

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT,
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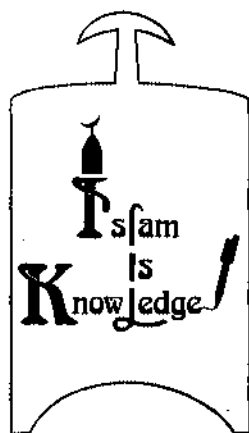
ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE SERIES

1

Islamization of Knowledge

Conceptual Background, Vision and Tasks

Salisu Shehu



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Salisu Shehu was born in Tafawa Balewa town of Bauchi State, Nigeria in 1965. His early education started with the traditional Qur'anic school obtainable all over Northern Nigeria. He later got enrolled into the conventional primary school in 1972. He had his post-primary education at the Government Arabic Teachers' College, Gombe from 1978 to 1983. He obtained both his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Bayero University, Kano in 1988 and 1995 respectively. He was a lecturer in Educational Psychology in the Federal College of Education (Technical), Gombe before joining the Department of Education, Bayero University, Kano where he currently teaches the same course among several others. He is the Director, Research and Publication, I.I.I.T.(Nigeria Office)

Shehu has written a number of papers and articles some of which include: "Qur'an and World Peace; Islamic Conception of Social Justice and Equity: Its Relevance and Efficacy to the Problem of Inequality in Nigeria"; and "Planning, Strategy and Conduct of War in Islam: Reflections on the Political and Military Biography of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w)" which will soon be published in sha Allah.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ١ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ٢
أَقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ٣ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ٤ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ
مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ٥

(العلق: ١ - ٥)

Read in the name of your Sustainer, who has Created man out of a germ cell. Read - for your Sustainer is the Most bountiful One. Who has taught (man) the use of the pen. Taught Man what he did not know. (Qur'an 96:1-5)

« إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ . وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ لِدُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا ، أَوْ امْرَأَةٍ يَتَّكِمُهَا فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَا عَابَرَ إِلَيْهِ وَتَفْتَنُ عَلَى صَبِيحٍ . وَهَذَا إِيمَانُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ : أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدٌ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ مَنَافٍ الْقُرَشِيُّ الْبَحَارِيُّ ، وَأَبُو الْحَسَنِ مُسْلِمُ بْنُ الْحَجَّاجِ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ الْقَشْقَرِيُّ الْقِيسَابُورِيُّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا فِي صَحِيحِهِمَا الْكَلْبُ الْقَصِيفُ . »

Umar ibn al-Khattab has related that he heard the Holy Prophet say: Motive determines the value of all conduct, and a person attains that which he desires. If the motive of one who emigrates is to attain to Allah and His Messenger, then that is the purpose of his migration; and he who migrates seeking the world attains to it, and he who migrates for the sake of a woman, marries her and thus his migration is for the purpose he has in mind (Bukhari and Muslim).

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**ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE:
CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND,
VISION AND TASKS**

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FOREWARD

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon His Messenger Muhammad. Wassalamu Alaykun Rahmatullah.

The IIIT (International Institute of Islamic Thought) in Nigeria, in conjunction with the Muslim Forum of Bayero University, Kano, jointly organized and conducted a one day seminar on the Islamization of Knowledge. The seminar took place on 5 Rabi' al - Awwal, 1417 (20 July 1996). It was one of a series of programme designed for faculty outreach. Therefore, academic staff in the various faculties of the University were invited and constituted the primary audience.

The primary aim of the seminar was to educate and mobilize Muslim academicians in the University towards the Islamization of knowledge programme. It has been observed that, although a number of departments in the University offer Islamically oriented courses and several papers had been presented in some departments and even some international seminars, many academic staff still do not have a proper understanding of the idea behind the Islamization of knowledge. For this reason, all the papers presented focused on the concept of Islamization of Knowledge itself.

One of the papers presented is Salisu Shehu's entitled, "Islamic Vision of Knowledge: Its implications and Significance to the Islamization of Knowledge Programme". This paper elucidated the conceptual basis of the Islamization of

knowledge which centres on the Islamic vision of knowledge. The paper clearly analyzed the position and importance of knowledge in Islam, the aim of acquiring knowledge in Islam, Islamic source of knowledge, classification of knowledge in Islam, Islamic view about the Universality of Knowledge and the characteristics of knowledge in Islam. It then discussed the significance and implications of the Islamic vision of knowledge to the Islamization of knowledge programme.

The thoroughness, brilliance and excellence of the paper motivated the IIT (Nigeria) Office to request Bro. Salisu Shehu to expand some of the sub-themes, especially on the tasks ahead for the Islamization of knowledge programme, with a view to publishing it. This booklet is the outcome of Bro. Salisu Shehu's vision which has been edited. This is then the pioneering book on Islamization of knowledge to be published by IIT (Nigeria) office. In sha Allah another paper will be published in the same way.

I pray to Allah Subhanahu waTa'ala to open the hearts and minds of all Muslims who come across this publication in order for them to assimilate its content and live their lives in accordance with the teachings it contains. May the Almighty reward the author abundantly. Ameen.

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23rd March, 1998.

SECTION ONE

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ ،
وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَمَنْ وَاوَاهُ بِإِحْسَانٍ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ .

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon His Messenger- Muhammad (S. A. W), his progenies, companions and all those who follow their footsteps up to the day of judgement.

When Allah was sending man down to the earth as His vicegerent, He promised sending him His guidance. That, 'whosoever follows this guidance will not lose his way, nor fall into misery'(Qur'an, 20: 123). As a fulfilment of this promise, Allah sent His messengers to all human communities throughout history, with Scriptures containing His sublime guidance. These messengers were sent with the primary duty of inviting mankind to accept this guidance and to warn against rejecting it. Allah says in the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w):

﴿إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ﴾

(سورة فاطر ٢٤)

Verily We have sent thee in truth, as a bearer of glad

tidings, and as a Warner: and there never was a people, without a Warner having lived among them (in the past) (Qur'an, 35:24).

This divine process of sending messengers to respective human communities took place throughout human history, until it was finally sealed up with the coming of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w). He is therefore, the last of all the Messengers of Allah to the world, and the divine book with which he came - Al-Qur'an-is similarly the last and final heavenly scripture to be sent to the world. There will not be any prophet after Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) just as there will never be any book that will be sent from heaven. The coming of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) with the Qur'an has thus finalised and concluded the process of divine revelation from Allah to mankind.

The Qur'an is not simply the final source of heavenly guidance to humanity. It also supersedes and abrogates all the previous revelations. This status of the Qur'an has some necessary and important implications for the guidance eternally willed for the world by Allah. First of all, the finality of its status implies permanence and originality. This is necessary because, if it fails to endure this status to the end of earthly life, there will come a time when it will perish or at least get distorted, a situation that will again necessitate another revelation. But since Allah had destined that it is the final revelation He guaranteed its eternal originality and permanence by taking it upon His Glorious Self to protect it from extinction and distortion, and to safeguard its sanctity and glory. He says:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾

(سورة الحجر ٩)

*We have without doubt, sent down the Message; and
We will assuredly guard it (from corruption).
(Qur'an, 15:9)*

In another verse He says:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِأَنذَرْنَاهُمْ أَن يَكُونَ لَهُمْ كِتَابٌ عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَاطِلُ مِن بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِن خَلْفِهِ تَنزِيلٌ
مِّن حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ﴾
(سورة فصلت ٤١-٤٢)

*Those who reject the Message when it comes to them(are
not hidden from us). And indeed it is a Book of exalted
power. No falsehood can approach it from before or behind
it. It is sent down by One Full of Wisdom, Worthy of Praise.
(Qur'an, 41:41&42)*

The two attributes described above- finality and eternal originality- necessarily imply universality and dynamism. By these it means relevance and suitability to all times, peoples and places up to the end of the world. In this regard Allah says:

﴿قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا . . .﴾
(سورة الأعراف ١٥٨)

Say: "O men! I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah,....." (Qur'an, 7:158)

All the attributes mentioned above necessarily imply some more others. These are completeness, comprehensiveness and sublimity. These mean that since it is the final, everlasting-

ing, universal and dynamic source of guidance from Allah, it must be an exposition of all aspects of life. It must also be a perfect and sublime code of life. All these attributes are necessary because without them the concept of its finality would have been meaningless, just as its universality would also have been worthless. Allah has affirmed all these important attributes in the Qur'an. For instance, regarding comprehensiveness He says:

﴿وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ﴾

(سورة النحل : ٨٩)

..... and We have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things, a Guide, and a Mercy to all Muslims. (Qur'an, 16:89)
Concerning its sublimity and supremacy the verses are too numerous, but in one of them He says:

﴿قُلْ لَّيْسَ احْتَمَعَتِ الْاِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ اَنْ يَّاتُوْا بِمِثْلِ هٰذَا

الْقُرْاٰنِ لَا يَّاتُوْنَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا﴾

(سورة الاسراء : ٨٨)

Say: " If the whole of mankind and jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed each other with help and support. (Qur'an, 17:88)

With these indisputable facts about the Qur'an there remains no doubt that it perfectly guides all aspects of our lives comprehensively. This is what makes Islam a complete way of

life perfected and immaculately articulated by Allah. He alludes to this in the Qur'an saying:

﴿اليوم أكملت لكم دينكم وأتممت عليكم نعمتي ورضيت لكم الإسلام

دينا...﴾

(سورة المائدة : ٣)

....*This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.* (Qur'an, 5:3)

There is no doubt regarding the fact that of all aspects of human life, knowledge stands out as the most vital. Given the comprehensiveness, universality and sublimity of Islam as a way of life it is inconceivable to think that the Qur'an and the Sunnah (its Prophetic interpretation) would be indifferent to this all important aspect of life. We can see that Islam attaches paramount importance to knowledge and the Qur'an has even shown us that it is a unique human attribute which differentiates him from all other creatures. It is also the source of his exaltation and honour above all of them, including the angels.

Islam is a distinct worldview and the Qur'an and Sunnah are its divine embodiment. Muslims believe that these two are the primary sources of the Islamic way of life just as they are also inexhaustible treasures of knowledge. Islam therefore has a distinct view about knowledge and its purpose. This is in line with its worldview.

The Muslim world has unfortunately been invaded by an alien, Western and secular worldview. It is clear that

there are differences between the Islamic and Western worldviews. These differences are fundamental and have found expression in their respective approaches to knowledge.

The imposition of the secular system of knowledge on the Muslim world by means of colonialism has caused serious problems to education among Muslims. Beside the problem of duality, the imposed system is grossly incompatible with the Muslims' overall cultural and civilizational disposition. This is the factor which is responsible for the intellectual sterility and cultural misorientation that characterise Muslims who have been educated in the secular system. They are usually unproductive because the education they received is not relevant to their value system and ideological orientation. For a person to be productive he has to be educated in the context of his value system and ideology. Education will be useless if it does not represent the belief and values of the community in which it is operated. The consequence of this situation is a growing disenchantment with the secular approach to knowledge which has predominance in the Muslim world.

