syed Naqib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1993, P 160.

Chapter: 3

Al-Attas' view on the concept of religion

First and foremost, it should be clear that the term *din* in Arabic, which is generally understood to mean religion, is not the same as the concept religion as interpreted and understood throughout the Western religious history, for the term *din* from Islamic point of view is rather comprehensive and encompasses all basic connotations gathered into a single unit of coherent meaning as reflected in the Quran in the Arabic language.

The starting point in the Islamic concept of religion, according to Al-Attas, goes back to the Time of Pre-Separation in the Interior Condition of God's Consciousness, before man was created as a physical human being. He draws his interpretation from this verse of the Covenant

و اذ أخذ ربك من بني آدم من ظهورهم و ذريتهم و اشهدهم على أنفسهم ألسنت بربكم
قالوا بلى.

When the Lord drew forth from the children of Adam –from their loins- their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves (saying): “Am I not your lord?”- they said: “Yes we do testify!”¹⁰⁷

Wan, Mohd Nor Wan Daud argues in this regards that perhaps Al-Attas was the first one among contemporary Muslim thinkers who has popularized this verse as the starting point of the basic religious sensibility in man.¹⁰⁸

The word *din* derived from the Arabic root *din* has many primary significations which are all conceptually interconnected, so that the ultimate meaning derived from them all presents itself as a clarified unity of the whole. The primary significations of the term *din* can be brought to four points: (1) indebtedness, (2) submissiveness (3), judicious power, (4) natural inclination or tendency.

¹⁰⁷ Al-A'raf : 172

¹⁰⁸ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Naqib Al-Attas An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) 1998, p 51

Syed Naqib Al-Attas attempted to these four element first from the profane pint of view, and later from the religious point of view. He explains the situation when one finds oneself in debt that he subject himself in the state of yielding and obeying to law and ordinance governing debts as well as to the creditor. This situation is applicable only in an organized society involved in commercial life towns and cities, which is denoted by *mudun* or *madinah*. So from the various applications of the verb *dana*, we can see the picture of a civilized living, of social life of law, order, justice and authority. And because of the connotation of *dana* the name of the city of Prephet Muhammad (PBUH) *madinah* has been changed from *Yathrib* to *Madinah*. This change was due to the fact that the idea of *din* has been realized by the community of the believers of that time how had understood the nature of the debt and began to repay it to the creditor. The City of the Prophet (PBUH) signified the place where true *din* was enacted under his authority and jurisdiction.

The another primary signification of *din* submission refers to abase oneself, to serve a master, to become enslave as being in a state of debt entails such conditions in a debtor. The idea of judge, ruler, and governor are also considered to be the signification of *din*. As for the natural inclination or tendency as a primary signification of *din* is derived from the idea of law, order, justice, authority, and social cultural refinement which entails the existence of a mode or manner of acting what is reflected in the law and, the order and the justice, the authority. And this mode or manner refers to a state of being which customary or habitual. Hence the signification of *din* as custom, habit, and natural inclination is identified.

As for the idea of *din* to denote being in debt form religious context poses some questions such as what is the nature of the debt? To whom is the debt owned? The idea of this debt, in fact, build on the fact of man's existence in this earth. The man who ponders upon his origin will realize that a few decades ago he did not exist, and the whole of the mankind now existing neither existed nor new of their possible existence. As Allah says

هل أتى على الإنسان حين من الدهر لم يكن شيئا مذكورا.

There surely came over man a period of time when he was a thing not worth mentioning.¹⁰⁹

So he who contemplates sincerely knows that his sense of being indebted for his creation and existence cannot be directed to his parents as he knows well that his parents too are subjected to the same process by the same Creator. Allah says

ولقد خلقنا الإنسان من سلالة من طين ثم جعلناه نطفة في قرار مكين ثم خلقنا النطفة علقة و خلقنا العلقة مضغة و خلقنا المضغة عظاما فكسونا العظام لحما ثم أنشأناه خلقا آخر فتبارك الله أحسن الخالقين.

Man We did create from a quintessence of clay; then We placed him as a drop of sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed; then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creation. So blessed be God, the best to create.¹¹⁰

The nature of the debt of creation and existence is so profound and comprehensive that once man realizes the fact of his creation would understand that he is in utter loss for he possesses absolutely nothing to repay his debt except himself. He therefore must return himself to Him Who him absolutely which means to give himself up in service to his Lord and Master. So the rightly guided man sincerely enslave himself for the sake of God by loyally and truly following and obeying His commends and prohibitions.

Here comes another primary signification of *din* i.e. submission which denotes conscious and willing submission to God's will and obedience to His law. This submission, however, does not entail loss of freedom since freedom in fact means to act as his true nature demands. Submission to God's law brings harmony as it means realization of what is inherent in one's true nature; opposing to it brings discord, for it means realization of what is external to one's true nature. The idea of submission in this sense has been referred in the Quran as *aslama*.

¹⁰⁹ Al- Insaan: 01

¹¹⁰ Al- Mu'minun: 12-14.

Allah says

و من أحسن دينا ممن أسلم وجهه لله

Who can be better than in religion (*din*) than who submits (*aslama*) his face (i.e. his whole self) to God.¹¹¹

This verse clearly indicates the importance of total submission to God in every sphere of life. And the *din* here undoubtedly refer to Islam as it the only acceptable *din* to Allah. The very idea of the acceptable *din* has been reinforced by other verses of the Quran as Allah says

و من يبتغ غير الإسلام دينا فلن يقبل منه

If anyone desires a religion (*din*) other than Islam, never will be accepted to Him.¹¹²

He also says

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

Indeed the religion (*din*) in the sight of Allah is Islam.¹¹³

The concept of submission is perhaps common in all religions, however, what makes Islam different from other religion is the submission according to Islam is sincere and total submission to God's will.

The concept of *din* in reference to a Muslim man denote creation of a higher type of person by constant self-improvement which would facilitate to use one's latent power and capacity to become a perfect man. And the goal of this is to achieve eternal blessedness by entering a state of supreme peace where the ultimate bliss will be the beholding of the Glorious Countenance of the King of the Kingdom that he should envisage to enter. A man, from Islamic point of view, is both a soul and a body, he is at once physical being and spirit, and his soul governs his body as God governs the universe. Man also has two souls: the higher rational soul and the lower animal or carnal soul. The effective power and rule exercised by

¹¹¹ Annisa: 125.

¹¹² Al-Imran: 85.

¹¹³ Al-Imran: 19.

the rational soul over the animal soul and the subjugation and total submission of the animal one to the rational one is interpreted as *din* within its conceptual framework. Therefore, it is important in Islam to have knowledge about Self as the Prophet (PBUH) said

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه

“He who knows his Self knows his Lord”.¹¹⁴

As mentioned earlier, that the concept of man’s Covenant with God occupies the central position in relation to *din*. The covenant was made to all souls of Adam’s progeny. All souls have the same status in relation to their Lord: that of being subject, possessed, owned, ruled, governed, created, cherished, and sustained. This covenant unites one Muslim individual to another in a wondrous and unique bond of brotherhood which exceeds the restricting limitation of race and nation, space and time. Syed Naqib Al-Attas contends

It is this real feeling of brotherhood among Muslims based upon such spiritual foundations which no earthly power can rend asunder that unit the individual to the society in Islam without the individual having to suffer loss of individuality and personality, nor the society its policy and authority.¹¹⁵

Another core concept in relation to *din* is justice. It will facilitate to fulfill the covenant of man with Allah. Although the idea of justice is also regarded as an important virtue, however, it is conceptually quite different in other religions particularly in Western civilization than in Islam by virtue of Islam’s emphasis on self. Syed Naqib Al-Attas presented an illuminating example. In Western civilization, committing suicide may be considered as an unjust act, but this is considered as such insofar only because his suicide deprives the state of a service of a useful citizen, so his injustice is not to himself but to the state and society. The idea of justice in Islam, as Syed Naqib Al-Attas says, means a harmonious condition or a state of affairs whereby everything is in its right and proper place.

¹¹⁴ Suyuti Jalaj Uddin, al-Qawlul Ashbah (manuscript, <http://www.alukah.net/library/0/59672/>)

This hadith is extremely controversial to the extent that Ibn Taymmiah described it as fabricated. In fact it is a saying of Yahya bin Mua’aj al-Raji. See Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Morocco.

<http://www.habous.gov.ma/daouat-alhaq/item/4653>

¹¹⁵ Syed Naqib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1993, P 74.

With respect to man justice means basically a condition and situation whereby he is in his right and proper place. So the concept of justice in Islam does not only refer to relational situation of harmony and equilibrium existing between one person and another, or between the society and the state, or between the ruler and the ruled, or between the king and his subjects, but far more profoundly and fundamentally so it refers in a primary way to the harmonious and rightly-balanced relationship existing between the man and his self, and in a secondary way to such exists between him and another or others, between him and his fellow men, and ruler and king and state and society.¹¹⁶

Last but not least, the concept of knowledge is an integral part of din which occupies an important position in Islam where in the Quran there are more than eight hundred reference to knowledge. This concept will be discussed in the upcoming pages of this paper in great detail.

To sum up the essence of *dinis* the Quranic concept of man's covenant with God along with its other primary significations of indebtedness, submissiveness, judicious power, and natural inclination or tendency. The covenant is the starting point of the Islamic concept of religion and is the dominant element of in all other Islamic concept bound up with it such as justice, knowledge, brotherhood, virtue. So it encompasses all the basic connotations which are reflected in the Quran and in Arabic language.

¹¹⁶Syed Naqib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1993, P 76.

Chapter: 4

Al-Attas' view on knowledge

Syed Naqub Al-Attas argues that the greatest challenge that has arisen in our age is the challenge of knowledge, indeed, not as against ignorance; but knowledge as conceived and disseminated throughout the world by Western civilization; knowledge which nature has become problematic because it has lost its purpose, and thus brought about chaos in man's life instead of peace and justice.¹¹⁷ To him, the proper revival of the Muslim Ummah should start not just with greater emphasis on education, but with greater emphasis on the right conception on knowledge, starting from the university level all the way down to the secondary and primary levels. That is why Al-Attas wrote a letter on the problems of contemporary Muslim world by the Islamic Secretariat based in Jeddah

In most Muslim countries today many Muslim think that their problems stem from economic or scientific and technological inadequacy. Although it seems that at first glance this is true, and yet, however, the real crux of the problem, from which stem all other problems, is the problem of knowledge (*al-'ilm*). Except for myself and perhaps one or two other Muslim philosophers no Muslim scholars in my opinion has considered the problem of knowledge to be a basic one for the Muslim today.¹¹⁸

Al-Attas further says

We should know, and earnestly realize that knowledge is not truly natural (*sebenarnya tidak bersifat neutral*); that different culture have their own conceptions about knowledge, even though there are similarities. There exists such profound and absolute differences between Islam and Western culture such they cannot be reconciled.¹¹⁹

The consequences of this fact are confusion, skepticism and spreading of alien concept which leadsto the loss of *adab*, that will be discussed later, and deislamization process.

¹¹⁷Syed Naqib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1993, P 133.

¹¹⁸Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naqib Al-Attas*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) 1998, p. 71.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p 72

Definition of knowledge

Syed Naqib Al-Attas defines knowledge as “the recognition of a proper place of things in the order of creation, such that leads to the recognition of the proper place of God in the order of being and existence.”¹²⁰

Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud¹²¹ further elaborates the idea. He says that the conception of Al-Attas is rooted in the Quranic verse that God had taught Adam the names of all things and in another which underlines the fact that all mankind has recognized and testified the lordship of God. Allah says:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

“He taught Adam all the names, then presented them to the angels, saying “Give me the name of these, if you are right”.¹²²

Education, which is concerned primarily with the acquisition of knowledge, is defined by Naqib Al-Attas: “recognition and acknowledgement, progressively instilled into man, of the proper places of things in the order of creation, such that it leads to the recognition and acknowledgement of the proper place of God in the order of being and existence.”¹²³

Naqib Al-Attas further argues that true recognition must be followed by acknowledgement, otherwise the recognition is in vain. Acknowledgement, like recognition, pertains to man and consists in man making himself suitable to the requirements of the right or proper places of things and affairs. The requirements for the proper places of things and affairs entail action on the part of man, and this action is denoted by the term *amal* (عمل¹²⁴). Because, in Islam, there is no worthwhile knowledge without action accompanying it, nor worthwhile action

¹²⁰Syed Naqib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1999, p. 18

¹²¹Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naqib Al-Attas*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) 1998, p.108

¹²² Al-Baqarah: 31

¹²³Syed Naqib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, (ISTAC) 1999, p. 19

¹²⁴ Ibid. p. 19

without knowledge guiding it. Thus the correlation between recognition and acknowledgement is established as one is supplementary for another.

Syed Naqib Al-Attas has also suggests a more detailed discussion on the definition of knowledge as well as the way of defining an idea from an Islamic point of view. The issue has been addressed quite precisely by Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud in his the philosophy and Practice of Syed Mohammad Naqib Al-Attas which can be useful for further inquiry.

The purpose of knowledge

Philosophers and educationists, particularly in the West, have various views on the purpose of education. However, generally there are two theoretical positions regarding the purposes of education. The first is called socio-centered position whereby education is conceived as a vehicle to produce citizen, while the second is person-centered position, which stresses the needs, capacities and interests of the students. The proponents of the socio-centered position base their arguments that since man is inherently a social animal, and knowledge is basically socially constructed, education therefore should prepare individuals to function and adapt successfully in their respective society. Therefore, educational aims and objectives are to strengthen the beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and skills accepted and valued by the social groups.

The second position i.e. is the person-centered current, which stresses the development of intelligent, rich, and well-balanced personality of each child, who while sharing many similarities, is in some sense unique.

Contemporary Muslim scholars have noticed this phenomenon in the educational domain, and criticized the negative aspects of the first position i.e. socio-centered one which is contrary to the Islamic view on education which has resulted in a number of other problems including the “diploma disease” i.e. the chase to acquire diplomas and degrees not because of their intrinsic educational significance but because of their economic and social values.