The Islamization of knowledge programme to which this book is a contribution, is an attempt to reorient and recast knowledge to conform to the Islamic belief system and worldview. In this regard a clear and unambiguous understanding of the Islamic concept of knowledge is needed. This is so because, whatever discipline is intended to be Islamized, its degree of conformity or otherwise to Islam can only be adequately discerned on the basis of the Islamic idea of knowledge. Similarly, the Islamic view of knowledge invariably constitutes the vision of this noble undertaking. This book attempts to analyse the components that make up the Islamic vision of knowledge, its implications

and significance to the Islamization of Knowledge programme.

In order to put the Islamization of knowledge undertaking into proper perspective an attempt has been made at presenting a conceptual background by means of analysing contradictions arising from the differences between the two contending worldviews. In the light of these contradictions, the essential differences between the two respective approaches to knowledge are discussed; and against this background, a case for the Islamization of knowledge is thus made.

Some of the major tasks envisaged ahead of the programme are suggested in the last section of the book. It is hoped that this humble attempt at introducing the Islamization of knowledge endeavour shall bring the concept to the limelight and shall generate further intellectual contributions in the same direction. All praises are due to Allah Who has guided us to this. We could never have been guided had it not been for the guidance of Allah.

1. TWO OPPOSING WORLDVIEWS

Humanity has always had tremendous lessons to learn from history. One of such lessons is the all pervading and recurrent historical experience which the world has always passed through. Throughout history, the world has been dominated, and at the same time polarised, by two contending political, civilizational and ideological powers.

At the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, the world was undergoing this kind of historical experience. This was the fierce contention between the Persian Empire on one hand, and the Roman Empire on the other hand. These were two super powers, whose political set up and interests,

ideological orientations and overall cultural and civilizational dispositions were parallel. It was thus a conflict between two parallel, or rather antagonistic world views. The Qur'an alludes to this historical fact in Surah 30, verses 2-6. Allah says:

﴿أَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ الْبَاقِيَ وَسِعَ الْعَرْشَ جُودًا﴾ (١) غلبت الروم (٢) في أدنى الأرض وهم من بعد غلبهم سيغلبون (٤) في بضع سنين لله الأمر من قبل ومن بعد ويومئذ يفرح المؤمنون (٥) بنصر الله ينصر من يشاء وهو العزيز الرحيم (٦) وعده الله لا يخلف الله وعده ولكن أكثر الناس لا يعلمون (٧) ﴿
(سورة الروم : ١-٧)

"The Roman Empire has been defeated; In a land close by; but they, (even) after (this) defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious; within a few years. With God is the Decision, In the past And in the Future: On that Day shall The Believers rejoice-with the help of God. He helps whom He will, and He is Exalted in Might, Most Merciful. (It is) the promise of God. Never does God depart from His promise: But most men understand not."

In the recent past, the world experienced this type of bi-polar contention between the capitalist western bloc championed by the USA, and the communist eastern bloc spearheaded by the former USSR. Even though communism itself was a child of western thought, and so the antagonism with capitalism can be seen to be a mere farce, the fact that the world witnessed it in practical terms is an indissmissible historical reality and experience. Presently,

with the demise of communism and the disintegration of the eastern communist political and ideological bloc, the western capitalist hegemony looks unrivalled. However, it is very clear that a potential contender is invariably the Muslim world. According to Mazrui (1990), Islam has always been strongly rebellious against Western cultural and political hegemony, and has always resisted its conquest. In this regard, Islamic resistance and rebellion against western imperialism preceded the birth of Marxism. While this conflict between Islam and the West may have been latent during certain periods in history, it has now become glaring and obvious. The ongoing process of globalization which reduces the world to the status of a village coupled with increasing Islamic re-awakening world-wide, has begun to make this conflict take more decisive dimensions. The world therefore, can be said to be experiencing yet another contention between what can succinctly be described as two civilizational forces, in all their ramifications, dimensions and manifestations: the Islamic civilizational force and the Western secular civilization.

After a long period of political servitude to and economic dependence on the West, accompanied by a long experience of intellectual and cultural stagnation, apathy and pathological despair of its adherents, Islam has come to reassert its forceful influence and presence on the platform of human history. At a time when the West is inebriated and deceived by its self-conceited consciousness and notion of indomitability and incontestability, the momentum of Islamic resurgence is on the increase. According to Ahmad and Ansari (1979, p. 5.), "there is a perceptible disenchantment with man made ideologies which had lately begun to cast a spell over Muslims as solvents to man's problems. There is an increasing desire to draw upon the intrinsic resources of

Islam to build a new order". Right from the last half of the fourteenth century of the Hijrah calendar the world has been witnessing a great surge in Islamic awareness, and many segments of the Ummah have made many significant strides toward self-liberation (Al-Faruqi, 1987).¹

The present contention between Islam and the world of Western secularism should be seen as a conflict between two incompatible worldviews - the Islamic and the secular Western worldviews. As explained by Hamid, (1993), a worldview is a way in which a person sees and explains the world and his place in it. A person's world view not only affects the way he thinks but it also affects the way he acts or behaves. A people's world view therefore shapes and moulds their lives.

The incompatibility of the two worldviews is informed by the fundamental and essential differences between them. These differences are antithetical to each other, and have found expression in their respective approaches to knowledge. It is pertinent to present brief pictures of these two opposing world views for the purpose of better understanding and appreciation of the call for Islamization of Knowledge.

(a) The Islamic Worldview

Concisely, the Islamic world view can be explained in terms of three fundamental conceptions. These are the Islamic conception of God, Life and the Universe. As Allah's vicegerent man is the principal actor in the universe. He dominates, and therefore fashions and manipulates in his own limited ways, the life in this universe. Because of this, the Islamic worldview like all others, centres around man, the purpose of his life, his relation to God, and his

relation to other creatures in the universe. It is against this background that the Islamic worldview is discussed here:-

(i) The Islamic Conception of God

The Islamic conception of God is that He exists and His Existence is an Infinite and Eternal Existence which never had any beginning and will never have an end. The Qur'an says:

﴿هو الأول والآخر والظاهر والباطن وهو بكل شيء عليم﴾

(سورة الحديد : ٣)

"He is the First and the Last, The Evident and the Immanent: And He has full knowledge of all things". (Qur'an 57:3)

His Existence therefore, preceded time and also transcends it. This is because, time as we conceive of it in this world is itself His creation. He alone created the universe and all that is beyond it, and He Alone sustains, cherishes, and governs it.² He has dominion and power over all things since He is the One that creates life and death which are the common and phenomenal characteristics of all creatures in the universe without exception. He has Absolute and Unlimited Knowledge, Wisdom, Power and Will. He is therefore Omniscient, Omnipotent, Sovereign, and Supreme above all things. All things (including man) depend on Him for everything and in anything because nothing escapes or defies His Will. Thus it is He, and only He alone, deserves to be worshipped. And this (worship) is the purpose for which He created man in particular and the universe in general. The following verse of the Qur'an is a precise and

concise presentation of the Islamic conception of God. The verse (Ayatul-Kursiyy) reads:

﴿الله لا إله إلا هو الحي القيوم لا تأخذه سنة ولا نوم له ما في السموات وما في الأرض من ذا الذي يشفع عنده إلا بإذنه يعلم ما بين أيديهم وما خلفهم ولا يحيطون بشيء من علمه إلا بما شاء وسع كرسيه السموات والأرض ولا يشوده حفظهما وهو العلي العظيم﴾
(سورة البقرة : ٢٥٥)

"Allah! There is no God save Him, the Alive, the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtaketh Him. Unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that intercedeth with Him save by His leave? He knoweth that which is in front of them and that which is behind them, while they encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He wills. His Throne includeth the heavens and the earth, and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, The Tremendous" (Qur'an, 2:255).

(ii) The Islamic Conception of Life

In Islam life has a purpose. It is the worship of God. He is the source of life and He gave it for this purpose. Nothing whatsoever comes into existence by chance or accident. Nobody created himself and nobody can create and give life except Him. While declaring this purpose of life and affirming that He is the source of all creation, He says:

﴿أفحسبتم أنما خلقنكم عبثاً وأنكم إلينا لا ترجعون﴾
(سورة المؤمنون : ١١٥)

"Deemed ye then that We had created you for naught, and that ye would not be returned unto us?" (Qur'an 23:115).

﴿وما خلقت الجن والإنس إلا ليعبدون﴾ (٥٦)
مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُوا (٥٧)
إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ (٥٨) ﴿
(سورة الذاريات : ٥٦-٥٨)

"I created the Jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me. I seek no livelihood from them nor do I ask that they should feed Me. Lo! Allah! He it is that giveth livelihood, the Lord of unbreakable might. "(Qur'an 51:56-58)³.

In the light of the above, it can be seen that Allah is the only one Who has the absolute right to take back life and therefore, He had only given it as a trust to man to utilize and fulfil the purpose for which he is created. Man therefore is a responsible agent. That is why he has been given free will and knowledge. Knowledge is a unique endowment to man and an integral part of his personality and being. It is the element that elevated man above other creatures and qualifies him to the position of Allah's Vicegerent on earth. His free will is the unique quality that makes him a rational being. With his knowledge and free will, He is supposed to fulfil the purpose of his creation. Thus in Islam, seeking and acquiring knowledge are an essential as-

pect of worship. In fact they are an important part of the trust accepted and taken by man from God when all other creatures declined to take it out of fear.

Consequently, man shall be called to give an account of his life on a day when all creatures will be resurrected. This Day of Resurrection marks the beginning of another life which is eternal; either in an endless bliss or in an everlasting torment. This means that, as far as Islam is concerned, this life is temporal and is merely a form of transition, a sort of sojourn, which begins at a certain point and ends at another, and to be continued in another divine form.

(iii) The Islamic Conception of the Universe

As for the Islamic conception of the universe, it is in fact the same as its conception of life; after all life takes place in the universe. However, it needs to be stressed here that, the whole universe was created for the purpose of man to exploit and live in it to fulfil the purpose of his creation.⁴ The universe did not therefore, come into existence by chance or accident. At a point in time, since it is a temporal entity, the universe shall come to an end. This end shall solely be determined and brought by Allah because He alone knows when it shall strike. In this regard He says:

﴿ يسئلونك عن الساعة أيا ن مرساها قل إنما علمها عند
ربي لا يجليها لوقتها إلا هو قلت في السموات والأرض
لا تأتاكم إلا بغتة يسئلونك كأنك حفي عنها قل إنما
علمها عند الله ولكن أكثر الناس لا يعلمون ﴾
(سورة الأعراف: ١٨٧)

They ask thee about the (final) Hour- when will be its appointed time? Say: "The knowledge thereof is with my Lord (alone): None but He can reveal as to when it will occur. Heavy were its burden through the heaven and the earth. Only, of a sudden will it come to you." They ask thee as if thou art eager in search thereof: Say: "The knowledge thereof is with God (alone), but most men know not (Qur'an, 7: 187).