The purpose of education, according to Muhammad Abdu of Egypt, is not for socio-economic mobility but for the development of the student's personality which belong the second position i.e. the person-centered one rather than the socio-centered one. He further adds

Education is imparted so that the students may have in his hand a degree which would make it for him to occupy a clerical chair in a department. But that his personality should be shaped by education (*al-ta'lim wa l tarbiyyah*) and by the inculcation of values so that he becomes a good and proper man in himself, so that he should well execute the task entrusted to him in the government or outside it, this fact enters the mind neither of the teachers nor of those who appoint those teachers.¹²⁵

To Muhammad Iqbal, the purpose of education is the creation of man and the development of strong individuals. He further stresses that the fate of people does not depends so much on organization as on the worth and power of individual men.¹²⁶

Al-Attas clarifies that the purpose of education in Islam is not to produce a good citizen, nor a good worker, but a good man. He articulates it more succinctly in *Islam and Secularism*

The purpose of seeking knowledge is to inculcate goodness or justice in man as man and individual self, and not merely in man as citizen or integral part of society: it is man's value as real man, as the dweller in his self's city, as citizen in his own microcosm kingdom, as spirit, that is stressed, rather than his value as physical measured in terms of the pragmatic or utilitarian sense of his usefulness to state and society and the world.¹²⁷

Al-Attas attempts to establish a profound focus of individual as it is reinforced in the Quran and in the hadith, and to refute the Western idea of the purpose of education which refers to the emergence of the complete citizen based on humanistic materialistic ideology. Because in Islam it is the individual who is accountable as a moral agent and will be rewarded or punished on the Day of

¹²⁵ Muhammad 'Amarah, ed. *Abhuh, al-A'mal al-Kamilah*, Beirut: al-Muassasah al-Arabiyyah li 'l-Dirasat wa 'N Nashr, cited from Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naqib Al-Attas*, p. 125

¹²⁶ Ibid, p. 125

¹²⁷ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naqib Al-Attas*, Kuala Lumpur: (ISTAC), 1998, p. 131

Judgment. He argues that a good citizen or worker of a secular state is not necessarily as good man; a good man, however, is definitely a good citizen or worker. He further says

Stressing the individual implies- as a precondition that our ideas should be equipped sufficiently to enable us to grasp and present a solution to the problem- knowledge about intelligence, virtue, and the spirit and about ultimate destiny and purpose; for intelligence, virtue and the spirit are elements inherent in the individual, and such knowledge is to be gained not from Western notion of psychology which are irrelevant to us, but from Islamic tradition expounded and interpreted by masters of the past, the man of spiritual discernment. Only in this way we can conceptualize and then realize an educational system within the Quranic framework and based upon Islamic foundation that would educate generations of Muslims to come to become good Muslims; Muslims no longer confused, but knowing and practicing, and ready to realize and establish the Islamic state and to enact their proper role as a single, vigorous ummah. The stressing on society and the state opens the door to secularism and secular ideology and secular education.¹²⁸

To sum up, it is not only Al-Attas who put emphasis on the individual when it comes to determine the purpose of education, rather the very idea has derived from the Quran and Suuah and has been reinforced by the other Muslim educationalists as mentioned above. And the Western idea about the purpose of education i.e. the socio-centered one is contrary to Islam as it focus on more on the benefit of the state rather than the benefit of the individual which ultimately leads to secularism and confusion.

Types of knowledge

In Islamic intellectual tradition, there has been a hierarchy and inter-relation among various disciplines which made possible the unity in multiplicity not only religious faith and experience but also in the realm of knowledge. The discovery of order and appropriate relationship between various disciplines was the goal of the leading Islamic intellectual figures, many of whom devoted much of their intellectual energy to the subject of classification of sciences. They include Al-

¹²⁸Syed Naqib Al-Attas, *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education*, Jeddah: Hodder and Stoughton, King Abdul Aziz University, 1979, p. 06

Kindi, Abaul Hasan AL-Amiri, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Nasir al-Din Tusi, Al-Farabi, Imam Al-Ghazali, Qutb al-Din Shirazi. Among them Farabi's classification was one of the most influential in the earlier period of Islamic history. Al-Ghazali's classification, on the other hand, was also quite influential in the Islamic history, who is regarded the most influential thinkers among the all Islamic thinkers.

However, no significant attempt had been made at the study of Muslim of classification of the knowledge except for a handful of works by contemporary intellectuals such as Osman Bakar's *Classification of Knowledge in Islam*, M. Umaruddin's *The Ethical Philosophy of al-Ghazzali*, MMahdi's *Science Philosophy and Religion in Farabi's Enumeration of Sciences*, F. Rosenthal's *The Classical Heritage of in Islam, Knowledge Triumphant*.

Syed Naqib Al-Attas has special observation on the classification of knowledge and offers a detail discussion on it which is also similar to other contemporary scholars, particularly to Syed Ali Ashraf. He explains that man is of dual nature possessed of two souls i.e. the retinal soul and the animal soul, so knowledge is of two kinds: the first one is given by God to men; and the second one is acquired by men by means of his own effort of rational enquiry based upon experience and observation. The first one is food for life and the soul and the second one is provision with which man might equip himself in the world in his pursuit of pragmatic ends. The first kind of knowledge includes the Quran as it is the knowledge of *per excellence*, the *sunnah* i.e. the prophet's life and the interpretation of the Quran by him, and the *shariah* which the God's law in every aspect of human life. As for the second, it has no limits the individual man must determine his quest for knowledge for the second kind based on his practical needs and capacity.

Another classification is made based on the importance of the two kinds of knowledge. Since the first kind of knowledge is essential for man's guidance and salvation, knowledge of it is necessary and obligatory to all Muslims (*fard ayn*). The acquisition of the second kind of knowledge is obligatory to some Muslims only (*fard kifayah*). However, the obligation of the second kind can be transferred to the first category of obligation in case of those who deem themselves duty-bound to seek it for their self-improvement. Since the attainment of the first category depends on the grace of Allah, and entails deeds and works of service to God as

prerequisites to its possible attainment, it follows that the knowledge of the prerequisites becomes necessary which includes knowledge of the essentials of Islam *islam- iman- ihsan*, their principles (arkan), their meaning and purpose and correct understanding, and implementation of everyday life and practice: every Muslim must have knowledge of these prerequisites; must understand the basic essentials of Islam and unity of God, His essence and attribute ; must have knowledge of the Holy Quran, the Prophet(PBUH), his life, and *sunnah*, and practice the knowledge thus based on deeds and works of the services to God so that every man of Islam be already in the initial stage of that first knowledge, that he be set ready on the Straight Path that leads to God.¹²⁹

Al-Attas further clarifies the distinction between the two kinds of knowledge by giving an illuminating example of a man and his neighbor. The man can know his neighbor just by observing the latter's habits and actions and by acquiring necessary information about him by others. This is knowledge of the first level. In reality the man cannot truly claim to know his neighbor at the deeper second level which can occur only after a certain period of direct interaction involving mutual experience and trust. Only then may the neighbor reveal some of his true feelings concerning matters that are dear to him and his other secrets. Similarly a man's knowledge of God at the level of *ma'rifah* (through acquaintance) is attained as a gift from Him to His servants who have lived a life of sincere worship based on knowledge.¹³⁰

As for the relationship between the two categories, the first, as Al-Attas contends, is the food for soul and unveils the mystery of Being and Existence and correctly explains the true relationship between man's self and his Lord as well as the true purpose of knowing and living. However, what is important to know is the significance of the first category as it should guide the second one, and without the first the second would confuse man by falling into the continues and tragic search for doubtful purpose and false meaning.

¹²⁹ Syed Naqib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1993, P 146

¹³⁰ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud , *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naqib Al-Attas*, Kuala Lumpur: (ISTAC), 1998, p. 112

Wan Daud presents a detail idea on the contents of the two categories of knowledge in the light of Al-Attas's thought in *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naqib Al-Attas*¹³¹. He says the following items fall under the first category of *fard ain*:

1) The Quran: its recitation, and interpretation (*tafsi and ta'wil*). Al-Attas regards Quranic *tafsir* as a scientific enterprise, not vulnerable to any fundamental error or mistake. He says that *tafsir* is a scientific method and approaches the nature of an exact science because it is based on the scientific nature of Arabic language whose system of roots protects it from arbitrary changes both in the meaning of its words and terms, as well as on the Holy Quran and Hadith.

2) The *Suunah*: the life of the Prophet (PBUH): the history and messages of the earlier prophets, the hadith and its authoritative transmission which also includes the in-depth study of the history of the hadith criticism, its genre of the technical terms (*mustalahul hadith*), comparative analysis of the major collections and their categories, and science of biographies and major biographical dictionaries.

3) The *Shari'ah*: jurisprudence and law; the principles and practice of Isla(*islam, iman, ihsan*). Al-Attas, however, found the teaching of Islamic law has been received greater prominence than what is really required in the educational and administrative thinking of many Muslims what hampered the study of other fundamental matters such as theology, metaphysics and ethics.

4) Theology (*ilm al – kalam*): God, His Essence, attributes, names and acts (*Tawhid*). Al-Attas has consistently argued that the issues and problems raised in theology are re-emerging particularly from Western cultural sources in many different forms. Properly understanding the arguments developed by some of the most prominent Muslim theologians will greatly help to reduce the religious confusion prevailing among Muslim societies.

5) Islamic Metaphysics (*al- tassawwuf – irfan*): psychology, cosmology, and ontology; legitimate elements of philosophy including valid cosmological doctrines pertaining to the hierarchy of being. According to Al-Attas, this course is perhaps the most fundamental one in the educational curriculum, not only because

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 247

it contains all most important elements of Islamic vision of truth, but also because it contains the summary of all other intellectual disciplines such as science of the Quran, hadith, theology and philosophy as well as a good working knowledge of the classical Arabic language.

6) Linguistic science: Arabic, its grammar, lexicography and literature. The purpose is not to acquire the knowledge of Arabic for effective communication by the means of writing or conversation, but more importantly to analyze and interpret the basic sources of Islam and the important intellectual and spiritual literature in Arabic.

It is clear from the foregoing paragraphs that Muslim students should take a wide variety of subjects under the framework of obligatory knowledge or *fard ain*. This would enable him to know not only the major principles and issues, as well as the problems and the differences in each disciplines, but more importantly, they will all be meaningful to him as a Muslim living in a global and pluralist society.

The second category i.e. *fard kifayah* is not obligatory to every Muslims. The Muslim community is, however, responsible if nobody in the society involve with it. Al-Attas derives *fard kifayah* knowledge into eight broad disciplines:

- 1) The human sciences;
- 2) The natural sciences;
- 3) The applied sciences;
- 4) The technological sciences;
- 5) Comparative religions;
- 6) Western culture and civilization;
- 7) Linguistic sciences: Islamic languages; and
- 8) Islamic history.

Indeed, Al-Attas does not confine *fard kifayah* knowledge to the over mentioned eight disciplines as knowledge is regarded as the attributes of God and

which is infinite in nature. Moreover, if *fard ain* is dynamic and expands according to individual's intellectual and spiritual capacity, certainly *fard kifayah* knowledge would also expand according to the need and plans of a particular society. He further pointed out that *fard ain* is not a rigid or close-ended set of knowledge. Rather it expands according to one's spiritual, social and professional development and responsibility.

Professor Wan Daud contends that the importance of the categorization of knowledge by Al-Attas is regarded as one of the major contribution to modern Islamic thought. His emphasis on this categorization perhaps due to his concern with the nature of the human obligation towards acquisition of knowledge , and the infinite nature of knowledge and the finitude of individual's life. Al-Attas also proposes that there should be a limit of truth in every object of knowledge; falling short of or exceeding that limit would be error and falsehood. He, however, persistently stress that such idea does not mean that there should be a limit to query or to the pursuit of knowledge, because the object of knowledge have different limits. It encourages clarity and precision which would make educational pursuit more honest, purposeful, practical and meaningful. This notion also accord with the Islam as education in Islam is conceived as a life-long religious duty which is not limited to the location of the courses offered or tot the age of the students.

As for the implementation of educational policy in the Muslim societies, this categorization should be taken into consideration. Al-Attas says naturally the curriculum is derived from the reality of man as a dual nature; his physical aspect is more concerned with his knowledge of the physical and technical sciences, or *far kifayah*; while the spiritual reality conveyed by the term *ruh*, *nafs*, *qalb*, and *aql* is more appropriately concerned with the knowledge of the prerequisites or the core knowledge or *fard ain*.

Chapter: 5

Syed Naqib Al-Attas' contribution to Islamization of knowledge

A handful of contemporary Islamic scholars have realized the significance of Islamization of knowledge and propagated the idea throughout the world by various means. Syed Naqib Al-Attas is one of them or perhaps the pioneer.

Professor Wan Daud contend

He is the first in the contemporary Muslim world to define, conceptualize, and elaborate the meaning, scope and content of Muslim education in a systematic and philosophical manner, the idea and the method of Islamization of present-day-Knowledge, the nature and the final establishment of the Islamic University, and the formulation and systemization of an Islamic metaphysics and philosophy of science.¹³²

His involvement with the Islamization movement can be attributed with his close acquaintance with the work of mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri¹³³ as well as Toshihiko Izutsu¹³⁴ both of them have used the term *Islamization* though in different connotation. Al-Attas, however, has refuted some of the ideas presented by Izutsu where he deems it contradicts with the Islamic viewpoint. The former attempted to elaborate three important elements ; the transformation of Malaya-Indonesian Hindu-Buddhist aesthetic worldview to the more rational, scientific, universal Islamic worldview; the role of language, in the process of Islamization; and conversely of de-Islamization; and the emphasis on metaphysical transformation as the primary component of Islamization. Toshihiko Izutsu, on the other hand, used the term Islamization to refer to the changes brought about by the

¹³²Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud , *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Naqib Al-AttasAn Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization*, Kuala Lumpur : International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) ,1998, p 17

¹³³ Hamzah Fnsuri (1590) was a Sumatran Sufi writer, the first known to pen mystical pane theistic idea in the Malaya language. He wrote both prose and poetry and worked in the court of the Aceh Sultanate. His major includes *Sharab al-ashiqin* (the Lovers' Beverage), *Asrar al-Arifin* (the secrets of the Gnostics), *Muntahi* (the Adapt).

¹³⁴ Toshihiko Izutsu (1914-1993) was a Professor Emirates at Keio University in Japan and wrote many books on Islam and other religions. He taught in Institute of Culture and Linguistic Studies at Keio University in Tokyo, Iranian Institute of Philosophy, in Tehran, and McGill University in Montreal, Canada. He was fluent in over 30 languages including Arabic, Persian, Chaises, Sanskrit, Pali, Russian and Greek. His major writing include *God and Man in the Koran*, *Ethico-Religious Concept in the Quran*, *The Concept of Reality and Existence*.

Holy Quran on the Pre-Islamic moral concepts in the revised edition of *The Structure of the Ethical Term* which he retitled as the *Ethico- Religious Concept in the Qura'n*, published by McGill University Press in 1966. Al-Attas mentioned that he attended Izutsu's lectures at McGill University in the spring of 1962 and 1963, and benefited greatly from them. In correspondence between him and Izutsu in later years it is evident that there was genuine mutual respect between these two scholars. In his *God and Man*, Izutsu referred to the efforts by Muslim scholars and thinkers to accommodate certain ideas of the Greeks as part of the great process of Arabization of the Hellenistic heritage.

Therefore, it is evident that Al-Attas was greatly inspired and influenced by these two scholars in different Islamic scholarships particularly in the idea of Islamization of knowledge. This issue is mentioned in different writings of Al-Attas as he mentioned that he was "greatly indebted" to Izutsu for the methodological concepts.