In the light of the Islamic conception of life and of the universe, in relation to Allah, Islam presents a balanced and upright vision of life which strikes a moderate balance between the two dominant aspects of life-the material and the spiritual. Whereas Islam emphasizes tenacious commitment to the pursuit of the life of the Hereafter, it however does that within the context of the material and mundane life. Islam does not therefore deny man the benefits of material and sensual enjoyment. It only lays on it certain restrictions, ordinances and injunctions in order to guide and moderate it and to direct it towards honour, nobility, righteousness, uprightness and goodness. At the same time, and in this way, Islam gives man the opportunity to satisfy the innate spiritual urges in him. Man by his very nature is an embodiment of matter and spirit. The two aspects must be allowed to flourish such that none exists at the expense of the other. But Allah constantly emphasizes the insignificance, limitedness, and temporality of material and sensual luxury and enjoyment. At the same time He constantly emphasizes the eternity, permanence and bountifulness and abundance of the divine luxuries of the Hereafter. Man should not therefore, be dazzled or deceived by the glitters of this life to the extent of making them ends in themselves, thus forgetting and becoming unmindful of the life of the Hereafter. Allah says:

﴿وابتغ فيما آتاك الله الدار الآخرة ولا تنس نصيبك من الدنيا
وأحسن كما أحسن الله إليك ولا تبغ الفساد في الأرض إن الله
لا يحب المفسدين﴾ (سورة القصص : ٧٧)

"But seek the abode of the Hereafter in that which Allah hath given thee and neglect not thy portion of the world, and be thou kind even as Allah hath been kind to thee, and seek not corruption in the earth, Lo! Allah loveth not corrupters." (Qur'an, 28:77).

This brief explanation of the Islamic worldview shows a balanced and comprehensive way of life encompassing the here and now, as well as the Hereafter. The position of man in this worldview is a very central one. It elevates man above all creatures, but never above the Creator and never even to a position at par with Him. Man is God's servant and must rely on Him for all his pursuits and sustenance. Thus, even in his quest for knowledge, man is dependent upon God. That human reasoning and sense organs are vital and efficient means of acquiring, transforming and transmitting knowledge is not rejected by Islam. But the fact of their limitations and weaknesses makes it necessary for man to be guided by a Divine, Absolute and Sublime source of Knowledge- revelation. Man cannot therefore, do away with revelation, so long as he wants to succeed and prosper. Allah says:

﴿قَالَ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ أَفَمَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ حَقٌّ أَنْ يَتَّبِعَ أَمِنْ لَا يَهْدِي إِلَّا أَنْ يَهْدِيَ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ (٣٥) وَمَا يَتَّبِعَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يَغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ (٣٦) وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ أَنْ يَقْتَرِيَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ نَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٣٧)﴾
(سورة يونس : ٣٥ - ٣٦)

"Say: "Of your 'partners' (whom you ascribe to God) is there any that can give any guidance towards Truth?"

Say: "It is God Who gives guidance to Truth. Is then He Who gives guidance to Truth more worthy to be followed, or he who finds not guidance (himself) unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you? How judge ye?"

"But most of them follow nothing but fancy (conjectures): truly fancy can be of no avail against Truth. Verily God is well aware of all that ye do."

"This Qur'an is not such as can be produced by other than God; On the contrary it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it, and a fuller explanation of the Book-where in there is no doubt- From the Lord of the Worlds" (Qur'an, 10:35-37).

(b) The Western Secular Worldview

The Western secular worldview is a by-product of an historical experience that is peculiar to the West; a conflict between the Church (catholic clergymen) and the scientists which led to the collective persecution of the latter at the behest of the former. A number of scientists were persecuted and some lynched. An example is the wellknown case

of Galileo about which Pope John Paul tendered a public apology just recently in 1997 on behalf of the Church. In reaction to such persecutions scientists rejected religion or simply condemned it as a hindrance to the growth and progress of knowledge. This notion formed the background against which life was envisioned. It therefore, came to be believed that, man alone has the power, the capability and the right to guide himself and to decide what is best for him. Consequent upon what has been said above, three trends of thought or belief emerged as the most essential characteristics and fundamental bases of the Western secular worldview. These are atheism, agnosticism and humanism. At the root of all these is either the rejection of God or of His Authority as the Divine and Supreme Law-Maker. There is hardly any significant difference between any of these three concepts. Hamid (1993) explains: "An atheist is one who denies the existence of God. An agnostic is one who says that he does not know whether God exists or not. He may go further and say that he does not care. He is really close to the atheist. A humanist (who may be an atheist or agnostic) insists that human beings alone must decide what is best for them for there is no such thing as Divine laws" (p.2).

The parameters of Western secular worldview can actually be figured out from these three concepts. In this worldview, belief in the existence of God does not really matter. Even if God's existence is recognized, that does not and should never have any significant meaning or implication to our life. Indeed, God's existence is at best considered a myth, and matter is the only real existence. Nature is therefore, the only reality and man is and should only be subjected to the dictates of natural laws, and not any 'mythical' Divine laws.

The conception of Life in this worldview is nothing

beyond a nature-material reality. Man only lives in this world and no more. Within the confines and under the dictates of natural laws which are immutable, man can and should design and maintain a pattern of life he considers best for himself. He should seek to know about the world by means of his intellect and sense organs. For him these are reliable and dependable tools of acquiring knowledge about the world. Precision and exactness about the world can be achieved by the postulations and rational thoughts of human reasoning and also by observations and experimentations of human sense organs. The scientific method or rather hypothetico-deductive methodology (logical-positivism) is thus the only reliable way of acquiring knowledge, or arriving at what is true or false.

The purpose of life in this worldview is purely mundane. It is nothing but the life of this world. It all begins and ends here, and no more. The Qur'an refers to this view of life saying:

﴿وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا
الدَّهْرُ وَمَا لَهُم بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ﴾
(سورة الجاثية : ٢٤)

And they say: "What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and live, and nothing but time can destroy us". But of that they have no knowledge: they merely conjecture. (Qur'an, 45:24)⁵

As far as this worldview is concerned the aspect of man's relationship with God is far relegated to the background. This worldview is essentially concerned with man's life in the realm of material (natural) existence. The funda-

mental principles which form the background of this worldview and the basic framework of Western modernity have been outlined by Elmessiri (1997) as follows: 1) Nature is eternal, self-existent, self-directed, and self-referential; 2) Natural laws are immutable and cannot be violated or suspended; 3) Nature is a whole that subsumes everything else and thus allows no gaps, discontinuities, dualities, hierarchies, or irreducible entities; 4) Natural laws apply to both humanity and nature and assign no special states to humanity; 5) The basis of all natural phenomena is solid matter and fluid energy. However, whether solid or fluid, nature is in a state of continuous nonteleological flux; and 6) Humanity derives all its norms from nature.

This is what Elmessiri calls **“Comprehensive Secularism”** and is the real essence of Western worldview. According to him, “it does not merely aim at the separation of church and state and some aspects of public life; it aims at the separation of all values-religious, moral, or human-not only from the state but also from public and private life and from the World at large. The only source of norms and values is the world of nature-matter. Within this frame of reference, both humanity and society are seen as controlled by immutable natural laws and by value-free self activating processes that lie beyond humanity’s control.” (P.2).

From the foregoing, it must have become clear that the two worldviews are definitely opposed to each other and are really antithetical. This is the important factor that informed Muslims’ vehement resistance to colonialism and secularism. It is indeed, the factor that explains the current contention between Islam and the so-called dominant culture. Islam is a unique and distinct world view which is all-encompassing, sublime and immaculate. It is divinely formulated, revealed and guided. It is built upon the belief that

Allah is the Originator and source of all creation, existence and knowledge. It is therefore, undoubtedly parallel to this atheistic conception of life or worldview. Because of this fact the two worldviews must necessarily conceive of and approach knowledge in similarly parallel, incompatible ways. This point is further elaborated in the proceeding discussions.

MUSLIM WORLD AND SECULAR EDUCATION

There is no doubt that the imposition of western civilisation (in all its aspects) on the Muslim world, by means of colonialism has had serious destructive consequences on the Muslims. It is however clear that the most harmful and destructive aspects of it all on the Muslim world is the educational / intellectual aspect. It has proved to be much more debilitating because, as it were, it is the most significant factor which ensures the perpetuation of political, economic and cultural subjugation of the Muslim world by the West. For in spite of the physical absence of western colonial powers in the Muslim world, the latter still continues to remain sheepishly loyal and subservient to the former. There is little wonder in this because, the products of the secular education system in the Muslim World are largely culturally misoriented, unproductive and intellectually sterile. This is because, the education they received is not relevant to their value system and ideological orientation. Suleiman (1985) described this set of people (the so-called elites) as *'deluded-hybrids'*. He explains that they are a class of people almost totally uprooted from their cultural and moral traditions. The consequences of the situation described above have been further explained by Suleiman (1985) in specific terms as follows:

- (i) That it has led to the acceptance of the myth of European superiority- which is an essential ingredient of the Euro-Christian educational philosophy- in governmental and intellectual circles in these (Muslim) countries, and consequently to the acceptance of European thoughts and ideas as possessing universal validity.
- (ii) That the elite class who now control the affairs over Muslims have come to exhibit, like their Christian counterparts, a service spirit and can only play the role of slaves to European imperialism even when they claim to be free.
- (iii) That the nature of the elites training makes them inherently impotent when faced with serious social crises, and thus socially undesirable to be at the helm of affairs over the people.
- (iv) That the system (i.e. in the Muslim world) has been unable to produce men of vision, calibre, ability and integrity to hold the reins of power.
- (v) That the system has engendered a situation whereby God has virtually been substituted with crude and brutal power as the object of reliance and trust (pp. 32-33).

While commenting on especially the first problem, Suleiman cautions that the danger in it is that ideals and thoughts which are essentially racial and parochial, and which have particularly given cause for colonialism from which we all suffer, and which, moreover, have developed from strictly European experience and are therefore irrelevant to our experience, are taught and promoted at the expense of our heritage and civilization. Al-Faruqi (1987,p.5) argues in the same way that, "the educational system is the laboratory where Muslim youth are kneaded

and cut, where their consciousness is moulded into a caricature of the West. here, the Muslim's linkage with his past is severed; his natural curiosity to learn the legacy of his fathers is stymied;...”

Besides the problems and consequences discussed above, secular education has also created another serious educational and cultural crisis. This is the crisis of duality. In traditional Islamic education, there is no dichotomy between the religious knowledge and knowledge about the real-existential (the world). The two form a single integral entity geared towards attaining the pleasure of Allah and developing an upright personality. In this kind of dispensation, a medical doctor, an engineer, etc sees his job primarily as a religious duty that must be discharged for the sake of Allah. Whatever form of knowledge a person acquires, he remains conscious of the social obligations upon him ordained by Allah. He must therefore make use of his knowledge to discharge these obligations to attain the pleasure of Allah. This is all because right at the beginning he has been enjoined to undertake the reading of all forms of knowledge **in the name of Allah**. In this system, education therefore was imbued with transcendental and higher order moral goals and values; beyond the lowly material values and goals of the secular system.

What has been said above is what used to obtain of Islamic education to the times when Muslims stagnated and degenerated intellectually. Then came colonialism which occasioned the imposition of secular education. What is most saddening about this ugly situation is that the secular education system has almost subjugated the Islamic education system. In the words of Al-Faruqi(1987,p.5) “the secularist education system has assumed tremendous proportion, elbowing the Islamic system from the field. Islamic educa-

tion, for the most part, remains a private affair devoid of access to public funds. Where public funds are made available, demands of secularization are imposed in the name of modernism and progress". The consequence of this situation is the creation of two sets of elites. On one hand are the products of the Islamic education system whose relevance to the political, economic and the dominant legal /judicial set ups (which have since been secularized or rather 'modernized') has been very insignificant. And on the other hand are the products of the secular education system whose level of Islamic knowledge is shallow just as their socio-political socialization and orientation are different from, and alien to traditional Islamic values. They are social misfits in their local communities. Their relevance to the aspirations, interests and values of their local communities is negligible.

As a result of the situation described above, Islamic societies have therefore, become culturally dual. At certain times, the different sections of the societies have been pulled apart (Ashraf, 1979). This has been the fate of the Muslim World, resulting from the imposition of the secular education system. This situation definitely poses a great challenge to Muslim intellectuals. As Ashraf (1979, p. 3) has said, educational reform is necessary and, "if the intellectuals of the Muslim world do not stem the tide now... the time is not far away when the tide will sweep away even the bed-rock on which the structure of Muslim Society is based".

THE NEED FOR ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Education is not simply a process of imparting a supposedly value-free knowledge as it is ordinarily assumed.

Far from that, education is an agent both of social conservation and social transformation. As Manzoor (1984) has succinctly put it, "education is an agent that determines a community's survival... It is through education that the cultural heritage, knowledge and values of a social group are preserved and the continuity of its collective life ensured.... it imparts meaning to the existence of a culture and helps it sustain its worldview".

As if the above were not enough, Manzoor tried again to demonstrate the significance and instrumentality of education as the central nerve of a community's existence by asserting that:

It (education) cannot be equated with a mere inventory of the paraphernalia and instruments of instruction, including even institutions and external structures. On the contrary, in every meaningful and constructive way, education is inextricably linked with the general intellectualism of a culture, the principal task of which is to provide a forum for self-analysis and criticism.... Educational philosophy, therefore, not only shapes the destiny and identity of any historical community; in its function as the guardian and cultivator of values, it is also the very basis of all culture and civilization. (p.38).

If this is the role of education in any human community Muslims must necessarily formulate a system of knowledge and an educational structure that conforms to their worldview.

The combined factors of the incompatibility of the secular worldview with Islam, and the awareness of the crucial role of education as described above are the reasons for

chains of reactions and resistance in the Muslim World. Some reactions such as the Muslim modernists' approach, were glaringly apologetic, advocating total adaptation and adoption of Western thoughts and ideas, and the interpretation by all means of Islamic texts to conform to them. This is a manifestation of intellectual apathy and psychological defeatism and despair. The fallacy inherent in this approach is that, it assumes the superiority of Western thoughts and regards them as axiomatic truths that are universally valid and impeccable. Besides, it is also wrong to adopt this approach because of the fact that even in the West, a number of scientific theories, principles and laws are usually challenged, questioned, faulted and even condemned as invalid, inaccurate and therefore, unacceptable.

The worst pitfall of this approach is its assumption that Qur'anic verses are to be validated and proved with science. This is definitely wrong for the Qur'an is an infallible and impeccable revelation, from an Infallible, Divine, and Omniscient Being. It can be used to prove the validity and truth of scientific theory and not vice-versa. Allah says in the Qur'an:

﴿وَعَت كَلِمَةً رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مَبْدَلَ لِكَلِمَتِهِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾

(سورة الأنعام : ١١٥)

"The Word of thy Lord doth find fulfilment in truth and in justice: None can change His Words: For He is the One Who heareth and knoweth all." (Qur'an 6:115).

On the other hand, there was the extreme traditionalist approach taken by a section of our Ulama. It was borne out of genuine intention to preserve the originality and sanc-

tity of the religion. It repels and dismisses any attempt to interpret Islamic texts through analogies with some modern scientific principles, concepts and discoveries, even if these have clear concordance and congruence with the Qur'an. According to Ashraf (1979), this reaction has indeed succeeded in preserving the spiritual aspect of Islam in a section of the community, but it failed to meet up the challenges posed by modernity.

At some extreme levels, this approach advocates the closure of the door of Ijtihad. This is the stand taken by some classical Muslim scholars in reaction to the excesses of some philosophers and the unbridled rationalism advocated and demonstrated by the Mu'tazilites. Good as the intention of this trend is, it however precludes the prospects of intellectual progress. Its far reaching effect is that, it denies Islam its universality, permanence and dynamism as a comprehensive worldview and way of life, and so perpetuates the intellectual stagnation of the Ummah.

What then is the way out? The way out is to provide an approach which does not compromise the fundamentals of Islamic faith in anyway, nor sacrifice its values, ideals, goals and teachings. An approach which at the same time does not retard the intellectual and scholastic progress of the Ummah. This should be a middle course approach between the two extremes. It should be an approach that is comprehensive and deeply penetrating. Not simply the one which addresses few parts of the problem, nor that which merely scratches its surface. The Islamization of Knowledge, as a methodological and epistemological enterprise really qualifies for this task. An attempt has been made here to explain what it means.

THE MEANING OF ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The Islamization of Knowledge could be seen as a reaction to the Western secular intellectual hegemony. But more than that, it should be seen as the intellectual wing of the ensuing contention between the Islamic and the Western (secular) civilisation and worldviews. Or as Abu Fadl (1988) said, "Islamization constitutes a major force of renovation upon the contemporary world scene", and that it is a "potential force for effective (global) cultural renewal and direction". So, rather than desperately trying to justify (by whatever means) some secular theories, principles or concepts of modern social and natural sciences with Qur'anic verses, as was attempted by some muslim apologists, the Islamization of Knowledge is an overall methodological enterprise. According to al-Alwani (1995, p. 89),

"The Islamization of knowledge is primarily a methodological issue prepositioned on the identification and articulation of the relationship between revelation and real - existence. In its essence, that relationship is one of integration and permeation that clarifies the comprehensive manner in which the Qur'an deals with the real - existential and its governing and regulating natural laws (Sunan) and principles".

In much more clear terms, al-Alwani (1995, p83) earlier explained what the Islamization of Knowledge exactly means. He says:

"The Islamization of Knowledge is not a cosmetic addition of religious terminology and sentiment to studies in the social sciences

and humanities or the grafting of relevant Qur'anic verses on to the sciences or disciplines intended for Islamization. On the contrary, Islamization of Knowledge may be viewed as a methodological and epistemological re-arrangement of the sciences and their principles. Moreover, it is not to be understood as a blanket extension of personal conviction to all the disciplines in an attempt to lend a sort of religious legitimacy to the accomplishments of human civilisation. Nor should it be understood as a negation of those achievements by the logic of empty semantics."

From the above explanations the Islamization of Knowledge programme can be said to be an attempt to reorient and recast knowledge to conform to the Islamic belief system and worldview.

The philosophical justification of the Islamization of Knowledge exercise is embedded in the fact that fundamental differences exist between Islamic and Western secular worldviews. Since both of these worldviews are the foundations of the Islamic and Western approaches to knowledge respectively, it therefore means that invariably, there are fundamental differences and conflicts between the two approaches to knowledge. While the Islamic worldview is built on a firm belief in Allah as the Creator of the universe, the Source of life, Who is Sovereign, Omnipotent and Omniscient, and upon whom man must rely in all his physiological and psycho - intellectual pursuits, the Western secular worldview is built on the notion that human reasoning is self-reliant and effective in guiding mankind. Thus, the way the latter would view, seek, interpret and transmit knowl-

edge will definitely be different from how the former would do. Given these fundamental contradictions between the two visions of knowledge, the prevalence and predominance of Western secular approach to knowledge in the Muslim world in particular and the whole world in general cannot continue to be tolerated and promoted. The predominance of this defective secular view of knowledge has thrown not only the Muslim world into a cultural misarray and disorientation, spiritual and moral degeneration, identity crisis and lack of meaning and direction in life, but also the whole world in general. There has to be a solution to this anomaly and the Islamization of Knowledge is a credible and viable proposal in this regard. According to Abu Fadl (1989, p.179), "Islamization provides a beacon on the receding horizons of our planetary community. As such it ought to become the common cause and general concern of everybody with a stake in the moral well being of a sane society and sober civilisation".

Whatever the case may be, every movement must have a starting point, or rather a springboard. It must also have a clear vision. With regards to the Islamization of Knowledge, the Islamic worldview and the Islamic conception of knowledge form an essential foundation and constitute and signify its vision. There is therefore the need to have a sound and unambiguous understanding of the Islamic conception of knowledge. This is so because as earlier said, whatever discipline is intended to be Islamized, its degree of conformity or otherwise to Islam can only be adequately discerned on the basis of the Islamic vision of knowledge. In the next section an attempt has been made to discuss the components that make up the Islamic conception of Knowledge.

SECTION TWO

THE ISLAMIC VISION OF KNOWLEDGE

Position of Knowledge in Islam

In Islam the position and importance of knowledge begin from the fact that firm faith in Allah is predicated on the basis of full conviction, certainty and proof. This cannot be attained without knowledge and it is only when faith is attained through sound knowledge that it could endure. Hence, blind imitation is discouraged in Islam. Allah condemns disbelievers in the Qur'an for abandoning knowledge and following conjectures which do not lead to the truth, and also blindly imitating their forefathers who cannot understand or reflect over anything of knowledge and guidance. The Qur'an says regarding blind imitation of parents:

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ، نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَفِينَا عَلَيْهِ
آبَاءَنَا أُولَئِكَ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ﴾
(سورة البقرة : ١٧)

*“And when it is said unto them: Follow that which Allah hath revealed, they say: We follow that wherein we found our fathers. What! Even though their fathers were wholly unintelligent and had no guidance? (2:170).”*⁶

And with regards to following false conjectures the Qur'an says:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ لَيَسْمَعُونَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْأُنثَىٰ (٢٧)
وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يَغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا (٢٨)﴾
(سورة النجم : ٢٧-٢٨)

*"Lo! It is those who disbelieve in the Hereafter who name the angels with the names of females. And they have no knowledge thereof. They follow but a guess, and Lo! A guess can never take the place of the truth. (53: 27-28)."*⁷

In the light of the above, it can be seen that Islam considers knowledge to be the only means by which truth can be realised and understood. And since Allah is the Ultimate and Absolute Truth (Qur'an 22:62; 10:32) it is only necessary that man must acquire knowledge in order to know God and worship Him correctly and properly. With this, it can be said that Islam begins and ends with knowledge.

In order to vindicate the above assertion, numerous historical and textual examples can be cited. First of all, the episode of the first revelation that was made to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) is the most relevant and convincing example. The verses of the Qur'an that were first revealed to him are those which enjoined him to read. As narrated by Bukhari Angel Jibril squeezed him several times ordering him to "read" after each squeeze. He then proclaimed to him the following verses:

﴿اقرأ باسم ربك الذي خلق (١) خلق الإنسان من علق (٢)﴾
 اقرأ وربك الأكرم (٣) الذي علم بالقلم (٤) علم الإنسان
 ما لم يعلم (٥) ﴿ (سورة العلق : ١-٥)

Read! In The name of thy Lord Who createth, Createth man from a clot (of congealed blood), Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who teacheth by the Pen, teacheth man that which he knew not. (Qur'an 96:1 - 5).