To my humble opinion, Al-Attas was the one out of all proponents of the Islamization movement who put utmost emphasis on language. He mentioned in numerous occasions that Islamization process should begin with language as the primary vehicle of the Islamization of Pre-Islamic Arabs occurred through the Islamization of the Arabic language. He argues that the process of Islamization which occurred in the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH) and His companions was carried out through the vehicle of the new Islamic Arabic Language.

He also attempted to demonstrate the nature of Arabic language which Allah has chosen for the Divine Revelation of the Quran, and the fact that Arabic language is not only the language of Arab people but it is the language for all non-Arabic speaker too. Another key aspect of Arabic language is that Arabic language is free of any distortion, deviation, doubt, error or contradiction. And that is why Al-Attas considers that the science of interpretation of the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) as exactly scientific and not prone to error. Because of all these important facts of Arabic language Muslims from the earliest period had carried out painstaking research on various areas of Arabic language which is also testified by Western scholars such as E. W. Lane

The aggregate of these work, with all the strictness that is observed in legal proceeding ... the utmost care and research have been employed to embody everything that could be preserved or recovered of the classical language; the result being a collection of such authority, such exactness, and such copiousness, as we do not find to have been approached in the case of any other languages.¹³⁵

It is worth mentioning that this special feature of authenticity in preservation of the main structure of the language has only been bestowed to Arabic as all other sacred scriptures has been vulnerable to some changes. The Hebrew Bible, for instance, according to their scholars, is not established on a scientific basis so as to maintain its authenticity. As one scholar says

The Hebrew text now in our possession has one special peculiarity: notwithstanding its considerable age, it comes to us in relatively late manuscripts which are therefore far removed in time for the originals (sometimes by more than a thousand years)... none of these manuscripts is earlier than the ninth century CE.¹³⁶

As for the Old Testament, George Buchana Gray puts in the Encyclopedia of Britannica

Error lurked even where no variants now exists, and that such errors can be corrected, if at all, only by conjectural emendation (the danger of which)...are well known and apparent (Italics in original).¹³⁷

As far as the New Testament is concerned, according to prominent Christian authorities, it has similar problems as those of Hebrew Bible. These scriptures, particularly the gospels, were written after the period of Jesus, in Greek language rather than Aramaic which was the language of the historical Jesus. It is also recognized in subsequent copies of the biblicalliterature underwent regular editions to adapt to changing needs and times.

¹³⁵Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Naqib Al-Attas An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization*, Kuala Lumpur:International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) , 1998, p 343

¹³⁶ Ibid p.347

¹³⁷ Ibid p. 347

Professor Wan Daud contends in this regards

One of Al-Attas major contributions to contemporary Muslim thought is his exposition of the role of language which is intrinsically connected to the process of Islamization because proper use of language, particularly its key concepts and terms, conveys the Islamic conception of being and its vision of Reality and Truth.¹³⁸

One of the major contributions of Al-Attas regarding the role of Arabic language in the Islamization process is identifying the unique nature of Islamic science of *tafsir* and its distinguishing from the Western concept of hermeneutics whether on biblical sources or other texts. Al-Attas underlines that the first science among the Muslims i.e. the science of exegesis of and commentary (*tafsir*) was possible and actualized because of the scientific nature of the Arabic language. And the fundamental basis of the differences between *tafsir* and hermeneutics or the science of interpretation of the sacred scriptures of Greeks, Christians, or other religious traditions lie in the conception of the nature and authority of the text and the authenticity and permanence of the meaning of the scriptures. Moreover, Al-Attas has also attempted to espouse and exemplify the permanent relevance of *tafsir* and *ta'wil* as valid methods to approach to knowledge and scientific methodology respecting our study of the world of nature, and their integral connection to the Islamic conception of knowledge and education. Al-Attas considers *ta'wil* as an intensive form of *tafsir*. He brings out a clear classical example of the scientific nature of *ta'wil* and its integral relation to *tafsir*

When God Most Exalted says that He brings forth the living from the dead (*yukhrijul al-hayy min al-mayyit*) and we interpret it to mean, to give one particular instance, that He brings forth the bird from the egg, this is *tafsir*, but when we interpret the same passage to mean that He brings forth the believer (*al-mu'min*) from the unbeliever or misbeliever (*al-kafir*) or that He brings forth the knower (*al-alim*) from the ignorant (*al-jahil*), then this is *ta'wil*. It is clear from this that *ta'wil* is but an intensive form of *tafsir*; for while the later refers to the discovery, detecting or revealing of what is meant by an ambiguous expression, the former refers to what that expression ultimately means. Now the discovery, detecting or revealing the concealed meaning of the words in question: the living (*al-hayy*) and the dead (*al-mayyit*) –is in both cases of *tafsir* and *ta'wil* based on other passage of the Holy Quran which reveal the conceptual structure of those words and

¹³⁸ Ibid p. 330

the context in which they resolve – that is, their semantic field – and on what is reflected of them in the occasions in which they were revealed and the hadith.¹³⁹

However, both *tafsir* and *ta'wil* are important to interpret the Quran which is also reinforced by the Prophet (PBUH) as he prayed that Abdullah ibn Abbas be excellent in *ta'wil* which certainly include *tafsir*.

Another significant feature of Al-Attas thought regarding the Islamization project is the importance of “the Islamization of present-day-knowledge” rather than “Islamization of knowledge”. Al-Attas used the qualifier “present- day” on purpose because the knowledge that Muslims had obtained from other cultures and civilizations of the past such as Greek, and the Indian, has already been Islamized. For instance, Muslim philosophers attempted to Islamize the Greek philosophy – particularly the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic conceptions- such that is accorded with their interpretation of Islam. They were also heavily influenced by the general cosmological scheme of the Greek especially the prominent role of stars and heavenly bodies. Al-Ghazali has profoundly explained the philosophers’ rejections of the attributes of God contradicts their usage of the term *al-fa'il* to refer to God as an agent, because any act of an agent presupposes the attributes of knowledge, will and choice. Al-Ghazali’s *Tahafut al-Falasifah* (the incoherence of the Philosophers) is also seminal work on refutation or Islamization of some of the ideas of philosophers which contradict with the Islam. Ibn Sina tried to bring the notion of God as the Necessary Being, upon whom all other existents as Contingent Being are based, by postulation three factors: matter form, and existence. Ibn Sina also attempted to rationalize the natural place of prophecy through his doctrine of creative knowledge and the intuitive sense.¹⁴⁰ Al-Attas further adds that philosophy, as deliberated by the Greeks, and modified by their Muslim follower, was thoroughly Islamized by al-Ghazali and his followers, to the extent that its original characteristics were almost unrecognizable.

¹³⁹Syed Naqib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1999, p. 5

¹⁴⁰ For detailed on this issue, see Fazlu Rahman’s *Islamic Philosophy, The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Paul Edwards, editor –in-chief (New York and London: Collier & MacMillan and the Free Press, 1967).

Al-Attas also recognizes and acknowledges the role of Sufis in the process of Islamization, especially with the integration of philosophy and mysticism after Islamization philosophy by Al-Ghazali and other orthodox thinkers. Regarding the role of Sufis, Al-Attas writes

The Islamization of ontology and metaphysics which marked the break from the Aristotelian tradition, that is, the real transition from the existence (*wujud*), was accomplished by the Sufis, particularly as reflected in the rational and theoretical formulation of the system by Ibn al-Arabi, their greater representative, as based on intuitive knowledge gained from spiritual experience.¹⁴¹

Fazul Rahman observes, in this regard, instead of continuing as a purely rational expression of the human mind, philosophy emptied its contents into intellectual Sufism. Henceforth, we do not get pure philosophy in Islam but a mystical philosophy. This trend of philosophical mysticism which started in the writings of Muhyi al-Din ibn al-Arabi (d.2040) was then elaborated by his commentators such as al-Qunyawi, al-Qashani, and al-Jami, and was developed in a full philosophical manner by Sadr al-Din Shirazi or Mulla Sadra (d. 1640).

The process of Islamization

Al-Attas' initial enquiry involved Malaya mysticism, particularly the mysticism of Hamza Fansuri, which he regards as the stimulation for the Islamization. He classified the different periods of the process of Islamization of the Malaya world by three phases.

The first phase is the period before Fansuri (1590), which became noticeable from the 13th century and which is characterized by the predominant role played by the jurisprudence in the interpretation of the religious law (Shari'ah).

The second phase, which became noticeable from about the 15th century all the way up to about the end of the 18th century, is mainly characterized by the

¹⁴¹ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Naqib Al-Attas, An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1998: p 327

predominance of mysticism (tasawwuf) and theology (kalam) in the interpretation of the religious law.

The third phase of the Islamiation process is a continuation of the second. Al-Attas, however, considers that this assessment of the Islamization of the worldview is not strictly a local phenomenon which is limited to the Malaya – Indonesian people as the arrival of Islam to the Malay World brought along with it acceptable traditions of Judaism and Christianity, abstract Greek philosophical ideas especially of Platonic and neo-Platonic trend, and most significantly its own elaborated theory of Nature such as atom, accidents, and substance. These facts suggests the universal and international nature of the Islamization which includes the whole Islamic World.

In this regards Professor Wan Daud observes that this three-phase process of Islaomization could be seen beginning from the period of the Prophet (pbhu) and extending several centuries forward where we can see that the systematic legal interpretations of Malik, Abu Hanifa, and Shafi'i occurred much earlier than more philosophical and rational interpretations of the theologians such as al-Ash'ari, and al-Maturidi and of Sufis such as al-Ghazali Ibn al-Arabi, Jami etc. Thus Professor Daud attempted to find the similarities in the process of Islamization of the Malaya World and the in other parts of the world.

According to Al-Attas Islamization means, with regards to contemporary knowledge, “the deliberation of knowledge form its interpretations based on secular ideology; and from meanings and expressions of the secular. He also put forwards an idea of Islamization of the present-day-knowledge which involves two inter-related processes.

i) the isolation of key elements and concepts that make up Western culture and civilization from every branches of knowledge, particularly those in the human sciences as well as the natural, physical and applied sciences as the Western education is based upon secular ideology and consequently lacks a single Reality to fix its vision, a single Scripture to conform and affirm in life, a single human guide whose words and deeds and actions and entire mode of life can serve as model to emulate in life, as the Universal Man.

Al-Attas further clarifies

Our evaluation must entail a critical examination of the methods of modern science; its concepts, presuppositions, and symbols; its empirical and rational aspect, and those impinging upon values and ethics; its interpretation of origins; its theory of knowledge; its presupposition on the existence of an external world, of the uniformity of nature, and the rationality of natural processes; its theory of the universe; its classification of the sciences ; its limitations and inter-relations with one another of the sciences, and its social relations.¹⁴²

ii) the infusion of Islamic elements and key concepts in every branches of the relevant present –day- knowledge. In the process of doing so, Syed Naqib Al-Attas suggests it should began with the university level, and it must be composed of ingredients pertaining to the nature of man (*insan*), the nature of religion (*din*) and man’s involvement in it; of knowledge (*ilm* and *ma’rifah*), wisdom (*hikmah*) and justice (*adl*)with respect to man and his religion; the nature of right action(*amal-adab*). These will have to be referred to the concept of God, His Essence and Attributes (*tawhid*), the Revelation (the Holy Quran), its meaning and message, the Revealed Law(*Shari’ah*), the Prophet (PBUH) his life and *Sunnah*,and the history and the message of the Prophets before him,. They will also have to be referred to the knowledge of the principles and practice of Islam, the religious sciences, (*ulum al-shari’yah*) which must include legitimate elements of *tasawwuf* and Islamic philosophy. This core knowledge, integrated and composed as a harmonious unity and designed at the university levels, must inevitably be reflected in successively simpler forms at the secondary and primary levels of the educational system.¹⁴³

In the process of the isolation of Western elements and inculcation of the Islamic elements, Professor Wan Duad present an excellent example of the *kalimah :la ilaha illa Allah.....* that the affirmation and negation occurs simultaneously without any vacuum, so that with regard to the Islaimzation process, the isolation and the inculcation will happen simultaneously. However,

¹⁴²Syed Naqib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*, Kuala Lumpur:(ISTAC), 1995, p 114

¹⁴³Syed NaqibAl-Attas, ed. *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education, Islamic Education Series*, Jeddah: Hodder and Stoughton & King Abdul Aziz University, 1979, p. 44

isolation of the Western concepts from the Muslim educational domain does not mean that knowledge about Western concepts is completely useless. They are useful only because through them we derive our understanding of the Western spirit and worldview which ultimately helps Muslim recognize the nobility and greatness of the spirit of Islam.

To sum up, it can be argued that the core of Al-Attas' philosophy and methodology of education is about Islamization of the mind, body and soul and its effects on the personal and collective life of not only Muslims but also others, including the spiritual and physical non-human elements in the environment. He applies his conception of Islamization of mind through linguistic means either by reintroducing certain Arabic Islamic terms in the original meaning or by redefining existing key terms and concepts. He takes great care to carefully define and explain the key term and concepts whether in English, Malaya or Arabic. For instance, he proposes, explaining the philosophical-historical roots of the secularization as a philosophical program that such a concept should not be Arabized but should be left to remind us of its foreign origin i.e. *sekulariyyah* (in Arabic) or *secularisme* (in Malaya). He also proposed, which already has been discussed, the concept of *ta'dib* as the true concept and method of education in Islam, covering the cognitive, spiritual, ethical, and social aspects as compared to the more limited meanings embedded in *ta'lim* and *tarbiyyah*.

Chapter: 6

Concluding remarks

From the preceding chapters it is clear that Al-Attas is regarded as one of the pioneers such as Syed Ali Ashraf, Fazlur Rahman, Syed Hossein Nasr, Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, in the Islamic educational domain in general, and in the Islamization of knowledge movement in particular. Syed Naqib Al-Attas, however, has initially conceptualized the Islamization of the present-day-knowledge and disseminated this idea through his writing at the first two World Conferences on Islamic Education. Moreover. His conceptualization has derived from a coherent interpretation of the Islamization the Muslim mind through the unique nature of Islamic-Arabic language.