These verses are the first part of the 96th chapter of the Qur'an. Ordinarily, one would have thought that the first chapter of the Qur'an should have been the one to be revealed at first before any other chapter. That this did not happen raises the question as to why the first part of the 96th chapter was revealed first and foremost. The answer is not far from the fact that, this was done in order to categorically show and declare to the world that Islam is a religion of knowledge, not a religion of conjectures, superstitions and fictions. That Islam is knowledge in itself and all sound knowledge is Islam. The two are inseparable. At the same time the fact that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), though the Noblest of all Allah's creatures, was squeezed by Angel Jibril after he replied - 'I cannot read' - also teaches that knowledge could only be acquired through certain hardships, difficulties, trials and adventures, and that whatever dimensions or forms such difficulties and trials may take, knowledge is worth them.

While showing the importance of knowledge in Islam, Ibn-al-Qayyim in his book - *Miftahu Dur as-Sa'adah Wa Manshuri Wilayati al-'Ilmi Wa al-'Iradah* - extolled, expounded and enunciated more than one hundred and twenty (120) virtues of knowledge in Islam. In doing this, he quoted various Qur'anic verses and traditions of the Prophet (S.A.W). For the purpose of the scope of this discourse, only few of such virtues will be quoted here as follows:

- (i) Allah says in Surat-Al-Imran i.e. chapter 3 verse 18.

﴿شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا

بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾

(سورة آل عمران : ١٨)

*Allah (Himself) is Witness that there is no God save Him. And the Angels **and the men of learning** (too are witnesses). Maintaining His creation in justice, there is no God save Him, the Almighty, the Wise.*

According to Ibn-al-Qayyim, in this verse Allah has elevated the position of knowledge and knowledgeable (learned) people to the extent that He recognized and approves of their testimony on His Unity and Oneness. He counts their testimony along with His own and that of His glorious Angels. By this, Allah has shown us that the only thing that leads to certainty, surety and conviction about Allah is knowledge. It is also very clear in this verse that nobody can know the Truth more than Allah Himself, His Angels and his learned servants. This is indeed a great certification of the importance of knowledge.

(ii) Allah dispelled all forms of equality between those who have knowledge and those who do not have knowledge. He said the two can never be equal. He says in the Qur'an:

﴿قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ...﴾

(سورة الزمر : ٩)

Say are those who know equal with those who do not know (39:9).

(iii) Of all things in this world, the one and only thing which Allah enjoined His messenger to constantly ask Allah to give him increase in is knowledge. Allah says:

﴿... وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا﴾

(سورة طه : ١١٤)

".....and say, My Lord! Increase me in knowledge"
(*Qur'an 20:114*)

As for the traditions of the Prophet (S.A.W) there are countless examples of his sayings which show the importance of knowledge in Islam. A popular saying is the one in which he says:

"Seeking knowledge is compulsory upon every Muslim".
(Reported by Ibn-Abd al-Barr. *In Jami'i Bayani al- Ilmi*; p.8).

In another hadith reported by Muslim, and others, the Prophet (S.A.W) said,

whoever follows a path (sets out) to seek for knowledge, Allah will ease for him the way to Paradise. A people will never gather in a sanctuary (Mosque) out of the sanctuaries of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah (the Qur'an), teaching it to themselves except that Angels will surround them, peace (of mind) will descend on them, the Mercy of Allah will overwhelm (cover) them and Allah will mention (recognize) them as those who are with (close to) Him.

In Islam, Knowledge has an inestimable virtue and importance. It is one of the legacies whose benefit a person

continues to draw even after he dies. The Prophet (S.A.W.) has told us, as narrated by Abu-Hurairah that:

“If a man dies, all his deeds are cut off except three things: A permanent charity, or a piece of knowledge that benefits, or a righteous son who prays for him”.

(Reported by Ibn Abd al- Barr).

Aim of Acquiring Knowledge in Islam

In Islam, knowledge is sought and acquired for one and only one fundamental aim. It is simply for the sake of Allah. It means that one should seek knowledge in order to know Allah and to worship Him correctly and properly. Even if the knowledge one seeks is not necessarily religious knowledge, so long as it is knowledge that is beneficial to humanity, Islam approves of it. A Muslim should therefore seek to acquire such knowledge for the sake of Allah. If a Muslim does this he is still worshipping Allah in that way. And after acquiring such knowledge he is expected to serve humanity with it, with the aim of getting the pleasure and reward of Allah. It does not matter even if he is paid for what he does with his knowledge. The aim of acquiring knowledge in Islam primarily therefore, is to conscientize and educate man to be conscious of his duties towards his Creator (Allah) and also his duties towards his fellow creatures and his rights upon them.

All that has been said above is deduced from the verses that were first revealed to the Prophet (S.A.W) which were quoted earlier. While the Prophet (S.A.W) was enjoined in those verses to ‘read’, what he should read was not specified. It is therefore safe to conclude that all forms of beneficial knowledge have been referred to in the verse. So, a

Muslim's goal in acquiring knowledge should be service to his Lord (Creator) and to his fellow creatures. That is why he is obliged to read in the name of his Lord.

While stressing this particular aim of seeking knowledge, the Prophet (S.A.W) warned against harbouring any ultra motive that is not in any way going to yield benefit to him in person, and mankind in general. Hence acquiring knowledge purely and only for the purpose of earning/accumulating worldly gains, arrogance, controversy, show off, and the like is condemned by the Prophet (S.A.W). He says:

“Whosoever seeks knowledge - supposed to be sought for Allah's sake -but he seeks it (just) to earn some worldly gains, he shall never perceive (smell) the fragrance of paradise”.

(Reported by Ibn Abd al-Barr in *Jami'i Bayani al-Ilmi*).

It could be seen from here that, a fundamental difference exists between the Islamic view of knowledge and the Western view. While the aim of acquiring knowledge in the west is purely secular, profane and temporal, the Islamic aim of knowledge transcends that as has been explained in the preceding paragraphs. It needs to be emphasized here that, the attachment of only materialistic aims and values to knowledge reduces the essence of knowledge. Knowledge has intrinsic and transcendental values for which it must be sought. One of such transcendental values of knowledge is its position as the only guide to Allah and the means by which humanity justifies its role as Allah's vicegerents on earth. These are higher order aims of acquiring knowledge which are absent in secular education.

The aims of Islamic Education are therefore, far more comprehensive than those of secular education. Unlike

Western secular education, Islamic education aims at providing prosperity and felicity in this world and in the Hereafter. The following statement of the aim of Muslim Education as agreed upon by Muslim Scholars at the First World Conference on Muslim Education in 1977, held at Makkah comprehensively summarises all that has been said here:

The aim of Muslim education is the creation of the 'good and righteous man' who worships Allah in the true sense of the term, builds up the structure of his earthly life according to the Shariah (Law) and employs it to serve his faith." (p.42).

Islamic View on the Source of Knowledge

This is another area of fundamental difference between the Islamic view of knowledge and the Western view. As far as Islam is concerned, Allah is the source of all knowledge. It makes no difference whether that knowledge is the type that is obtained through revelation or the type that is acquired through empirical means - experience and experimentation. In this regard, the source and origin of knowledge is Divine and Transcendental. This is unlike the Western secular view which considers the source of knowledge purely mundane - purely a product of man's interaction with his environment.

According to the Qur'an, Allah taught Adam all forms of knowledge. It is this knowledge which Allah taught Adam that humanity inherited. That this knowledge undergoes transformations and developments does not dispel the facts of its origin and source. Allah says in this regard:

﴿وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (٣١) قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ (٣٢) قَالَ يَا آدَمُ أَنْبِئْهُمْ بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنَّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ﴾
(سورة البقرة ٣١-٣٣)

"And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the Angels, saying: Inform Me of the names of these, if ye are truthful. They said: Be ye glorified! We have no knowledge save that which Thou has taught us. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Knower, the Wise. He said: O Adam! Inform them of their names, and when he had informed them of their names, He said: Did I not tell you that I know the secret of the heavens and the earth? And I know that which ye disclosed and which ye hide. (2: 31-33)

According to the view of many Qur'anic interpreters and commentators, the names taught to Adam are the names of everything and their uses for life. This interpretation is the one maintained by the celebrated Qur'anic commentator - Ibn-Kathir in his interpretation of this verse. And he said this same view is the one expressed by Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Said bn Jubair, and several others. This view of Allah being the source of all knowledge is exactly what Allah means when He says:

﴿عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَم﴾
(سورة العلق : ٥)

He taught man what he knows not. (Qur'an, 96:5).

What is meant here is that God has sent down knowledge and He blessed man with the intellect and power of reasoning. If man uses this intelligence given to him appropriately he can explore and exploit the treasures of knowledge. Empirical knowledge could therefore be explored and acquired by man through experience and experimentation. As for revealed knowledge man can never reach it except by revelation from God. Human intelligence has limitations. Left alone, human intelligence cannot arrive at any adequate standard of guidance and prosperity. The inherent limitations of the human intelligence is what automatically sets limits to human knowledge. There is therefore a necessary need for man to be guided by an Infallible, Impeccable and Immaculate Divine Source of Knowledge; hence the need for revelation to guide man. This fact about the limitation of human knowledge is alluded to in the following Qur'anic verse:

﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾

(سورة الإسراء : ٨٥)

*They will ask thee concerning the spirit.
Say: The spirit is by command of my Lord,
and of knowledge, Ye have been vouchsafed
but little". (Qur'an, 17:85)*

In line with the above explanations, it could be said that the Qur'an (having been revealed by Allah) and the Sunnah (which is the Prophetic interpretation of the Qur'an) are the primary sources of knowledge in Islam. In particular the Qur'an is an embodiment of numerous branches and

aspects of knowledge from which a number of systems and subsystems of knowledge are derivable. It comprehends all forms of knowledge accessible to man regarding the divine / transcendental world and the cosmic existence (the universe). It is, therefore, indispensable in any quest for, or pursuit of, knowledge whether it is related to the divine or the real existential. In the Islamic view of knowledge, no scholastic pursuit can take place in isolation of it. It is the Muslim's fundamental guide and major reference piece, even when he is undertaking a study about the universe and everything therein.

Classification of Knowledge in Islam

Many Muslim scholars have attempted to classify knowledge in various ways. An-Najjar (1996) presented some aspects of these classifications. In his view, some of them are imitations of the Aristotelian classification structure. Al-Farabi's, Ibn-Sina's and Ikhwanal-Safa's classifications fall into this category. Others according to An-Najjar are innovative and original such as the classifications of Ibn-al-Nadim, Ibn-Hazm, Ibn-Khaldun, Tash-Kubra Zadah, among others. An-Najjar actually has made some detailed explanations with regards to the structures, patterns, characteristics and roles or impacts of these classifications, but this is beyond the scope of this book. The aim here is simply to present a simple and broad-based classification such as al-Ghazzali's that it is devoid of intricacies and complexities.

According to Al-Ghazzali (450 A.H), knowledge is broadly classified in Islam into two categories. These are religious and worldly knowledge. By religious knowledge, it is meant knowledge which has direct links with religious

beliefs, rituals etiquette and conducts. By worldly knowledge it is meant the aspects of knowledge which acquaint man with this universe and with the skills, expertise and professionalism in relation to his worldly living. Islam enjoins and encourages acquiring both types of knowledge. However, Islam regards religious knowledge more important than worldly knowledge because it is the knowledge that directly leads man to know his Creator and how to worship Him correctly. And this is the fundamental purpose of creation. Islam therefore makes it obligatory on every Muslim (man and woman alike) to seek and acquire knowledge of his religion. Even in the religious knowledge, there are certain aspects, such as knowledge of inheritance the acquisition of which is a vicarious obligation, that are not necessarily obligatory on each and every individual.

As for the worldly knowledge, acquiring any aspect of it is not obligatory upon every Muslim on individual basis like religious knowledge but it is obligatory on all Muslims on a collective basis. Al-Ghazzali stresses that this aspect of knowledge is a communal obligation and, therefore, every particular Muslim community *must* make sure that a section of it *necessarily* acquires each and every aspect of it. This necessity according to Al-Ghazzali becomes even more serious if such a discipline has certain indispensable importance and benefit to societal existence. Some important examples in this regard are Medicine, Mathematics, Engineering and the like. Any Muslim community which fails to train a section of it in any one aspect of these secular disciplines could be deemed to have offended Allah collectively. It is against this background that Al-Qardawi in his book - *Ar-Rasul-Wa al-'Ilm* - said in categorical terms that:

... it is obligatory upon the Muslim community to get some of its citizen to special-

ize in all various fields of human endeavours (**worldly knowledge**) - psychology, sociology, education, economics, politics, and so on. (**The Muslim community must be conversant with all these and other fields**) to be able to teach them perfectly and also transform and present them in their (**hitherto**) original Islamic view points/perspectives, and in their Islamic garbs. This is necessary especially because of the fact that it is these fields/areas of human social sciences that shape and mould the mentality (**consciousness**) and life preference (**dhauq**) of the community/society; and also they modify the behavioural tendencies (**suluk**) of its individuals. Muslims should not therefore, simply consider acquiring or abandoning these aspects of knowledge as mere matters of free choice but should consider that as a form of (**essential**) collective obligation among other things (pp:94).⁸

A seemingly similar pattern of classification was also made by Ibn-Abd al-Barr in his Jamiu Bayan al-'Ilm. He said:

Knowledge in the view of the people of religion (Islam) are of three (orders) categories. (These are) higher order, lower order, middle order knowledge. The higher order knowledge to them is religious (revealed) knowledge. In this category of knowledge, it is not allowed for any person to make any pronouncements except in accordance to the saying of Allah in His Book or in the tongues of His Messengers. The Middle order knowledge is the

knowledge about the sciences of the Universe... like Medicine, and Engineering (among others) and the Lower order Knowledge the is the one related to the skills, laws and ethics of trades and works like swimming, horsemanship, fashion-design (tailoring), artistry, engraving, and the like. (P.46).

However, it needs to be emphasized here that, whichever discipline a Muslim chooses to study, he should do that purely in the name of Allah - his Creator. And once a Muslim offers to study a particular discipline he does that on behalf of the Muslim community. It therefore automatically becomes an individual obligation on his shoulders. This is because, the implication of offering a particular discipline (like Medicine) means undertaking a trust towards one's creator and his community. If knowledge is viewed in the way explained above, it becomes clear that, Islam does not after all see any sharp line of demarcation between the religious and the so-called secular knowledge.

Al-Alwani(1995,p.85) alluded to this categorisation of knowledge and that the two categories as far as Islam is concerned are complementary to each other. He maintains that, from the verses which command us to read:

... it may be deduced that humanity has been commanded to undertake two different kinds of readings and to understand its situation in the universe through an understanding of how the two complement one another. The first reading is the book of Allah's revelation(the Qur'an), in which all matters of religious significance are explained, and the second is the book of His creation(the natural universe), from which nothing has been omitted. To undertake a reading of either without reference to the other will neither benefit humanity nor lead it to the sort

of comprehensive knowledge necessary for the building and maintenance of civilized society or to knowledge worthy of preservation and further development or exchange.

• In another dimension, Knowledge in Islam has also been classified into some other two categories. These are **beneficial (an-Nafi'i)** and **harmful (ad-Darr)**. These categories are sometimes referred to as **Commendable (Mamduh)** and **Blameworthy (Madhmum)**. In the Qur'an, Allah alludes to this categorization while condemning the people who seek the knowledge of magic. He says:

﴿وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ . . .﴾

(البقرة : ١٠٢)

.... And they learn what harmeth them, not what profiteth them....(Qur'an, 2: 102)

In a number of his traditions, the Prophet (S.A.W.) constantly used to ask Allah to endow him with a beneficial and profitable knowledge, and he constantly seeks refuge with Allah from harmful knowledge. In one of his prayers, narrated by Musa Ibn Abi Aishah (Maula Umami Salmah), the Prophet (S.A.W.) used to say:

“O Allah! I ask you beneficial knowledge, a pure (blessed) wealth and an acceptable deed” (Reported by Ibn-Abd al-Barr, p.196)

In another hadith, narrated by Abd Allah ibn Abbas, the Prophet (S.A.W.) used to say:

“O Allah! I seek refuge with you from knowl-

edge which does not benefit...." (Also reported by Ibn-Abd al-Barr, p.195).

A number of inferences could be made from the verse and these prophetic traditions. One of these is that, there is knowledge which is inherently and intrinsically beneficial and profitable, and there is also the type which is harmful and blameworthy. Revealed knowledge as contained in the Qur'an and Sunnah is definitely beneficial. So also is any type of knowledge that leads and guides to Allah, righteousness and service to humanity. Any form of knowledge that is inherently opposed to the contents of Allah's revelation like magic and the like, and which therefore misguides and dissuades from the path of Allah, and also does not benefit humanity in anyway, is definitely harmful and blameworthy. Muslims must refrain from it and should not waste their time and resources on it.

Another inference that could be made from these texts is that, the benefit or otherwise of knowledge depends on the use made of it or the purpose accomplished with it. A piece of knowledge that is not used in accordance to the injunctions of Allah, even if it were commendable and useful in itself may automatically and ultimately be harmful and blameworthy. In this regard, a knowledge of Qur'anic sciences (e.g. Qira'a, Tafsir, etc) if not used to attain the pleasure of God, and to worship Him may end up being harmful to its possessor. The same thing applies to knowledge of Medicine, Engineering, Astronomy, Psychology, Sociology, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, and the like if they are directed against humanity, such as when they are used to perpetrate and perpetuate mischief, and all sorts of wrong doing. This type of knowledge, which in itself is beneficial but wrongfully and mischievously made use of is really part of the type which the Prophet (S.A.W.) seeks Allah's refuge from.

Islamic View About the Universality of Knowledge

If reference is made to the Islamic view about the source of knowledge, it would be seen that Islam really views knowledge as a universal entity. In other words, knowledge in its entirety and essence is a universal human heritage. In one of his hadiths, the Prophet (S.A.W) alluded to this fact by saying, "wisdom (knowledge) is the lost property of the believer. Wherever he finds it, he most deserves it"

No race, tribe, nation, or colour has a monopoly of knowledge. Humanity generally has the capability to acquire knowledge and can also attain perfection in it. So, all human races, tribes, nations and or colours could excel in terms of exploring, acquiring, transforming and developing knowledge. It is simply a matter of historical evolution that one race/community dominates others in terms of knowledge. In the same vein it is also a matter of adventurism and hard work (seriousness with life). This is an historical fact. It could be proved by making reference to the Egyptian, Chinese, Indian, Persian, Greek, Roman and Islamic civilizations which all flourished and dominated the world at certain times in history.

Although it has just been said that knowledge is universal, it is noteworthy to affirm that despite its universality, knowledge has a cultural stamp. This is because it has never existed in a vacuum. It has always existed in certain historical, social and geographical contexts. Every human community (given the diversity of worldviews amongst communities) has its own exclusive cultural values, and peculiar civilizational orientations. The goals and aspirations of different human communities are therefore, invariably diverse. Subsequently, societies/communities differ in their respective approaches to and views about knowledge and

what it stands for. On the basis of its cultural values and aspirations, a community delineates its aims and methods of acquiring knowledge, and also the structures and contents of its educational system. This is what gives knowledge a cultural stamp. Junaidu (1972, p. 467) succinctly puts this fact across in this way:

Knowledge is certainly universal and timeless but it has a social cultural stamp. It also has a purpose and a commitment to a particular worldview. It therefore cannot be neutral

Characteristics of Knowledge in Islam

Another area of fundamental differences between the Islamic approach to knowledge and that of the West is that of characteristic of knowledge. Infact the characteristics of knowledge in Islam are the features which make its vision of knowledge distinct and unique. Some of these characteristics have been outlined and discussed by Wan Daud(1989, pp.62-91). Of such characteristics, there is the inseparability of knowledge from Allah. It means that, since Allah is All- Knowing and Omniscient, He is the root of all knowledge. Whatever form of knowledge is possessed or acquired by mankind it is definitely vouchsafed to them by Allah. It should never be seen purely as a product of human independent effort and endeavour. Hence, no aspect of knowledge should be separated from Him.

Another characteristic of knowledge in Islam is that, knowledge and truth are interwoven. This is obvious since Allah is the Ultimate Truth. As explained above ,knowledge cannot be separated from Him. What this implies is that, the essence of knowledge is to lead to the truth, and nothing but the truth. Since Allah is the Absolute and Ultimate Truth, knowledge should lead humanity to Allah. Any

knowledge which does not lead to the truth is not in real sense a sound knowledge but a mere misconception. This is the reason which informs the Qur'anic insistence on certain variables as the truth (*al-haqq*), certainty (*al-yaqin*), absolute and experienced certainty (*haqq al- yaqin*), certainty of sight (*ain al- yaqin*), and cognitive certainty (*ilm al- yaqin*). These variables constitute three grades of surety or truth; the highest being the first and the lowest being the third. On the other hand, the Qur'an condemns the antitheses of these variables such as falsehood (*al-batil*), doubt (*shakk*), conjecture (*zann*), whims (*hawa*), and ignorance (*jahl*).

Other features of knowledge in Islam are its relationship with action, spirituality, and ethics. This relationship as obtained in Islam is unequalled. In Islam the essence of knowledge is good deeds and righteousness. In a number of verses and ahadith emphasis has been made on combining knowledge with good deeds and piety. At the same time the Qur'an condemns the Jews (individually and sometimes collectively) for not acting in accordance with their knowledge, and the Christians for acting on ignorance.⁹

Looked at in another way, since knowledge is the source and foundation of sure faith and true belief (iman) and that iman itself produces good deeds (*amalus-salih*), Wan Daud here submits that, "it can be syllogistically deduced that knowledge would (through belief) be a positive cause of good deeds." Thus, the frequent linking of iman and *amalus-salih* in the Qur'an is virtually linking knowledge and good deeds (which combines righteousness, piety, and all other moral and ethical conducts). This is the very reason why people of piety, sure faith and righteousness are usually described as "people of knowledge" (*alladhina utul ilma*), "those who possess understanding" (*ulul al- hab*),

“those deeply grounded in knowledge”(*ar-rasikhuna f ail-ilm*), and so on.