Attas' idea has also inspired many contemporary Muslim scholars all over the world. Faruqi, for instance, has benefited profoundly from his writings which motivated him to write the monograph, *The Islamization of Knowledge*, 1982. The realization of the importance of the Islamization of knowledge seemed to have struck Faruqi quite suddenly. Taha Jabi al-Alwani, the former president of the International Institute of Islamic Thought, in a brief assessment of Faruqi's contribution to Islamization of Knowledge, writes

This case stirred in him strong emotions which has been scattered between many causes. He became devoted to this one cause: The Islamization of knowledge. It dominated his life and his activities as he pondered, discussed, and planned with his brothers how to realize it and how to mobilize people and resources for it.¹⁴⁴

The discussion that Al-Attas had with Faruqi positively influenced Faruqi's intellectual activities in a fundamental manner. Which is why, Faruqi, as the president of the Association of the Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), invited Al-Attas to be one of the keynote speakers at its symposium on Islam and Development. A week later Faruqi wrote to Al-Attas expressing his gratitude

¹⁴⁴Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Naqib Al-Attas An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization*, Kuala Lumpur : International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1998, p 378,379

Your colleagues , members of the Executive boards and the large number of fellow Muslims asked to comment on your performance at the convention – all were proud of you.....You *are* the AMSS. Your performance, i.e. your stimulation of Islamic thinking and your contribution to the legacy of thought, is its *raison d'etre* and end. I hope this realization has dawned upon you with the same bright intensity with which it did upon the AMSS Executive Board of the last five years....¹⁴⁵

In addition to these, Al-Attas' discourses on Islam attracted vast audiences, particularly the university students, who subsequently, under his intellectual guidance, formed the Islamic Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM), the Muslim Writer's Association of Malaysia (GAPIM), and the Academy of Islamic Science (ASASI). Besides, some of the key political figures have been inspired by Al-Attas' teachings and writings, namely Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Osman Bakar, Sidek Fadil, Muhammad Affandi Hassan, Fuad Hassan.

Al-Attas, whose mastery encompasses a wide variety of branches e.g. religion, metaphysics, theology, philosophy, education, philology, arts, architecture and military science, is a man of versatile quality, and whose ideas would enlighten the present Muslim ummah as well as the generation to come. His intellectual activities have transcended the national border and his ideas have inspired many minds all over the world. Therefore, more thorough and meticulous research should be carried out to investigate his thought and insight as well translating his works in different languages, particularly in Bengali and in Arabic in order for the Muslim ummah to benefit from his legacy to a large extent.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p 381

Part Three:
Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi

Chapter: 1

Biography

Faruqi's early life and education

Ismail Raji al-Huda Al-Faruqi was born in 1921 in Jaffa,¹⁴⁶ Palestine. His father was Abd al-Huda al-Faruqi a *qadi*(Islamic Judge) of the *Shariah* court during the British Mandate. Al-Faruqi received his early education from his father and local mosque school. In 1926, he entered the French Dominican College des Freres (St. Joseph) and received his high school diploma in 1936. By the time he was fifteen years old, he was fluent in Arabic, French and had received his first exposure to Christianity. The following year he was admitted to the College of Arts and Science at the American University in Beirut where he studied English and continued thereafter completing a B.A. with a major in Philosophy.

Having completed his undergraduate degree in 1941, Al-Faruqi received an appointment as Assistant to the Register of Arab Cooperative Society under the British Mandate government. In 1945, he was promoted to the post of district magistrate (*hakim*) for the Galilee district. Then in 1948, with the creation of Israel, the Palestinian Governor of the region came to the end, and his family fled to Beirut. Professor Sahfiq comments that when the Israel was created in 1948, Al-Faruqi joined the armed struggle against Israel

Consumed with a desire for revenge, Al-Faruqi took up arms against the Israel occupation and saw action in the field. Disappointed by Muslim disunity and internal division, he gradually made his way to the United States.¹⁴⁷

Al-Faruqi himself contends

After I graduated from the American University in Beirut, I worked as a registrar in the Arab Cooperative Society in Palestine, then as an administrative officer and as magistrate (*hakim*) of the district of Galilee.

¹⁴⁶ Jaffa, also called Japho or Joppa, is the southern, oldest part of Tel Aviv, an ancient port city in Israel. Jaffa is famous for its association with the biblical stories of Jonah, Solomon, and Saint Peter.

¹⁴⁷ Shafiq Muhamaad, *Growth of Islamic Thought in North America*, Beltsville, USA: Amana publication, 1994 p. 7

When the Rescue Army (Jaysh al-Inqadh) was set up, I was working as an administrative magistrate (*hakim*) in the northern region which was occupied by the army until they fell into the enemy's hand, by then I had gone to the U.S for studies.¹⁴⁸

In 1948, he entered the Graduate School of Arts and Science at Indiana University, where he worked on a Master's degree in Philosophy. He graduated in 1949 with a thesis entitled "The Ethics of Reason and the Ethics of Life (Kantian and Nietzschean ethics). Desiring further studies, he was accepted into Harvard University in 1950 and was awarded a M.A. degree in Philosophy in 1951.

Needing to support himself, he worked as a translator at the American Council for Learned Society where he translated three books from Arabic into English. He then also involved in some other business. Once he realized that he earned sufficient funds, he left this lucrative career in order to re-enter the academia. He then enrolled in the PhD program at Indiana University and graduated in 1952 with a dissertation entitled *On Justifying the God: Metaphysics and Epistemology of Value*. John Esposito noted that during al-Faruqi's academic years in the US, he struggled to support himself and there is some indication that even during his PhD studies at Indiana he continued to work as a carpenter.¹⁴⁹

Once finished, he sought out opportunities for post-doctoral studies. In 1953, he went to Middle East and received a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship to study Islam and Islamic intellectual history at Al-Azhar University in Cairo from 1954-1958. After completion of his fellowship, he was invited by Wilfred Cantwell Smith to study at McGill University's Institute of Islamic Studies (1958-1959). He was then awarded a two-year Rockefeller Foundation fellowship to become a fellow of the Faculty of Divinity at McGill.

During his time at McGill, he became close friends with Fazlur Rahman. When Fazlur Rahman accepted a position at the Central Institute of Islamic Research, he asked director I.H. Quraishi to offer a two-year appointment to Al-Faruqi. Thus, from 1961-1963 al-Faruqi served as professor of Islamic Studies at Karachi, Pakistan. During this period he was invited to deliver ten lectures on the relation of Islam to Nationalism at the Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo

¹⁴⁸ Fletcher, D. Charles, "Ismail Al-Faruqi (1921-1986) and Inter-Fait Dialogue the Man, the Scholar, the Participant", an unpublished PhD thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, 2008, P 17

¹⁴⁹ Ibid p. 18

,and twenty lectures on the history of religion in the Near East at Al-Azhar University, and ten lectures at the University of Cairo on comparative religion.

For the academic year 1963-1964, he was offered and accepted a one-year appointment as a visiting professor of History of Religion at the University of Chicago's Divinity School. The following year, he secured a position of associate professor at Syracuse University's Department of Religion where he taught Islamic Studies and History of religion until 1968.

His academic activities

Al-Faruqi was involved in numerous academic projects. He was involved in the Muslim Student Association (MSA) which was an outcome of his wide interaction with the Muslim students beyond those who were studying under his supervision. He was also the first President of the American Muslims Social Scientists (AMSS). In 1980s the AMSS was joined by the Islamic Society of North America (ISAN). In 1981, he helped to create the International institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) at Herndon, Virginia. Al-Faruqi's vision also included establishing an Islamic University in the US, but the project was not completely fulfilled. However, he managed to found the American Islamic College in Chicago where he acted as its first precedent and advisor. He also assisted in the founding of the Sister Clara Muhammad School in Philadelphia. He also found time to Chair the boards of North American Islamic Trust (NAIT), and the editors of American Trust Publications as well as joined the board of advisors for the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, UK.

He visited many countries to lecture, consult, and promote his Islamization project. He helped design and advise Islamic Studies programs in Pakistan, South Africa, India, Malaysia, Lybia, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. He served as chairman of the international Scholars Committee advising the Malaysian government in 1982.

Although he was preoccupied with the Islamization project, yet he remained committed to active involvement in inter-religion relation. His interest in comparative religious studies let him to spearhead the creation of the Islamic Studies Section in the American Academy of Religion (AAR). Faruqi chaired the Islamic Studies Section until 1982 having been involved for ten years. He was

invited to participate in a number of symposia, conferences and organizations dealing with various forms of inter-faith dialogue particularly by the Inter-Religious Peace Colloquium (IRPC) and the Global Congress for the World Religions (GCWR).

His books in English

1. From Here We Start, tr. from Arabic of K.M. Khalid. Washington, DC, American Council for Learned Societies, 1953.
2. Our Beginning in Wisdom, tr. from Arabic of M. al-Ghazali. Washington, DC, American Council for Learned Societies, 1953.
3. The Policy of Tomorrow, tn. From Arabic of M.B. Ghali, Washington, DC, American Council for Learned Societies, 1953.
4. Urubah and Religion: An Analysis of the Dominant Ideas of Arabism and of Islam as its height Moment of Consciousness, vol. 1 of On Arabism, Amsterdam, Djambatan, 1962.
5. Christian Ethics: A Systematic and Historical Analysis of its Dominant Ideas, Montreal: McGill University Press and Amsterdam, Djambatan, 1968.
6. The Great Asian Religions, in collaboration with W.T. Chan, P.T. Raju and J. Kitagawa. New York: Macmillan, 1969.
7. Historical Atlas of the Religion of the World. New York: Macmillan, 1975.
8. The Life of Muhammad, tn. And ed. From Arabic of M.H. Haykal, Indianaopolis: North American Islamic Trust, 1976.

9. Sources of Islamic Thought: Three Epistles on Tawhid by Muhammad ibn ‘Abdul Wahhab, tn. An ed. Indianaopolis: North American Islamic Trust, 1980.
10. Sources of Islamic Thought: Kitab al-Tawhid, tr. from Arabic of by Muhammad ibn ‘Abdul Wahhab, tn. An ed. London: IIFSO, 1980.
11. Islam and Culture, Kuala Lumpur: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, 1980.
12. Islam and the Problem of Israel, London: the Islamic Council of Europe, 1980.
13. Social and Natural Sciences, ed. With A.O. Naseef, Sevenoaks, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, and Jeddah, King Abdulaziz University, 1981.
14. The Hijrah: The Necessity of its Iqamat or Vergegenwertigung, ABIM: Kuala Lumpur, 1981.
15. Essays in Islamic and Comparative Studies, ed. Herndon, VA: IIIT, 1982.
16. Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faith, ed. Herndon, VA: IIIT, 1982.
17. Islamization of Knowledge. Herndon, VA: IIIT, 1982.
18. Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life, Kuala Lumpur, IIIT (1985) Islam. Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 1982.
19. The Cultural Atlas of Islam, New York: Macmillan, 1986.

20. Toward Islamic English, Herndon VA: IIIT, 1995.

21. Islam and the other Faiths, ed. Ataullah Siddiqi, UK, Islamic Foundation and USA: IIT, 1998.

His books in Arabic

1. *Muhadarat fi Tarikh al-Adiyan*, Cairo University, 1963.

2. *Usul al-Sahuniyyah fi ddin al-Yahudi*, Cairo, *Maktabu Wahaba*, 1968.

3. *Al-Millal al-Mu'asarah fi ddin al-Yahudi*, Cairo, *Ma'hadul Buhuth wa Dirasaat al-Arabiyyah*, 1968.

4. *Al-Islam wal Fann*, Cairo, *Dar al-Garb li ttabayah wa al-Nashr*, 2000.

5. *Atlas al-Hadarah al-Islamiyyah* in collaboration with Lois Lamy al-Faruqi, tr. Abdul Wahid Lu'lu, ed. Dr. Riyadh Nurullah, Riyadh, *Maktabatu Ubaikan wa al-Ma'had al-Alami lil Fikr al-Islami*, 1998.

6. *Al-Tawhi wa Madaminuhu fil Fikr wal Hayat*, tr. Dr. Al-Sayyed Umar, *al-Ma'had al-Alami lil Fikr al-Islami*.

Works on Faruqi

University theses and dissertations on Faruqi

1. The Islamization of Science: Four Muslims positions Developing an Islamic Modernity by Leif Erik, Fil, Dr, Lund University, Sweden, 1969.
2. Isma'il al-faruqi (1921-1986) and Inter-Faith Dialogue: The Man, the Scholar, the Participant by Fletcher, Charles, PhD thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Canada, 2008.
3. Islam, Modernity and Human Sciences: Toward a Dialogical Approach by Zaidi, Ali Hassan, PhD thesis York University, Canada, 2007.
4. Al-Faruqi's Approach to Comparative Religion: A Critical Study of His Book Christian Ethics, by Modh Murat Bin Md Aris, Master's Thesis, Faculty of Revealed Knowledge, International Islamic University, Malaysia, 2020.
5. *Ma'alim Dirasat al-Masihiyah baina Abi Muhammad Ibn Hazm wa Ismail Raji al-Faruqi*, by Zaina Muhammad Bakhah, M.A. thesis, International Islamic University, Malaysia, 1999.
6. *Manhaj Faruqi fi Dirasat al-Masaihiyyah*, by Lindah Bua'fiah, M.A. Thesis, Department of Usul al-Ddin, University of Batna, Algeria, 2010.

In addition to these there are numerous articles which have been written by Faruqi himself as well as by others on Faruqi.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ See Fathi Hasan al-Malkawi, Raid Jamil Ukashah, Abdul al-Raham (eds.) *Ismail Raji al-Faruqi wa Isahamatuhi fi al-Islah al-Fikr al-Islami al-Muwasir*, Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Fath liddirasat wa al-Nashr, 2014

His marriage with Lois Ibsen

While studying Master's at Indiana University, Faruqi met and later married Lois Ibsen who was also doing a Master's degree in Music. Lois Ibsen was born in July 25, 1962 in Montreal. In 1950, when she was 25 years old she married Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi. According to Hassan Hanafi, a prominent Islamic scholar of Egypt, Lois converted to Islam and adopted the name Lamya لمياء. She completed a B.A. in Music at the University of Montreal, and M.A. in Music at the University of Indianan. In 1960, she studied Islam at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, and then at the University of Pennsylvania, Syracuse, and Temple. She completed her PhD in 1974 at Syracuse in Music Arts and Religion. She taught at Temple, Butler and Indiana University along with universities in Pakistan and the Philippines. Together with Faruqi, she raised five children (2 boys and three girls).¹⁵¹

The death of the Ismail and Lamya Lois Al-Faruqi

The issue of the death of Faruqi and his wife was shock for the entire Muslim world. Both Faruqi and Lamya have been assassinated on May 27, 1986 in their suburban Wyncote, Philadelphia, home. According to the Associated Press, Isma'il (65), and Lamya (59) were stabbed to death in their home in Philadelphia on May 27, 1986 at 2:48 AM. Isma'il was found in the second floor while Lamya was on the shed adjacent to the kitchen. Their 27-year-old eight month pregnant daughter Anman el-Zein survived wounds to her chest and arms requiring 200 stitches. Her 18-month-old son was hidden by her sister Tayma (21 year old) who were upstairs out of harm's way.¹⁵²

Reactions within some of the Muslim community speculated that the murders were the work of Jewish Defense League (JDL). The Jordanian Ministry of Islamic Affairs also claimed that extremist Zionist groups in the US carried out the act. Hafez Malek, a political science professor at Villanova University, told

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p. 18

¹⁵² Fletcher, D. Charles, "Ismail Al-Faruqi (1921-1986) and Inter-Fait Dialogue the Man, the Scholar, the Participant", an unpublished PhD thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, 2008, P 29

reporters that Dr. Faruqi often spoken about death threats in the 1970s and early 1980s due to his outspoken support of the Palestinians, but there were no recent threats. Judaism professor at Temple University Samuelson said that Faruqi's view were "uniquely his own and would make everyone unhappy".¹⁵³

There are still many speculations on this brutal incident in various newspapers and magazines. However, there is no doubt that the Muslim ummah in particular and the whole world in general have lost a great a scholar. His contribution was not confined to the Muslim ummah, rather it included the adherent of other religions, particularly through his inter-faith dialogue program. May Allah have mercy on him and his family, forgive his sins and grant him Jannah.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p 31

Chapter: 2

The formation of Faruqi's thought

From the chronological events of Faruqi's biography, it is rather difficult to comprehend the key factors and influences that shaped his ideas and thoughts. A narrative can tell us what he did and not necessarily why. Unlike the two previous personalities of the thesis i.e. Syed Ali Ashraf and Syed Naqib Al-Attas, the formulation of Faruqi's life and thought vary widely by virtue of the numerous facts, particularly the fact of being a Palestinian American. Besides, there have been some paradigm shifts in his thought, particularly the issue of Arabism vs. Islamism, which will be discussed later.