While discussing this water-tight relationship between knowledge and good deeds in Islam, Mikailu (1996, pp.2-6) elaborately explained the views of Sheikh Sayyid Sabiq in his book -Da’awah al-Islam, pp.33-34; and Sheikh Uthman bn Fodiyo in his book- Kitabul al- Adab al-‘Ibadat wa al -‘Adat, p.31 on the issue. Both scholars maintain the view that ethics and scholarship are positively correlated. In Sabiq’s view, the right approach to life is, “to adopt a balanced approach in all endeavours(especially scholastic and academic) through allowing Islamic ethics and moral injunctions to guide his behaviour for attainment of optimum level of felicity as well as spiritual redemption.” Sheikh Uthman bn Fodiyo on the other hand enumerated the qualities which combine to make an ideal or exemplary scholar. These include among others, things like firm iman in Allah, piety, humility, righteousness, etc. It is therefore, clear from the foregoing that, in Islam, unlike secularism, knowledge, faith, action(good deeds) and morality (ethics) are inseparable

Methods of Knowledge in Islam

The Qur’an recognizes three levels of perception. These are the spiritual, intellectual and sensory levels. The organs on which these three levels are represented are the heart (*qalb*), the mind/intellect (*aql*), and the sensory organs. The methods of knowledge in Islam are based on these three levels of perception. According to Muhammad (1995) they constitute the major (methodological) components of Islamic epistemology. In other words, Islam recognizes the fact that knowledge is sourced and obtained through these levels. The spiritual level deals with revelation in its

various forms such as inspiration, intuition and telepathy; the intellectual level deals with cognitive processes like thinking, reflections meditations and contemplations; while the sensory level deals with things like observation, experimentation, and the like. It is however, important to note that, at the spiritual level of perception, both the intellect and the heart are involved, and at the sensory level, the intellect is still involved. The methods of knowledge in Islam are thus confined to these levels of perception. Going by this structure the most reliable method of acquiring knowledge is revelation. It is an immaculate and impeccable way of endowing knowledge to man. Thus in Islam, revealed knowledge is the most authentic knowledge which humanity has got. It cannot be faulted by human reasoning or sensory observations and studies.

Revelation itself according to the Qur'an can take place in different ways and forms. It can be by means of direct verbal communication in which Allah divinely speaks directly to the mortal being as it happened to Prophets Musa and Muhammad (S.A.W) respectively; it can be through an angel (Arch Angel Jibril); and or through inspiration. These three methods have been described in the Qur'an in the following way:-

﴿وَمَا كَانَ نَبِيٌّ أَنْ يَكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ
أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بَأْذَنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ حَكِيمٍ
(سورة الشورى : ٥١)

And it is not (possible) for a man that Allah shall speak to him except through inspiration or from behind a veil or that He sends (unto him) a messenger (an angel who) reveals (to him) by his leave that

which He wills. He Most High, All- Wise". (Qur'an, 42:51)

Some other forms of revelation may be through vision(in dreams) as was the case with Prophet Ibrahim(A.S)¹⁰ and Prophet Muhammad(S.A.W).¹¹ Even though revelation from Allah to humanity is principally done through the prophets, the Qur'an also tells us that other chosen servants of Allah can sometimes receive inspiration from Him. Examples of these are Maryam (A.S)¹², Ummu Musa (Moses's mother).¹³ The Qur'an also informs us that even non humans receive inspiration from Allah. For example it is mentioned in the Qur'an that Allah inspired the honey bee.¹⁴ But it has also been clearly explained in the Qur'an that evil spirits do communicate to their human friends or servants.¹⁵ This should not be mistaken for the revelation being discussed here. When we talk about revelation as a method of acquiring knowledge in Islam, we mean only the revelation that comes from God. Others beside this are falsehoods and misconceptions. It is also important to note that revelation from God had completely been sealed and cut off after Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w). All claims of receiving revelation (i.e. the types done to Prophets) after Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) are false. His revelation, the Qur'an, is final, universal, permanent and comprehensive. It has been destined therefore, to be an eternal and infinite treasure of knowledge. It is an indispensable beacon and criterion for any scholastic endeavour for all times.

Telepathy is another form of inspiration. To Muslims, it is a miracle which usually happens with certain chosen servants of Allah. It happened with Prophet Muhammad(S.A.W) when he narrated the martyrdom of Ja'afar bn Abi Talib and two others, at the very moment it was happening hundreds of kilometres away from Madinah.

The same thing happened with Umar (r.a.)-the second caliph of Islam, when from the top of the pulpit on Friday he was heard shouting words of caution to the Muslim army commander (Sariyah) who was thousands of kilometres away from Madinah. All these establish the fact that there is a spiritual level of perception which transcends ordinary intellectual and sensory perceptions. The western secular approach to knowledge however, simply dismisses it as unscientific or rather unempirical.

As for the methods which involve the rest of the two levels of perception (intellectual & sensory), the Qur'an exhorts us to use them for the acquisition of sound knowledge. With regards to the intellect the Qur'an implores mankind to make use of several intellectual methods of acquiring knowledge such as reflection (*tafakkur*), understanding (*tafaqquh*), meditation/contemplation (*tadabbur*), understanding/discernment (*ta'qqul*). All these words have been used in their various verb forms in the Qur'an. In some places the Qur'an praises those who use these intellectual processes properly (that is the believers), and condemns those who do not use them properly.

Regarding the sensory organs, the Qur'an calls on humanity to make use of their sensory organs to observe the universe in order to acquire knowledge of the Truth. In many places Allah mentions these sensory organs as special and important favours endowed to man and that he should use them to arrive at true knowledge.¹⁶ Based on this, we can say that the Qur'an approves of empirical studies and experimentations and observations. This is because undertaking such empirical studies will widen one's scope of knowledge, increase one's faith in Allah and will also serve as a practical interpretation of the Qur'anic sayings about the real-existential. The Qur'an never contradicts the real

existence and vice-versa. Where this occurs it must be as a result of the inability of man's senses and intellect to perceive the situation correctly because of the inherent weaknesses of these sense organs. The Qur'an tells us how Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) undertook an experiment on revivification of the dead (2:260), for the purpose of attaining a sure faith in Allah. Still in very clear terms, the Qur'an calls on us to undertake close empirical investigations, observations and experimentations on the various creatures of God (especially our own selves) in order to see the inherent portents in these creatures which convey the Majesty and Greatness of God. For example, Allah says:

﴿وَبِالْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِلْمُوقِنِينَ (٢٠) وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ (٢١)﴾

(سورة النازعات : ٢٠ - ٢١)

On the earth are signs (of God's existence) for those of assured faith. As also in your own selves; Will ye not then see? (Qur'an, 51:20-21)

These types of exhortations are very numerous in the Qur'an. They all convey to us how the Qur'an is very much concerned with the quest for empirical knowledge. If all the three sources of acquiring knowledge as analyzed above are considered, it becomes clear that the Islamic methodology of knowledge is all-encompassing, whereas the western secular methodology is deficient and narrow because of its rejection of revelation.

There is another dimension of methodology of seeking, acquiring, imparting, and disseminating knowledge in Islam. This dimension applies to the regulations, rules, eti-

quette, prerequisites and conditions governing and guiding the behaviours and conducts of the teacher and learner. Volumes of books have been written by many Muslim scholars on this subject matter. They include things like humility, obedience, respect, steadfastness, perseverance, firmness, hardwork, industriousness and diligence, and so many others.

Another aspect of the method of knowledge in Islam is the method followed by hadith scholars and scientists in collecting, authenticating, recording and reporting all information concerning the Prophet (S.A.W). Here, you find an advanced method of scholastic research and investigation which up to now has not been matched even by the so-called modern research methodologies of the West. Al-Umari (1992) has established this fact beyond any reasonable doubts. The scope of this book will not allow detail explanations and discussions on this aspect of the methods of scholastic inquiry in Islam. The foundations of these scholastic endeavours are in the Qur'an. In many places the Qur'an enjoins Muslims to authenticate information(knowledge) before passing it over, and to avoid acting on hearsay and conjectures. In fact the Qur'an puts conjectures as the direct antithesis of knowledge in many verses. A good example of these is the following verse:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ لَيَسْمُونَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْإِنثَى﴾ (٢٧)
وما لهم به من علم إن يتبعون إلا الظن وإن الظن لا يغني من الحق
شيئاً (٢٨) ﴿﴾
(سورة الذاريات : ٢٧-٢٨)

Those who believe not in the Hereafter, name the angels with female names. But they have no Knowledge therein. They follow nothing but conjecture;

and conjecture avails nothing against Truth. (Qur'an, 53: 27-28)

Implications and Significance of the Islamic Vision of Knowledge to the Islamization Programme

We have seen that, there are fundamental differences between the Islamic worldview and approach to knowledge on one hand, and the western secular world-view and conception of knowledge in the other. We have also seen that, the two approaches to knowledge are incompatible and can never exist harmoniously side by side. In addition to that, given the comprehensiveness of the Islamic view of knowledge, and also the godlessness of the secular approach to knowledge, the Islamization of knowledge is a necessary and vital exercise which must be undertaken by the Muslim world.

Another implication of the Islamic conception of knowledge, to the Islamization programme is that, since Muslims have had such a sublime, independent and dynamic system or view of knowledge, they should not continue to retain an alien system of knowledge that is inimical and antagonistic to the Islamic worldview. Muslims should never be deceived by the false claim of neutrality and objectivity of knowledge which tantamounts to perpetual intellectual, psychological and cultural subservience to the hegemony of secular knowledge. It is true that, knowledge per se is neutral and universal. But because of the fact that it never exists in a vacuum, and has always had values, methods and philosophies attached to it, it becomes culture bound and ideologically biased. This argument was made by Harris (1979,P.2) while refuting the claim of neutrality of knowledge. He said,

“Knowing the world, or coming to know the world, is not a matter of learning or coming into possession of a set of facts or truths about the world, which are there in the world, and which the world yields up to those who are able to see them; it is rather, a matter of coming to perceive the world in particular ways, from particular perspectives, and from particular view points, which are largely determined by and arise out of one’s interactions in and with a particular historical and social context”.

The arguments of Junaidu (1976, p.467) quoted earlier bring out even clearer the points being put across here. The implications of all the points raised above is that, Islamization of knowledge is not just a necessity but an obligation. This is so especially if contemporary Muslims wish to assert their faith and regain their lost civilizational glory.

History also vindicates all the assertions made above. According to Dauda (1994), when the Euro- Christian crusaders ransacked Muslim libraries and took away volumes of books in various disciplines of knowledge, they had to transform the knowledge to conform to their worldview. This they did by removing all Islamic elements from it. They redefined concepts and objectives, reformulated paradigms and theories, and reshaped methodologies to suit their peculiar socio-cultural and ideological circumstances. The same thing was done by the Marxist-socialists who stripped all disciplines of knowledge of their bourgeois capitalist tendencies, “giving them a completely new outfit after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in the then Russia”. It will therefore be defeatist and or pretentious if the Muslim world feels that all is well, and that there is, therefore, no need for

change.

The significance of the Islamic conception of knowledge to the Islamization of knowledge programme is that, with it, the effort of Islamization is not an unrealistic venture, nor is it a sentimental enterprise. It is a realistic and genuinely motivated endeavour informed by the Muslims' consciousness that they have an upright and sublime alternative to the Western secular system of knowledge. In this regard, the Islamic conception of knowledge is the starting and the ending point as well as the necessary criterion or yardstick for the Islamization of Knowledge undertaking. Put together with the implications discussed above, it constitutes and clearly also projects the vision of this noble endeavour and effort.