There are basically three facts which can be regarded as the most profound in formulation of his thought, namely (i) his feelings of Muslim diaspora, (ii) his methodology of engagement with non-Muslims for inter-faith dialogue, and (iii) his quest for transcendental moral solution.

As for the issue of feeling of diaspora, it is important to understand his early life and upbringing in Palestine as well as his migration to the USA. Since his father was a *qadi*, Faruqi then must have learned some basic Muslim practice. However, he was also introduced to Christianity in his early years when he spent ten years at the French Dominican College des Frères. Not only did he learn French, but also he learned a great deal about Catholic Church tradition, doctrine and practice. However, the creation of Israel and the subsequent loss of his homeland, Palestine, has the largest impact on his self-conception. During Faruqi's years at McGill, Fazlur Rahman saw him as an angry young Muslim Palestinian, and Cragg reflected that

... he share in this ongoing tragedy of Palestinian displacement immersed him, and his thinking, in the mystery of pain, resentment, privation, and distress. The prevailing circumstance of his mind and story shadowed all his works.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Fletcher, D. Charles, "Ismail Al-Faruqi (1921-1986) and Inter-Faith Dialogue: the Man, the Scholar, the Participant", an unpublished PhD thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, 2008, P 49

There were the ambition to be a successful man both in terms of physical needs and intellectual pursuits when he left Palestine. However, there also have been the diasporic feelings and the struggle to survive and support himself.

Faruqi recounts

There was a time in my life when all I cared about was proving to myself that I could win my physical and intellectual existence from the West that I could succeed as a man. But when I won it, it became meaningless.¹⁵⁵

In this juncture of his life, he suffered with a sort of identity crisis and tried to construct his self-narrative, and began to develop his profound idea of Arabism or Arab consciousness not only to find the solution to the identity crisis but also due to the fact he was deeply concerned with the disunity of the Arabs and the Muslim ummah in general. And it took him quite a long time to develop the theory of Arabism or *Urubah*.

The theory of Arabism

It was his formative period of intellectual development having deeply affected by several crisis including self-identity crisis and the assimilation into a new culture in the US. He spent quite a long period to develop this theory spanning the years 1954-1962 which resulted in his book *On Arabism :Urubah and Religion : A study of the fundamental ideas of Arabism and Islam at its highest moment of Consciousness*. It is worth mentioning that in formulation of this ideas he was in Egypt studying at Al-Azhar which he also articulated in his series of lectures at Al-Azhar and Cairo University. Charles contends

The theory of Arabism published in 1962 reflected some of the struggle encountered by al-Faruqi as he sought to establish himself in a new culture. It combined the philosophical ideas of value, morals and ethics, all of which were the subject of his graduate work in the United States, with his Arab identity situated within the broader context of Islamic thought, which he studied in Egypt at Al-Azhar and McGill's Institute of Islamic Studies.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 49

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 146

Regarding Arabism, John Esposito – a professor of International affairs and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University and the first PhD student of Faruqi-wrote

Arabism is not simply an idea but a reality, and identity, and a set of values integral to and inseparable from the identity of all Muslims and all non-Muslims Arabs. Arabism is the very spirit of ummah; it incorporates not only the Arab-speaking members of the Arab world, but also the entire world community of the Muslims since Arab language, consciousness, and values are at the core of their common Islamic faith.¹⁵⁷

Another key aspect of the theory of Arabism is the division of Arab consciousness into three periods: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Faruqi tried to build his theory on the concept of ancient primordial essence within humanity from a historical perspective. Because the humanity grew gradually over the time to receive and realize the fullness and blessings of God's oneness, His law, and its result of justice and a moral society. In fact, Arab consciousness was striving to include all people under the one God and a reminder of the Hebrew people who was limited as adherents of the genuine Judaism. According to Faruqi, Judaism was the first moment of Arab consciousness whose essence is the recognition and worship of one God and whose ethics is the universalistic fulfilment of value conceived as His commend. Christianity, on the other hand, was the second moment of the Arab consciousness and came as a solution to the chronic perversion of the Hebrew within the Arab stream of being.¹⁵⁸

The nature of Arabism and the Arab consciousness is determined by values. According to Faruqi, since humanity can only perceive God's values or attributes and not His nature, the realization of these values is the process of Arabism. So, the theory of Arabism is really a theory about values, which are given to us by God and are identified with us by His attributes. In this way, Faruqi tried to develop the inter-faith understanding as each religion attempts to realize common goals.

It is also worth mentioning that the theory of Arabism drew strong criticism from a wider audiences. During Faruqi's lectures in Cairo, several students protested his

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 52

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p.54

about his Arabism theory by asking “What fables are you telling us? However, in a later, dated Nov. 11, 1963 al-Faruqi responded to a letter critiquing his Arabism theory written by Ciyler Young. In his defense, Faruqi noted that the intellectuals of Cairo (Al-Azher and Cairo University) and Karachi University at first reacted against Arabism, but as they learned more they acclaimed it enthusiastically.¹⁵⁹

From Arabism to Islamism

In 1963, there has been another major change in Faruqi’s thought when the idea of Arabism became less significant to him largely due to his connection with the Muslim Students Association (MSA) as he was profoundly impressed by the strong *iman* of the members of MSA. Subsequently, this connection also resulted in the development of the process of Islamization agenda. This was also possible as personally Faruqi was quite liberal to adopt with any changes based on strong epistemological basis which is evident in his intellectual journey.

The very change has also been noticed and testified by many other Faruqi’s contemporaries. Ilyas Ba-Yunus, a pioneer of Islamic work in North America, visited him while he was a patient at the John Hopkins Ophthalmological center and was told: “Until a few months ago, I was a Plestania, an Arab, and A Muslim. Now I am a Muslim who happened to be an Arab from Palestine”. Quraishi, reported a similar conversation a few years later in which Faruqi said: I asked myself: Who am I? A Palestinian, a philosopher, a liberal humanist? My answer was I am a Muslim.¹⁶⁰

Minimizing his idea of Arabism, he started to lay the foundation for a universal, corporate identity which will globally unify the diverse community of the Muslims as one ummah. Faruqi no longer needed to be a lone Palestinian, and Arab Muslim seeking way in the West, but now saw himself as a Muslim and part of a large international community of fellow Muslims, eventually finding his own identity. That was how he returned from his preoccupation with Arabism to the more subtle idea of Islamism which helped Faruqi to be involved in the concept of

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p 21

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 57

Islamization of knowledge to a greater extent. Subsequently it resulted in the creation of International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in order to carry out the Islamization of Knowledge project, where he worked to outline, articulate and promote the Islamic methodology as well as the project of Islamization of knowledge.

As for the second factor i.e. his methodology for the engagement with the non-Muslim and the search for the transcendental moral solution, basically derived from his strong commitment to active involvement in inter-religious relations from an Islamic perspective as he wanted to see Islam takes a more central place within the wider academic community in the US. His unpublished doctoral thesis was an attempt to formulate the principles of inter-faith studies and dialogue on the basis of absolute values. His seminal book on comparative religion *Christian Ethics* provided an insight into meta-religious principles as a means to evaluate all religions.

Faruqi's journey onto the study of religions, and his use of a methodology on engagement with non-Muslims both from religious and philosophical motives. His doctoral research into the metaphysics and the epistemology of value became as an essential element of his later study of non-Muslim faiths. Charles contends

In his study of the epistemological conditions of value he derived inspiration from the works of Max Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann. Both introduced al-Faruqi to the use of philosophical phenomenology, which in then became a reference point in his later study of the history of religion.¹⁶¹

However, one can see the connection between Faruqi's philosophical research and his personal religious developing in this point of his life. Especially with regard to the idea of absolute value. Although his doctoral thesis was based upon pre-Islamic and Western philosophical thinkers, such as Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, yet he has also taken the Islamic theology into account while his search for absolute values, particularly the Mu'tazilite and Hanbalite concept. This was due to his study in Egypt at Al-Azhar which ultimately resulted in his return to the Islamic heritage from his philosophical inclination, particularly when he found Western philosophy wanting.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p 131

With the publication of *Christian Ethics* in 1967, Faruqi offered an explanation of his theory of comparative religious studies. In fact it was a culmination of his thought on ethics and religion which started with the development of his own self-conception moving from a philosopher into a Arab Muslim and then into a Muslim proponent and practitioner of engagement. Charles attempted to figure out the principles of comparative religious studies mainly based on his research on Faruqi's ideas.

The first principle is internal coherence. Which means within a religious system there cannot be any self-contradiction between the various elements that constitute that system. The second principle is that external coherence between all religious system and wider cumulative human knowledge is required. The Third principle is that all revealed truth must cohere with the experience of humanity. The fourth principle is that the truth in a religious system must correspond with reality. And the fifth principle is that a religious system should serve man's movement towards ethicality and higher value.¹⁶² These principles, however, require more explanation in order to have a clear idea about Faruqi's thought regarding comparative religious studies which is not the topic of the thesis.

Dialogue is another important element in Fruqi's thought for mutual respect among the adherents of different religions. Faruqi has established and outlined the principles of dialogue and engagement with the non-Muslims. These are

1. No religious pronouncement is beyond critique.
2. Internal coherence must exist.
3. Proper historical perspective must be maintained.
4. Correspondence with reality must exist.
5. Freedom from absolutized scriptural figurization. (dogmatic interpretation).
6. Dialogue should be conducted on areas where there is a greater possibility of success such as ethical value.¹⁶³

The third and last fact in Fariqu's thought is his quest for a transcendental moral solution. The reason for all these functions from the part of Faruqi was a driving force within him and this force can be identified as the search for truth as an all-

¹⁶² Ibid, p. 170,171

¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 191

encompassing ideology which can be designated as “transcendental moral solution”. In fact, it was quite evident from his early age that he was a thinker as he went on to study philosophy at university and studying it with an English program further shows his inquisitiveness and willingness for learning. Although he was well-acquainted with the Western philosophy, particularly Kant and Nietzsche, yet he could not find the transcendental moral solution to all human moral chaos. This situation motivated him to re-assess the Islamic heritage. Then He started study Islam in a more in depth fashion as he found all these theories wanting.

His doctoral research was dedicated to the investigation of the metaphysics and epistemology of value. He was exposed to various controversies on the issue of the basis of value. His first encounter was with “naturalistic fallacy”, an idea elaborated by the British philosopher G.E. Moore and David Hume. Naturalistic fallacy, according to Moore, is that one cannot attempt to prove a claim about ethics by appealing to a definition of ‘good’ based upon a natural property, such as pleasure or desire. He maintained that ‘good’ is indefinable and that “It is one of those innumerable objects of thought which are themselves incapable of definition, because they are the ultimate terms by reference to which whatever is capable of definition must be defined”.¹⁶⁴ He cited the example of color to illustrate that a dictionary definition of yellow is insufficient to understand what yellow is. To comprehend yellow one must be shown examples. Statements about yellow do not provide the meaning of yellow. Faruqi’s understanding of the naturalistic fallacy, however, contains elements of the ideas of both Moore and Hume and his use of fallacy can be summarized as drawing ethical conclusions from natural facts or deriving an ethical ought based upon a metaphysical *is*.

With the study of Nicolai Hartman’s ethics, Faruqi then moved to another direction and attempted to demonstrate that values are *a priori*, that is, belonging to an order of experience other than that of any value. Values then became absolute not relative and they are considered genuine “prime mover”. Man, through his consciousness, identifies, defines and apprehends these values. Faruqi wrote

Naturally, not everyone is conscious of every value, just as not everyone has insight into every mathematical problem. But where any one does have genuine valuation consciousness,

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p.132

he is not free to feel at random, but only what is itself a value; and this is, in him, a direct witness to the value itself. The value itself, therefore, can be discerned by its presence in consciousness.¹⁶⁵

If, as Faruqi asserted, values are absolute and independent of man in their Ideal Being or essence, then from where did these values originate? This question, however, is not new. With regards to the nature of holiness, Socrates introduces the dilemma by asking, do the gods love holiness because it is holly, or it is holy because they love it? This dilemma reappeared in the medieval Islamic thought between the Mu'tazilites and Hanmalites. The former argue that God loves the good because it is good. The later saw that there is no "good" or "bad" beyond what God has commanded or forbidden in the Quran.

Faruqi initially approached the question of what is goodness and how it can be known from the perspective and work of Western philosophy. His conclusion that values are absolute, led him to the position that God loves the good because it is good. However, once Faruqi came to believe that the absence of the transcendent led to moral chaos because all human morality is relative and not absolute in practice, he could view Allah as both the author and definer of ultimate value in its ideal being and essence. He further elaborates, God is not defined as good because it is not possible to know God since He is transcendent. However, humanity can perceive God's will, which is given to us as values. Values tell us about God's will not His nature.¹⁶⁶

These three elements were the most noticeable ideas in the formulation of Faruqi's thought which also took quite a long time from his busy life. In the process of formation of his thought, he was preoccupied with the condition of the Muslim ummah whether as a daisporic community or those who suffered from Western colonialism. He was constantly busy with identifying the root causes of the misery of the Muslim ummah al over the world. Eventually, in his quest for the causes, he found the system of education in the Muslim world to be the main cause for the malaise of the ummah which led him to come up with the revolutionary idea of Islamization of knowledge. Although his activities included a number of domains e.g. interfaith dialogue, the issue of Muslim diaspora, lecturing and

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 135

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 138

authoring, yet he is more known and acclaimed for his contribution to the Islamization of knowledge project.

Chapter: 3

Faruqi's contribution to Islamization of knowledge

Preliminary thoughts

Prior to discuss Faruqi's view on Islamization of knowledge project, it is important to shed light in his observation of the status of the Muslim ummah all over the world, and identification of the root causes of this situation. He observed that no other nation has been subjected to defeats or humiliation like the Muslim ummah. Muslims were defeated, massacred, colonized, exploited, and forced into conversion to other faiths. More importantly, they were secularized, Westernized, and de-Islamized by various means of their enemies. The global mass media present Muslims as stereotyped, lawless, terrorist, uncivilized, fanatic, and fundamentalist and so on. The Muslim word itself is known only for its inner conflict, and division, its self-contradictions, its war and threats to the world peace, its excessive wealth and excessive poverty, its famines and epidemics.

As for the political domain, the Muslim ummah was severely affected by the colonial conspiracy as they have successfully fragmented the ummah into some fifty or more nation-states and set them one against another. The colonial masters have left no time, peace, resources necessary to integrate its own citizenry into a greater unity. Furthermore, the enemy has created hostile foreign state within the body of the ummah to divert Muslim energy away from reconstruction and to drain its resources to serve as basis for colonialism and foreign political interest. Eventually when the time came to end the colonial power, they handed over power to the military who had already been systematically westernized. So, from political perspective the ummah was suffering from numerous problems mainly due to the external conspiracy.

As far as the economic aspects of the Muslim ummah is concerned, it is quite evident that the ummah is undeveloped and backward. No Muslim state is fully self-sufficient in terms of their basic necessities. Although there were a number of initiatives in the industrial development in the Muslim states, the colonial power managed to make these dependent on their resources so these failed

to contribute to the economic improvement of the ummah. Another economic aspect of the Muslim states was the self-sufficiency. However, in order to weaken this strength of Muslim ummah, the colonial power tried to uproot the Muslim farmers from their villages by false promises of better living in the cities. Eventually the farmers migrated to cities and became the victim of the political agitators who took advantages from their adverse condition.

As for the cultural domain, the root causes of the decline of the ummah was largely due to illiteracy, ignorance, and superstition which spread among the Muslims. Besides, the blind imitation of the West by the Westernized Muslim leaders also resulted in weakness in the foundations of the faith and culture of the ordinary Muslims. More importantly, a secular system of education was built that taught Western values and methods. Consequently, a new group of graduates emerged in the Muslim community who was ignorant and suspicious about the Islamic legacy and started to dominate the ummah. Eventually, a gap began to develop within the ummah dividing it into Westernizing secularizers and opponents of secularization. That was also a part of the agenda of the colonial power as they wanted to see the Westernizing secularizers to become the decision makers in the Muslim societies. The colonialists and their proponents filled the Muslim's daily life with the Western culture and media including newspapers, magazines, and radio, television, which affected Muslims negatively and undermined the Islamic culture. Western social institutions and customs were introduced in every aspects of Muslims life. Muslim men and women began to feel a desire to imitate Western decadence: gradual nudity, immorality in dress and so on. Although by doing so, the so-called Muslim elites tried to be modern or Western, they, however, barbarized themselves. They made themselves something neither Islamic nor Western – rather a cultural abnormality of modern time.

The root causes of the crisis

After observing the miserable condition of the Muslim ummah, Faruqi focused on the root causes of the problem. He then identified the core causes of the problem is the intellectual and methodological decline resulted mainly from the current

educational system of the Muslim world, and the lack of Islamic vision. Faruqi states

Consequently, Muslims scholars and intellectuals are sought to fulfil their needs in the Western social sciences, not realizing that the West had established these sciences in accordance with its own circumstances and goals and rooted in its ideological world vision. As a result, these sciences now tend to reflect the Western values, concepts and beliefs, upon which all Western aspects of behavior, activity and social institutions are established. While these disciplines acceptable and compatible with Western objectives, they tend to clash with Islamic value and guideline (...) the plan draws attention to the current estrangement between the ummah and its legacy – a rift that has been turn Islam’s great achievements into merely historical ones- mere fossils of a bygone age, recalled, if at all, to master nostalgic feelings or an intellectual sense of pride. The legacy of Islam, to may, no longer present the basis of dynamic creativity.¹⁶⁷

Despite the tremendous expansion that has taken place in the educational domain so far in the Muslim societies, the state Muslim education is at its worst. Since the period of colonial administration, the secularist educational system has assumed tremendous domination, removing the Islamic system from the field. After gaining independence, the National governments promoted the secularist educational system by adopting it as their own, allocation more public fund, and secularizing it even further in the name of nationalism and regional patriotism. The rich Muslim countries, on the other hand, also serve the secularist cause along with their growing number of students, faculty members, and expansion of modern facilities. Despite huge amount of allocation in the name of modernization, no significant improvement have been achieved in the quality of education and in the Islamic orientation of the students and faculties. Everywhere is the blind emulation of the Western educational model based on the common slogan “the West is the Best”, assuming the Islamic legacy no longer able to provide guideline in the improvement of the educational system in modern age.

As for the lack of Islamic vision, Muslims over the last two centuries have failed to make notable improvement in the educational domain due to the fact that they don’t have the religious spirit and vision. And because they were not motivated by the Islamic spirit and vision, they had not carried out their journey of

¹⁶⁷ Stenberg Leif, “The Islamization of Science: Four Muslims Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity”, an PhD dissertation , Lund Studies in History of Religion, Lund University, Sweden, 1996, p. 154

seeking knowledge not for the sake of Allah, rather for a materialistic, egoistic, or nationalistic goal. Therefore, they did obtain all the knowledge available to them in the West, nor they digest what they learned to reintegrate it within the Islamic vision of knowledge and truth as the ancient Muslims who learned and Islamized the science of ancient Greece, Persia, and India. Faruqi further elaborates

Education in the Muslim world lacks the vision. Its leadership does not have the vision of the Western man, by necessity; and it does not have the vision of Islam by choice. i.e. by deliberate ignorance, laziness, and lack of concern. Educational leadership in the Muslim world has existed without culture and without cause. Nationalism has inspired the Western universities in the last 200 years because Romanticism has replaced the defunct God of Christianity with “la nation” as the genuine “ultimate reality”. For the Muslims no reality is ultimate but Allah (SWT). Therefore, ultimate loyalty to nation-state, is both impossible and blasphemous to him. Whatever type of link a Muslim has with his legacy and past, it is not possible for him to be a nostalgic in the same sense as the European who has substituted his Christianity with his nationalism.¹⁶⁸

Further, regarding the Islamic vision, Faruqi declares that the roots of the malaise are to be found in influences from a world of ideas based on a vision freeing to Muslim world, that is, ideas from the West. In the field of humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, disciplines were introduced which are alien to Islam. In the field of science the effect was the establishment of new modes of carrying out scientific works. The result was a dependency on the non-Muslim research and the formation of a science which goes against the affirmation of Islam... Thus the problems faced in the ummah are also referred to as a recession in thought and a lack of vision”.¹⁶⁹

Sayyid Qutb, a vehement critic of the modern Western thought and educational system contended that “it is apparent even to some of the more enlightened Occidentals that the philosophy materialistic Western civilization is a danger to the continued existence of man. It breeds in human nature a ceaseless anxiety, a perpetual rivalry, a continuous strife, and a degeneration of all human qualities. And this, in spite of all triumphs of science that could have tended to

¹⁶⁸ Al-Faruqi, Ismail Raji, ed. Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman, *Islamization of knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan*, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1988, p. 7

¹⁶⁹ Stenberg Leif, “The Islamization of Science: Four Muslims Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity”, a PhD dissertation, Lund Studies in History of Religion, Lund University, Sweden, 1996, p. 162

human happiness and peace and content, had it not been that the basis of the Western philosophy of life were purely materialistic and hence unsuitable to guide men along with the path to perfection”.¹⁷⁰

Similar ideas also have been expressed by other contemporary Islamic scholars such as Professor Mumtaz Ali further adds other causes for the current problem. He attributes the reason to the lack of vision of Islamic life. He explained this with a simple question, why do we need a vision in our life? The answer is that we want the good of this world, which depends entirely on correct and true vision of life. The Islamic vision of life is not based on conjecture; rather it is based on knowledge- the revealed knowledge of the Quran and the Sunnah. Whatever vision of life developed upon premises other than those exposed in the Quran and sunnah have been based on ignorance, as man has neither the knowledge nor the ability to develop his own vision of life. The Quran and the Sunnah contain the *shari'ah*—the code of life, which explains the Divine and universal values upon which a healthy society is developed along with human values. As Muslims have neglected the message and mission of Islam, in the same way they have also ignored the real vision of Islamic life, and this has contributed heavily towards their decline.¹⁷¹

Another cause has been observed in this regard by Ibn Khaldun in his *Muqaddinah*, and by Sayyid Mawdudi in “*The Islamic Movement: Dynamics of Values, Power and Changes*”. Both believe that the lack of *ijtihadic* and dynamic leadership is another core cause for the Muslims decline. They explained that the rise and fall of a nation and civilization depends on the role that leader and scholars play in the society. This contention is fully supported by the empirical evidence from both the Western and the Muslim worlds. Unfortunately, the attention of the ummah has been derived from the responsibility of the leadership. They were unable to understand the affairs of the world with *ijtihadic* qualities. Due to this lack of *ijtihadic* leadership, both political and intellectual, the Muslim ummah has to face this current decline all over the world.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, *The History and Philosophy of Islamization of Knowledge: A preliminary Study of the Pioneers' Thought*, Malaysia: IIUM press, 2010, p.105

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p.44

¹⁷² Ibid, p. 46-47

Other contemporary thinkers such as Abul Hasn Ali Nadawi, Malik ibn Nabi, Sayyid Qutb analyzed the factors that contributed to the stagnation of the Muslim ummah. All of them identified the following four factors as having as having contributed to the decline of the ummah: (i) negligence of the universal mission of the decline of the ummah; (ii) disintegration of the caliphate into monarchy; (iii) close of the gates of *ijtihad*; and (iv) negligence towards jihad (utmost struggle in the way of Allah).¹⁷³

Abdul Hmid Abu Sulayman, a pioneer of the Islamization of knowledge movement, and Chairman of the Board of the Trustee of the International Institute of Islamic Thought, asserted that “thought is an element that works at a more fundamental level, one that qualifies any understanding or program for producing real result”. Thus a majority of the Muslim thinkers realized that all of the challenges of our time have been intellectual in nature, and these ought to be addressed at the intellectual level, intelligently and strategically through *ijtihad*.¹⁷⁴

Once the root causes of the decline of the Muslim ummah are identified by the majority of the Muslim thinkers, Faruqi began to figure out the ways to save the ummah from this crisis. And came up with the idea of Islamization of knowledge as a means to the Islamization in its broader sense, and to the revival of the ummah.

¹⁷³ Ibid, p. 175

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 180

Chapter: 4

Faruqi's method of Islamization of knowledge

There are basically three dimensions through which Faruqi sought to implement the idea of Islamization of knowledge. These are (i) extensive distributing and propagating Islamic vision by organizations, seminars, and conferences; (ii) Islamizing the educational system all over the Muslim countries; (iii) and innovating Islamic English. In fact, all his efforts were made from a reformist point of view as Zakyi Ibrahim attempted to compare him with Martin Luther due to his conviction of the necessity of reform. His *Al-Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life* is considered to be his blueprint for achieving his reform agenda. Zakyi further contends

Al-Faruqi regards *iman* not as an act, a decision, or a resolution to accept or in which to put one's trust, or as that which is not known to be true. Rather, it is something that happens to a person when the truth, the factuality of an object strikes one and convinces him/her beyond any doubt of its truth. Thus *iman* and *yaqin* (certainty) are synonymous, for before acquiring *yaqin* one may deny and question the truth. But once one acquires it, truth is established and convincing.¹⁷⁵

The very idea has been reinforced by John Esposito and John Voll. They narrated in their *Makers of Contemporary Islam* that Faruqi believed that Islam was in need of reformation, and he believed, Faruqi aspired to be its Luther. Zakyi, however, said that I am neither praising Luther for his movement nor claiming that al-Faruqi led a similar project; rather, I am asserting their wholehearted conviction that reform was needed and they did what they could. In fact, this may be where the assessment of Faruqi's Christian acquaintance gain its significance.¹⁷⁶

Faruqi, however, started his mission mainly with creating awareness among the Muslim intellectuals about the current crisis of the ummah as well as

¹⁷⁵ Ibrahim, Zakyi, "The Martin Luther of Islam? : Ismail al-Faruqi's Impact on Contemporary Islamic Intellectualism" , *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol. 31, no. 1, Editorial ,p. iii

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, p ii, Editorial

explaining the negative aspects of the Western domination in every domain of life, particularly in educational domain. He tried to demonstrate how Muslim ummah blindly imitate the West for the basis of the fact that Muslim cannot compete the West and are not capable of improving their condition without the help of the West. This mentality ultimately led Muslims to ignore the role of Islam as a source of all creation innovation and advancement.

In order to carry out his awareness agenda, he organized numerous conferences all over the world. For instance, a conference was held in Lugano, Switzerland in 1977. It was an initiative of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS). It is believed that International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) was established as result of this conference, which indicates the partial success of Faruqi's awareness mission. Thirty leaders of Islamic movements and Islamic scholars in various fields of specialization from all over the world have attended the conference. Faruqi, Taha Jabir Al-Alwani, Syeed Hossein Nasr, explained the crisis of the Muslim ummah which is a crisis of thought and intellectual in nature. Regarding the success of the conference, Faruqi contends

The participants unanimously agreed that the contemporary crisis of the ummah was intellectual – a crisis of thought- and the remedy was to be sought within that framework. The seminar participants also concluded that the Muslim thought process and methodology needed to be given priority in the effort to achieve reform and that a specialized body needed to be established to conduct research into these areas.¹⁷⁷

The recommendation of the participants regarding the establishment of a specialized think tank to carry out various research has been achieved and the International Institute of Islamic Thought was established in Herndon, Virginia, in 1981. In the initial period of the institute, it produced the *Islamization of knowledge: General Principle and Work Plan* as blueprint in the formation of the ideas. Then, according to Faruqi, the first edition of the book was a result of the second International Conference on Islamization of knowledge in Islamabad, Pakistan in 1982. The conference was organized in collaboration with the International Institute of Islamic Thought and International Islamic University of Islamabad. Following the conference in Pakistan, individuals at the

¹⁷⁷Stenberg Leif, "The Islamization of Science: Four Muslims Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity", a PhD dissertation, Lund Studies in History of Religion, Lund University, Sweden, 1996, p. 154

institutes decided to publish a detailed plan to serve as a guide to Muslim intellectuals and students in the field of Islamization of knowledge. The “Workplan” continues to develop. In the second edition, it focused on the crisis of thought, which includes two basic dimensions. The first affects the intellectual thought process and the second has to do with the ummah and its legacy.

IIIT continues to extend its activities. In addition to the conference in Islamabad in 1982, the IIIT had held two other major conferences. The first was held in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia in 1984, in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Culture, and the second in Khartoum, Sudan in 1987. The later was organized in collaboration with the University of Khartoum. The first one i.e. the conference in Malaysia, the Prime Minister Mahatir Muhammad took part and held a lecture, declaring his support for the Islamization of knowledge presented by the IIIT. IIIT’s success in Malaysia also has led to the establishment of International Institute of Islamic Thought Malaysia (IIITM). And liaison has been established with various organizations and universities in the USA and in the United Kingdom. IIIT has a network of distributors and local offices all over the world, especially in Europe, Middle East and Asia. Several of new distributors and local offices have been set up are located in Muslim countries especially in the Middle East. Many of institute’s projects are carried out at universities in Egypt such as Cairo University and Al-Azhar University. IIIT is also involved in the development of a specific project at Amir Abdul Qadir Islamic University, in Constantine, Algeria, founded in 1984.

In addition to these, IIIT continues, “prominent thinkers” representing an intellectual elite all over the Muslim world, to overcome the gap between tradition and modernity for today’s Muslims. Moreover, the prospectus of the institute acknowledges the contributions of the Egyptian scholars Muhammad al-Ghazali, Yusuf al-Qradawi, and the Syrian scholar Sayed Ramadan al-Buti.¹⁷⁸

Apart from heightening awareness among the Muslim intellectuals about the crisis through seminars and conferences, Faruqi tried to convey the message by various publications. These include *American Journal of Islamic Social*

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 157

Sciences(AJISS) a quarterly journal published by IIIT together with the Association of Muslim Social Scientists. This journal is playing a significant role in propagating the idea of Islamization of knowledge. Its objectives also include to serve as a bridge Muslim intellectuals and scholars all over the world to affect the development of the scholarly approach in the field of Islamic social sciences and human studies. In association with the Islamic Foundation, Leicester, UK, the institute publishes *The Muslim Word Book Review*. Thus IIIT has developed an extensive distribution net in terms of propagating their message among the Muslims.

Through the IIIT and various other activities, Faruqi managed to create a number of his as well as the institute's adherents. Such one adherent is Mona Abdul-Fadl. She was born in Cairo, but spent a great part her youth in the UK. She was educated in England and earned a doctorate from the University of London. She is professor at Cairo University. She also had the chance to be in charge in a project of IIT called "Western Thought". She has written extensively such as editing the *Association of Muslim Social Scientists: Proceeding of the Twenty First Annual Conference(1993)*. Her articles in AJISS 1991, is an eloquent example of how the adherents of the IIIT have developed from the ideas once held by Faruqi.

Faruqi's and Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman's Islamization of Knowledge occupies a prominent position for the adherents of the ideas presented by the IIIT's publications, especially those individuals who have taken part in conferences organized by the institute, and who have published articles and monographs in IIIT's publications.

Throughout the conferences organized by IIIT, many others has referred to Faruqi as a source of inspiration. They, however, also referred to Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman, Maurice Bucaille, Syed Ahmed Khan, and Mawdudi. References are also made to classical Muslim authors such as Ibn Khaldun, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Taymiyah. The major source of references in the text printed and published by IIIT is the Quran. Of course, there are also numerous references to the sunnah.

Faruqi's next step for the Islamization of knowledge project, after his attempt to create awareness among the Muslim intellectuals and scholars, was to Islamized the educational system in the Muslim countries. It has been noticed by the

contemporary Muslim scholars that one of the core reasons behind the decline of the ummah lies in the emulation and the influence of the Western education on the Muslim countries, Faruqi suggested the following in order to Islamize the educational system

A. Integrating the two educational system

To Faruqi, the first step in the process of the Islamizing the educational system is to unify the two system, Islamic and general from the elementary level to the tertiary level. He argues

to establish a unified educational system in which Islam is the motivation and guiding power, the Islamic educational system, which consists of elementary and secondary schools (*ma'ahid ilmiyah or diniyah*) as well as colleges (*kulliyat*) and universities (*jami'at*), must be united with the secular system of public schools and universities. The union should bring to the new unified system the advantages of both, namely, the financial resources of the state and the commitment to the vision of Islam. Unifying the two system should create the opportunity to eliminate their major shortcomings; namely, the inadequacy of the archaic textbooks, the inexperience of many teachers in the traditional system, and the mimicry of the secular West in methods and ideas in the public system.¹⁷⁹

He then puts emphasis on the financial soundness as it a core element in any educational system. However, he tent to come up with different sources for financing the educational system rather than government fund considering the negative impacts of its influence and control. Which is why he puts forwards some alternatives, namely the endowment (*waqf*- continuous self-supporting charity) the income of which would fund the total system or at least part of it. Faruqi thinks that the *waqf* is a necessary and important means of funding in order for the Muslim educational system to be recessed as it is evident in the history of Islamic educational institutions which were operating by the *waqf* that made them autonomous and thus enabled their teachers and students to seek knowledge for the sake of Allah alone. Furthermore, it was the *waqf*-based madrasah educational system that constituted the model emulated by the first universities of the West

¹⁷⁹Al-Faruqi Ismail Raji, *Islamization of knowledge, General Principal and Work Plan*, Virginia: IIIT, 1989, p. 14

when they were founded eight centuries ago. In the present time, however, it may not be possible to fully depend on *waqf*. Therefore, Faquqi insists that the state should contribute to the financial needs as it is quite common in the Western universities. It is the responsibility of the ummah, in order to build a promising future, to respect its learned sons and daughters and to transmit to them the cultural and spiritual legacy of their ancestors. All these can be done by unifying the two educational systems which is the norm in the Muslim countries at present.

B. Mandatory study of Islamic civilization

Islamic civilization is the spirit of the ummah. A child's spirit is protected by his parents or guardians, who will see to it that he commits no acts hateful in Islam nor violates any provisions of the *sha'riah*. That is why Faruqi suggests a mandatory four-year study of Islamic civilization in order to protect the ummah from the Western de-Islamization process.

Every student in the university must undertake this course of study regardless of his or her area of specialization. It is not possible to be civil without such knowledge. Even students belong to a non-Muslim minority, it should not prevent them from fulfilling this basic requirement. Since they or their parents have chosen to become a citizen of the Islamic state, they must acquire the necessary familiarity with the civilization in which they are living and the spirit and hope that move this civilization and its fellow citizens.

The benefit of studying Islamic civilization also includes the fact that it will enable them to develop a clear sense of identity. No one can be self-conscious who is ignorant of ancestors. Neither one is self-conscious who is unconcerned about the glories, and victories of his ancestors who is inspired by their hope. To know one self is to know how one is different from others not only in the material needs but also in the view of the world, in moral judgment, and in spiritual hope. This is the domain of Islamic culture and civilization that Muslims have built and sustained throughout the generations. This should be achieved through the study of Islamic civilization as well as through the comparative study of other religions and civilizations.

The situation has chained considerably. Today to be modern is to be civilizationally conscious, i.e. to be conscious of the nature of one's civilizational heritage. Unlike the past, the civilizational forces can reach and overtake anyone without invasion or military occupation of his land. They can convert his mind to their world view, and treat him as a puppet whether he is aware of it or not.

Then the study of Islamic civilization should not be only for a special group. Because the vision of Islam is not meant for the specialists alone. Islam insists that all men are to know, teach and to observe the truth. The Prophet (PBUH) said *طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم* "It is obligatory for each Muslim, male or female, to seek knowledge"¹⁸⁰. Islam is the comprehensive religion which encompasses all human activities whether physical, social, economic, political, cultural or spiritual. Islam is relevant to everything said or done.

Therefore, Faquri proposes an educational system in which the curriculum of every department is based on Islamic value, principles, and objectives. Moreover, the course should be designed to provide students the values and the first principles of Islam as the essence of Islamic civilization, as well as the historical achievements of Islamic civilization as manifestations of the first principles of Islam. The course should include discussion of how Islamic civilization compares and contrasts with other civilizations in essences and manifestation. It also will give the Muslim students knowledge of how Islamic civilization is the only option in dealing with the fundamental problems of Muslims and non-Muslims in the contemporary world.¹⁸¹

Having studying the Islamic civilization properly, this educated group will focus on removing the opposition of religion and reason. They will identify the reason of so-called separation of Islamic thought from action. This group will also prove that there is no dualism between mundane and religion. In this regard, Faruqi says

Probably the most far-reaching development in the intellectual history of the ummah is the dichotomy between revelation and reason. It was the advent of Greek logic and its

¹⁸⁰ Ibn Majah, Sunan, Kitab: Muqaddimah, Hadith no:224

¹⁸¹ Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Islamization of knowledge General Principal and Work Plan*, IIIT, 1989, p. 18

influence upon some Muslims who were all too anxious to utilize the methods it provided to convince non-Muslims of the truth of Islam that made them indulge in futile theological issues that eventually led to a perceived separation of *Wahi* and *Aql*. Hellenized Christians and Jews lived for centuries under the aegis of this dichotomy. Al-Farabi gave this dichotomy its classical statement upheld by the philosophers against the theologians (*mutatakallimun*). The dichotomy was accepted by some later *mutatakallimun* who were content to elaborate on the faith defensively. Such logic continued to dominate the field of intellectual discussion in the age of decline, especially under the influence of Sufism, which was influenced by Gnosticism.¹⁸²

The call for Islam was rational and critical. It invited men to use their intelligence and apply their critical faculties in order to be coherent, to say the truth which is absolutely certain. Quran includes numerous commands to use the intellect and praise those who do it. Allah says

إن في خلق السماوات والأرض واختلاف الليل والنهار لآيات لأولي الألباب الذين
يذكرون الله قياما وقعودا وعلى جنوبهم ويتفكرون في خلق السماوات والأرض ربنا
ما خلقت هذا باطلا سبحانك فقنا عذاب النار.

In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are signs for those who possess intelligence. They remember God while standing, sitting, and on their sides, and they reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth: "Our Lord, You did not create all this in vain. Be You glorified. Save us from the retribution of Hell."¹⁸³

Without reason the truth of revelation cannot be understood nor they can be recognized as for what they are, the Divine, and acknowledged as such. If we accept that revelation not based upon reason or *aql*, then this claim will be considered as subjective, arbitrary, and whimsical. Therefore, the true educated group will try to solve this intellectual crisis of dualism between revelation and *aql*.

Then comes the next steps towards Islamization of knowledge which is basically translating the text books of modern knowledge into Islamic English with Islamic vision as all the modern knowledge still belong to the non-Muslim

¹⁸² Ibid, p. 26

¹⁸³ Surah Al-Imran, verse: 190-192.

scholars. As long as the books of modern knowledge does not come within Islamic English, they non-Muslim will remain the undisputed scholars. As far as the Islamization of modern knowledge is concerned, Faruqi thinks that the first prerequisite for the Muslim academicians is to master all the disciplines in order to understand them completely and to achieve an absolute command over them. Then they must integrate the new knowledge in the corpus of the Islamic legacy by eliminating, amending, reinterpreting, and adapting its components as the world-view of Islam and its value dictates.

As for the task of producing text books, Faruqi says

The task of Islamizing knowledge (in concrete terms, to Islamize the disciplines or, better, to produce university level text books recasting some twenty disciplines in accordance with Islamic visions) is among the most to realize. As far we can tell, no Muslim has yet contemplated the contradiction of Western knowledge with the vision of Islam. It is our present generation that first discovered this conflict as we live it in our own intellectual lives..... Until the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) was established, not one educational institution in the Muslim world had planned to tackle the issue of Islamization of knowledge, to produce Islamic text books for college use in the disciplines or provide to tools of research necessary for writing those textbooks.¹⁸⁴

This task is considered as a great one for Muslim intellectuals and leaders i.e. to recast the whole legacy of human knowledge from the viewpoint of Islam. This also include rethinking the reasoning and relating the data to regulate the conclusions, to re-project the goals and to do so in such a way to make the discipline enrich and serve for the cause of Islam. Then through the principles of Islamic methodology such as the unity of God, the unity of Truth, the unity of knowledge, the unity Divine trust, the unity of humanity should be injected in all academic disciplines. These principles constitute the framework of Islamic thought and methodology; they are the lighthouse that guides the Islamic mentality, psychological build-up, and personality in the academic as well as in personal life. Moreover, these principles are the eternal facts of Islam which were brought to men by revelation, so that they are absolute in nature.

¹⁸⁴ Al-Faruqi Ismail Raji, *Islamization of knowledge , General Principal and Work Plan*, Virginian: IIIT, 1989, p. 18

The third approach towards Islamization of knowledge from the part of Faruqi, we find it in his *Towards Islamic English* (1986), in which he says that Islamic English is needed to signify a modified form of English which will enable the English language to carry Islamic proper nouns and meanings without distortion. First, Faruqi attempted to identify the Muslim users of English. Faruqi points at Muslims in Australia, Europe, and North America, who have English as their native language. Then there are those Muslims who use English in reading, writing, and communication and/or research. He maintains that the number of people targeted in this approach is far greater than the number of non-Muslims who speak English as their mother tongue. Therefore it is of paramount importance to make sure that this huge number of Muslims are aware of the proper use of English in terms of religious affairs. Besides, distorting the language of the Quran, the Word of God, would endanger the very existence of the Islamic religion. And Faruqi also criticizes the use of colloquial form of Arabic language and the study of colloquial Arabic. This study promotes a division between Muslims and that threaten the unity of Islam.

He further elaborates the issue that wrong use of Quranic terms, names of Prophet Muhammad, attributes of Allah does not only distort the meaning but also can lead to blasphemy. Transliteration of the key Islamic Arabic terms also does not give the proper meaning. Translation, on the other hand, is also problematic as it can distort the meaning in many cases. Faruqi provides several examples. One is the translation and meaning given to the term *zakah*. He argues English renderings such as alms, alms-giving, and charity are not correct translation of *zakat*. He rather suggests “public welfare tax” as its payment is religiously and publicly obligatory for all Muslims without exception.¹⁸⁵ Faruqi stresses that English translation of the key Islamic terms is a reduction in meaning as it cannot carry the meaning, field of association, and connotation of the Arabic words. He further says

Words like *taqwa*, *haji*, *fiqh*, *usulul fiqh*, hadith etc. have much more meaning in their Arabic form than their English approximation are ever capable of carrying. To give an English translation to them is to reduce, and often, ruin those meaning. To the scholar in

¹⁸⁵ Stenberg Leif, “The Islamization of Science: Four Muslims Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity”, a PhD dissertation, Lund Studies in History of Religion, Lund University, Sweden, 1996, p. 173

general, intellectual loyalty to English form has no right to assume priority over loyalty to meaning. The latter is the realm of truth; and truth must take precedence over all other values- let alone the value of a convention of the English speaking people. A fortiori, for the Muslim, loyalty to “the king’s English” must never assume priority over loyalty to Islam, to its meaning and concepts.¹⁸⁶

Having described the shortcomings regarding the use of English for the Muslim speakers, Faruqi contends that English language in general needs the value of Islam. These can only be provided by the Quranic language. This process or development of English language will help English-speaking Muslims to protect themselves from the “onslaught of materialism, utilitarianism, skepticism, relativism, secularism, and hedonism”. Finally, it may provide English-speaking Muslims with the means to end their predicament in modern time.¹⁸⁷

There we can find the similarity between Al-Attas and Faruqi in terms of appropriate use of language as both emphasized on the issue and considered language an important element in the process of Islamization of knowledge. In fact, Al-Attas mentioned that Islamization should begin with the language as the Prophet (PBUH) rectified many Islamic key terms with the revelation of the Quran. They also identified that as the Islamization occurred through the Islamization of Arabic language, similarly the de-Islamization or secularism of the Muslim minds also effected by the linguistic means i.e. secularizing the semantic field of the key Islamic terms and concepts.

The concept of Islamic university in Faruqi’s thought

Before we conclude, it is important to shed light in brief on the ideas of Islamic university in Faruqi’s thought as a part of his reform movement in the educational domain. According to Faruqi, Muslims were the pioneer in the establishment of

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 174

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 175

university as an independent entity devoted to seeking knowledge with its teachers and students. In fact, this is the idea of university that enabled the early Muslims to cope up with the challenges of Rome and Persia. They were steadfast in the belief that they are capable enough to dominate the world with this new religion. However currently, the Islamic world, in the eyes of many became like an “ill man”, and Islam became a backward religion. The cure should come from the Muslims themselves and should start from the higher educational institutions which help produce creativity and innovation and work on raising awareness among the Muslims. But the universities in the Muslim world have failed to produce the desired intellectual Islamic thought as they are off track. That is why Faruqi attempted to provide the idea of real Islamic universities as he describes in *towards an Islamic university*.¹⁸⁸

Therefore, he suggests that an ideal university should implement the followings:

A. Heritage of the human and sacred knowledge through

- Understanding and implementing the reality of revelation preserved in the Quran and Sunnah.
- Understanding and implementing the knowledge which came though the Islamic heritage in various fields.
- Understanding and implementing the knowledge which came though the humanity in the modern time in various fields.

B. The Muslim ummah and its problems

¹⁸⁸ Fathi Hasan al-Malkawi, Raid Jamil Ukashah, Abdul al-Raham (eds.) *Ismail Raji al-Faruqi wa Isahamatuhu fi al-Islah al-Fikr al-Islami al-Muwasir*, Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Fath liddirasat wa al-Nashr, 2014, p. 617

- The university should, first and foremost, identify the root causes of the decline of the Muslim ummah, and their negative effects on them.

- Understanding the real situation of the ummah in each and every domain.

- Understanding and identifying the problems that effect on the every aspects of Muslim ummah's life.

C. Establishing the connection between the current situation and Islam

- The people concerned with the university should determine the relation between Islam and every branches of human knowledge and scholarship.

- Formulating plan for resolving the problems of Muslims, as well as implementing Islamic values.

D. Islam and the world: this is through

- Understanding the current reality and problems faced by non-Muslims all over the world.

- Establishing connection between Islam and non-Muslims.

G. *Tarbiyyah* of Muslims: through

- Providing *tarbiyyah* both for male and female.

- Development of sentimental and cultural strength necessary for implementing the above mentioned objectives.

H. Preserve the heritage and enrich them through

- Preparing the services necessary for enabling the Muslim students for explaining the spirit of Islam and its movement.
- Preserve all the works and innovations occurred throughout the history which are harmonious with Islam.

Finally, the preservation of the identity of sociality should be done through education. It is not possible except exerting huge effort by the universities in the Muslim world in order to raise a comprehensive Islamic awareness as universities play the vital role in spreading mass awareness and creating future leaderships.¹⁸⁹

With regard to the Islamic courses at the university students, Faruqi suggests three fundamental programs. These include

- *Al-Alamiyyah* degree program: The duration of this program is four years. Students in this program should fulfil three requirements, namely Islamic requirements, general requirements, and the requirements of the department.
- *Al-Faqaha* degree program: This program consists of three years of university studies. It is a specialized course which also includes learning a foreign language. At the end students are required to prepare a thesis.
- *Al-Hikamh* degree program: This program also consist of three years of university studies. One year is for the study in the field of specialization. One year is for the study of relevant subjects of the thesis. And the last year should be devoted to preparing the thesis.¹⁹⁰

Faruqi, tends to emphasis more on the role of higher educational institutions in terms of implementing reform in the Muslim educational system. Especially

¹⁸⁹Fathi Hasan al-Malkawi, Raid Jamil Ukashah, Abdul al-Raham (eds.) *Ismail Raji al-Faruqi wa Isahamatuhi fi al-Islah al-Fikr al-Islami al-Muwasir*, Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Fath liddirasat wa al-Nashr, 2014, p. 636

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 654

through eliminating the dual educational system, instilling the spirit of Islamic vision, as well as mandatory study of the Islamic civilization.

Chapter: 5

Concluding remarks

There is great deal more that can be written about a personality like Faruqi, whose ideas will continue to inspire the ummah to regain its glory of the past when Muslims were regarded as the benchmark in every aspects of life, especially in the domain of knowledge and scholarship. Faruqi, in his long journey to the quest for truth, remained committed to Islamic values and principles, and felt the sense of belonging to Islam rather than the West despite spending most of life in the West.

One of the manifestationS of his lifelong commitment to the agenda of Islamization of knowledge is the worldwide acclamation of his ideas by the Islamic scholars. IIT, on the other hand, continues to expand its activities globally by its 13 offices all over the world. He wanted to see Islam in a strong position in the world, particularly in the academic arena of the US. That is why his main focus was reform of educational system in the Muslim countries in order to avoid being dominated by the West. He thought that the contemporary educational system in the Muslim world from elementary level to tertiary level is a mere caricature of educational system in Europe and North America. He, therefore, believed that a new Islamic ally educated generation is the key to the future – a world in harmony and balance.

As for his endeavor in developing the principles of dialogue and comparative religious study, he was heavily inspired by the classical Muslim scholars such as Ibn Hazm who studied other religions and set out the principles of what is now known as textual criticism. Therefore, the study of other faith from the part of Faruqi was not something new, it is, to Faruqi, a part of the rich historic legacy of Islamic thought. His active involvement with the various organization,

particularly the American Academy of Religion was a remarkable contribution to the idea of interfaith dialogue. Due to his ten-year involvement with the Academy, he finally managed to set up the Islamic Studies section and remained its chair till 1982. In fact, Faruqi tried to establish a common ground among Muslims, Christians, and Jews, and bring various faith communities closer together by fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. His numerous writings dealing with a variety of inter-faith issues are an important guideline for upcoming researchers in the field of inter-faith study. The most prominent of these include *Christian Ethics*, “*Islam and Christianity: Diatribe or dialogue*”, “*On the Nature of Islamic Da’wah*”, “*Meta-Religion: Towards a critical world theology*” etc. Thus he ushered a new era in the study of comparative religious study in the contemporary Islamic history.

Since his assassination in 1986, substantial efforts have been made to spread the thought and ideas of Faruqi among the Muslims not only as a means of appreciating his contributions but also for the desperate need for the new generation to benefit from his ideas. These include the international conference in Jordan organized by IIIT, Jordan in collaboration with Yarmouk University in 2012, the first of its kind in the Arab world. Some twenty-four papers have been presented covering various aspects of Faruqi’s ideas. This book is regarded as the first reference book on Faruqi’s thought in Arabic. Another such conference was held in 2010 in the UK, organized by IIIT at the Center for Study of Democracy, at Westminster University. Recently, in June 2016, IIIT organized Al-Faruqi memorial lecture hosting more than ninety guests. These indicate the rising interest of Muslim scholars in Faruqi all over the world. The journal of the IIIT *Majalltu Islamiyyatul Ma’riafh* has published a special issue on Faruqi, and the

American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences has also published a special issue dedicated to Faruqi.

However, despite this concern about the thought of Faruqi, Muslim scholars, such as Fathi Hasan al-Malkawi, Raid Jamil Ukashah, Abdul al-Raham believe that we need more studies, researches in educational institutions by the intellectuals and researchers to explore his contribution in order to benefit more from his legacy. They also suggest to establish Faruqi Chair in different educational institutions in various aspects of his contributions particularly in comparative religion, history of intellectual thought, philosophy, education in order to accomplish Faruqi's project of the revival of the ummah through education reform and implementing the idea of Islamization of knowledge.

Lief says

In this urgent appeal directed to Muslims it is often stated that the model and the example to follow is Muhammad. Thus, Al-Faruqi can also be regarded as a prototype for Muslim scientists. His actions and life constitute a model to be followed in matters concerning the Islamization of knowledge project. Al-Faruqi's radical change from being a committed Arab nationalist to becoming a committed Muslim can serve as an example for Muslims to follow in their daily life.¹⁹¹

Finally, it should be clear to even a casual reader that although his contribution included a wide variety of fields, however, his idea of educational reform and formulation of the principles of Islamization of knowledge should be regarded the most invaluable among these. There are many fundamental elements in his thought that should encourage Muslim scholars and researchers to pursue further studies, particularly at masters and doctoral level of the higher educational institutions.

¹⁹¹ Stenberg Leif, "The Islamization of Science: Four Muslims Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity", a PhD dissertation Lund Studies in History of Religion, Lund University, Sweden, 1996, p. 221

Conclusion

Although the main focus of this study was on demonstration of the contributions of the Syed Ali Ashraf, Syed Naqib Al-Attas and Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi to Islamization of knowledge through their lifelong commitment to the subject, a number of issues have also been covered. These include the rationale of the Islamization project, and their approach to convey this message to the Muslim ummah by publications, conferences, research institutions, conceptualization of the agenda Islamization, and formulation of methodologies to implement the agenda as well as a few major ideas of their thought. However, it is still fruitful to summarize some of the key points of their thoughts discussed in this thesis.

In the case of Syed Ali Ashraf, although specialized in English literature, the interest in the reform of educational system stems from two reasons. First is the negative impact of colonial role on the Muslim world in general and on the Indian subcontinent in particular as he witnessed the core of the educational system in the leading two institutions namely the University of Dhaka, and Karachi University in the aftermath of the colonial period. Second is the adaption of Western system of education by the Muslims countries as he spent quite a long period of this life in the West.

His insight into the nature of Western concept of knowledge and education provides the shortcomings of Western system of education and the rationale for the reform in educational domain. His presentation of the classification of knowledge also serves as a rationale for Islamization as well as the nature of comprehensiveness of knowledge in Islam. His explanation of the nature of man is rather sophisticated as understanding the nature of knowledge from Islamic point of view depends on the appropriate comprehension of the nature of man, for man is an integral part in the process of learning.

Finally, his contribution to the Islamization movement through developing the conceptual framework and methodology is considered to be the steppingstone to the success of the movement, particularly his effort to organize the World Conferences on Muslim Education in 90s. As for the implementation of the idea of Islamization, he established Darul Ihsan University in Dhaka on the basis of his

view of an ideal Islamic university though it no longer reflects his vision due to its gradual deterioration of various aspects.

Syed Naqib Al-Attas has also contributed substantially to the Islamization movement through his active involvement, particularly writings. His utmost emphasis on the linguistic aspect of the Islamization is also a key element in his thought which has been discussed in this thesis. His views on education and the appropriate use of its Arabic equivalence have been covered due to his emphasis on semantic effect on the understanding of religion (*din*). He has special observation of *din*, for the understanding of the nature of *din* would help grasp the other key elements such as justice, brotherhood, the covenant of man with God etc. Therefore, this work has also shed light on the discourse of *din* briefly.

The idea of *adab* takes a central place in Al-Attas' thought in relation to the education and knowledge. So this work attempted to cover the topic in a nutshell. His elaboration of the Islamization of knowledge as well as its process was discussed as a major component of the thesis. In fact, he formulated the principles of Islamization from a philosophical point of view as the teachings of Fansuri was quite evident in his thought process. With regard to the implementation of Islamization he also expressed the similar idea of the other two personalities of the thesis, mainly the deliverance of Western elements from the educational system in the Muslim world.

Thus, as a pioneer of the Islamization movement, Al-Attas legacy provides us with an all-inclusive idea of Islam in general and of Islamization in particular. His attempt to implement the Islamization process is manifested in the establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization. The manifestation of his contribution also includes inculcation of his vision of reform and Islamization within some of the contemporary scholars, namely Professor Wan Mohd Noor Wan Daud. His thought will continue to illuminate the present ummah as well the generations to come.

Finally, in the part of Islamil Raji Al-Faruqi in this work, the formative period of his life has been quite important due to the creation of Israel and the fact of being a Muslim diaspora in the USA, which effected his thought so profoundly. In the process of formulating his thought, he was exposed to various philosophical

ideologies which resulted in a number of shifts in his thought process. His thorough study of other faith and setting out of its methodology was regarded as the first of its kind in the contemporary Muslim intellectual history. The dissemination of idea of reform in the Muslim educational system through extensive travelling across the globe played a major role in increasing awareness about Islamization of knowledge. Then, in the implementation of Islamization, the establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) along with its publications and other numerous activities was a significant contribution of Faruqi to the subject. Faruqi put emphasis on the role of higher educational institutions as a means to implement the Islamization idea as he believed that reform should begin from the tertiary level because of the influence of the university graduates in shaping the mindset of society.

Due to the significance of the idea of Islamization of knowledge, this study humbly suggests more systematic studies by the Islamic scholars and researchers to spread the thought of the three personalities as well as other proponents of the Islamization movement among the ummah in order to achieve its revival and regain its glory. Efforts should be also made to pave the way for implementing the theory of Islamization in the educational domain, particularly establishing more research institutions to fulfil the prerequisites of the Islamization i.e. heightening awareness among the authorities in the Muslim countries, rewriting the text books from Islamic perspectives, translating books written on Islamization into different languages. It is also the responsibility of Muslim ummah to demonstrate the benefit of rethinking the purpose of education from an Islamic perspective in order to eliminate the Western hegemony in the educational realm which is based on material and secular ideas. Otherwise, the western hegemony will result in more chaos in the Islamic academic world rather than harmony.

In addition to these, Islamization of knowledge project will vilify the so-called universal theory, the “Clash of Civilisation” of Samuel P. Huntington who in his seminal work *The Clashes of Civilizations and the Remaking the World Order*, argues that people’s cultural and religious identity will be the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War world, despite the criticism of his theory by many academics including Edward Said. Thus not only the Muslim ummah, but also the whole globe will get rid of the unbridgeable dichotomy among the religious

sects.,on the other hand, it is time for the Muslim ummah to prevent Islam to be presented as backward by the Western scholars and the Muslims themselves who are imbued with the Western thought, which can be done primarily by reforming the educational system of the Muslim countries by implementing Islamization of knowledge theory.

Therefore, we hope that this study would stimulate young researchers to realize the significance of the issue and conduct more rigorous research on the various aspects of the Islamization of knowledge agenda as well as the ideas and thoughts of its proponents all over the world.

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