SECTION THREE

THE TASKS AHEAD OF THE ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWL- EDGE PROGRAMME

THE TASKS AHEAD OF THE ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE PROGRAMME

After presenting the Islamic vision of knowledge and its implications, it is necessary to attempt to project an outline of the tasks ahead of the Islamization of Knowledge programme. Considering the complex implications of this vision of knowledge, the tasks must be analysed comprehensively. If a serious commitment is to be made to the Islamization of knowledge programme, then it must be pursued as a radical intellectual revolutionary exercise. This is what Suleiman (1985) suggested when he says that, what is required is "a radical intellectual war to oust the hegemony of secular thoughts in our universities and institutions of learning, and bring once again the Islamic thoughts in all fields of endeavour." (p.33).

The tasks of the Islamization of Knowledge programme therefore, must be such that should provide fundamental, formidable and all-encompassing alternatives based on the Islamic worldview. Such tasks should touch all aspects of knowledge and education. An attempt has been made to present some of the important ones below:-

(a) Formulating an Islamic Theory of Knowledge based on the Qur'an and Sunnah

This task entails undertaking fundamental methodological and epistemological works that would lead to formulating and expounding paradigms and methodologies of knowledge and research in all the specific disciplines and in the general system of knowledge. These paradigms and

methodologies are to be expounded and projected strictly in accordance to the general and specific principles of knowledge enshrined in the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the Intellectual Legacy of the celebrated Muslim Scholars.

The entire processes and procedures involved in this task are contained in the twelve necessary steps leading to the Islamization of Knowledge as contained in Al-Faruqi (1987). Similarly, they are the ones refined and profoundly analysed in the six concise discourses presented by Dr. Taha Jabir al-Alwani in his paper-Islamization of Knowledge: Yesterday and Today-published in the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, vol:12,NO: 1 (pp.81-101).

It is important to note that this is the most arduous aspect of the undertaking, its essence, and so the crux of the whole matter. It challenges the very core or nucleus of the Western secular epistemology, which is a system that took centuries to develop to its present state. Only a determined, relentless and well-equipped effort can carry this undertaking to success and victory. It is never an endeavour that can be accomplished by scratching the surface. This is a fact that must be appreciated and accepted.

(b) Formulating and Establishing Islamically Based Contents and Infrastructure of Knowledge

This task entails applying all the outcomes of the preceding task to each discipline. It means that, the Islamically based paradigms and methodologies propounded should be applied to each discipline. This is necessary for the purpose of overhauling each discipline in its totality and not merely making cosmetic changes to it. The ultimate goal in this task is to Islamize the curriculum content of each discipline from its essential rubrics and fundamentals.

In this task the process of integrating revealed and acquired knowledge comes into force. This will do away with the problem of bifurcation or duality of knowledge. In this, all aspects of knowledge can be imparted and also employed in such a way that they would serve faith and life for the purpose of earthly prosperity and that of the Hereafter.

The bifurcation of knowledge that currently prevails in the Muslim world has persistently prevented Muslim youth from understanding and appreciating the relationship and relevance of the Islamic sciences to their real life situation and has also precluded the discernment of the relevance and relationship of the modern sciences to their faith.

The prevalence and persistence of this duality of knowledge in the Muslim world is a disturbing anomaly that was hitherto unknown to Muslims. It could be said to be responsible for our cultural and intellectual set back. This is because, as Abu-Sulayman (1994) has rightly asserted, "the two categories of knowledge form a tree which is unable to grow, because the first category lacks the essential dynamism to foster growth and the second is alien to the Muslims, their lands, goals, and objectives." Abu Sulayman then maintained that, for the purpose of reforming and reconstructing knowledge, a revival that would make the two fit together must be initiated as part of establishing an Islamic Infrastructure and Education.

This task involves all the conventional levels of education. Muslims must overhaul all the contents of all the branches of knowledge right from nursery schools up to the Universities. Muslim children and youth should never be subjected to alien and sometimes atheistic concepts in any of the levels of education.

Besides the above, this task also involves changing

the secular educational infra-structure, such that the goals, procedures, modalities, manners and the general codes and dispensations or dispositions of the system conform to Islamic ideals. In essence, what this means is the Islamization of the administrator-teacher; teacher-teacher; teacher-student; administrator-student; and student-student relationships. This involves instilling Islamic moral codes and tenets as the governing principles of the education system.

This task also involves redefining the school-community relationship to make it conform to the teachings of Islam. In Islam, the schools owe certain obligations to the community and vice-versa. These reciprocal obligations between the school and the community are not necessarily similar to the ones laid down by secularism. In actual sense, these obligations emanate right from the relationships between the learned individual and the community. What does an 'alim owe to his community and what does the community owe as obligations to him? All these have been enshrined in the Qur'an and Sunnah. The school-community relationship in Islam is an extension, and also a reflection of this. The schools should seek to imbibe this spirit in the teachers and students. Unless this is done, our schools cannot be better or Islamically different from the secular schools.

If this task and the one preceding it are clearly understood and appreciated, it would be seen that, Islamization of Knowledge in the contemporary world should be a project that would leave no stone unturned.

(c) Production of Islamized Teaching Force (Personnel)

The Islamization of the paradigms, methodologies and contents of knowledge may only remain as paper work if

the qualified and competent manpower necessarily required for implementing the project is not prepared. That is why the production of Islamically conscious and qualified Muslim teachers is necessary. This view has been forcefully advanced by Dauda (1996). This task was also clearly envisaged by the participants of the International Conference on Muslim Education (1977, Makkah). In his preface note to one of the series published after this conference-Curriculum and Teacher Education-Syed Ali Ashraf states that:

In order to realize the aims and objectives of Islamic education it is necessary for schools, colleges and universities to have an Islamic curriculum. But a curriculum and even the text-books prepared according to that curriculum cannot make education truly Islamic either in spirit or in practice if the teachers are not faithful Muslims and if they do not know the proper methods of teaching according to that curriculum.

The role of the teacher as a central and important figure in the success of any educational endeavour cannot be over-stated. This is because, the teacher stands at a middle position between the educational policy makers, the learning contents and the learners. The success or failure of an educational system to a great extent undoubtedly depend on the teacher. Thus, as Baloch (1980, p.116) rightly emphasized, "the education and preparation of teachers is the central, most crucial and most challenging problem involved in the reconstruction of any educational system."

The task of producing or rather preparing teachers for the successful implementation and ultimate realization of the Islamization of knowledge project is a two-fold one. As an imperative solution, it first of all involves re-educating the present population of Muslim teachers in all disciplines.

Parvez Manzoor tags this as the "re-education of Muslim intellectuals". It calls for sufficiently acquainting such Muslim teachers with basic and adequate knowledge of the Islamic Sciences especially the Science of Jurisprudence (Usul al-Fiqh), the Qur'anic Sciences such as Tafsir and 'Ulum al-Qur'an; and the Hadith Sciences. At the same time, it also calls for giving them a reorientation in their respective disciplines by means of educating them in the Islamic perspectives of these disciplines.

At the same time, and as a permanent and lasting solution, a concrete plan for the training of a qualified and competent calibre of teachers from among Muslim children and youth must immediately be embarked upon. What must be ensured in this regard is the production of teachers who are morally upright, religiously committed, and at the same time conversant with the Islamic Sciences and the Islamic perspectives of the modern disciplines and branches of knowledge. This is a task that must be started from the primary schools through the Universities.

(d) Laying Down Plans and Strategies for Successful Implementation

It may not be reasonable to pursue and or undertake the tasks advanced here without making concrete plans and strategies for implementing them. In this regard, the Islamization of knowledge programme requires another essential task of laying down concrete plans and strategies by which it should be pursued and implemented. Making educational plans and strategies has been alluded to in the Qur'an, Allah says:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِن كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ

طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ ﴿

(سورة التوبة : ١٢٢)

Nor should the believers all go forth together: If a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies in religion and admonish the people when they return to them, that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil) (Qur'an, 9:122).

This task involves a number of things as follows:-

(I) Setting a Time Frame for Particular Aspects of the Programme

There is the need to set a time limit for each aspect of the specific activities and task of the Islamization of knowledge. The importance of time and making reference to it in Islam when undertaking any activity is not a matter of disagreement. In many verses of the Qur'an, Allah draws our attention to the importance of time. If we are able to set such a time frame, we would be providing ourselves with the criteria for assessing, evaluating and measuring our successes and failures. This is very important in the life of a Muslim. That is what is referred to as **al-Muhasabah**. It is reported that a popular saying from one of the rightly guided Caliphs was:

“Evaluate and take reckoning of yourselves (deeds) before it is done against you (in the Day of Judgement).

(ii) Identifying Priorities

This is necessary because Islam gives credence to doing the most important and most profitable before embarking upon the lesser in importance. This is what a contemporary Muslim scholar calls the Science of Prioritization (**Fiqh al-Aulawiyah**). If this is done we would save ourselves the problems of wasting our time and resources on the less important or unnecessary to the detriment of their counterparts.

(iii) Exploring, Harnessing and Employing Resources

This is as necessary as the preceding steps. Any project that is not sufficiently backed by resources is bound to fail. This is the basic reason why the Qur'an constantly emphasizes (**al-Infaq**) (spending) in the struggle to raise the Kalimah of Allah (**Jihad**). Since Islamization of knowledge is an intellectual Jihad, the necessity of (**Infaq**) generating resources towards it must be appreciated. We must therefore mobilize adequate resources and spend them accordingly for this virtuous task of Islamization of knowledge. Exploring, generating and harnessing resources for this purpose can be subsumed under the general implications of the verse in which Allah says:

﴿وَأَعِدُوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ أَخِيلٍ تَرَاهُم بِه
عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَأَخْرَجِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ وَمَا
تَنْفَقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفِّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَظْلُمُونَ﴾
(سورة الأنفال : ٦٠)

Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies of God and your enemies, and others besides, whom Ye may not know, but whom God doth know. Whatever Ye shall spend in the cause of God, shall be repaid unto you, and ye shall not be treated unjustly." (Qur'an, 8:60).

While making plans and strategies, we must purify our intentions and re-state our commitments and determinations. Most importantly, we must put our trust in Allah. If we do all these we shall succeed in sha Allah.

CONCLUSION

So far we have seen the Islamic conception of knowledge and its implications and significance to the Islamization of knowledge programme. We have also seen the tasks ahead of the programme. Given the wide range of fundamental differences which exist between the Islamic and secular approaches to knowledge, it is safe to say that the Islamization programme is a Herculean task. As it was said by Al- Alwani(1995) it can not be mere cosmetic changes to the different disciplines by means of grafting relevant Qur'anic verses and ahadith to them. It is an exercise that calls for an overall overhauling of the methodological and conceptual / philosophical foundations of all the disciplines of knowledge, and to be replaced with Islamically oriented conception and methodology.

Since secularism has been the basic foundation upon which the Western philosophy and methodology of knowledge are built, religion has obviously been so terribly downplayed and relegated to the background. This being a consequence of the great controversy between men of science and the church, the victory of the former over the latter has made the Western world to believe that religion and all it stands for was reactionary, retrogressive, backward and superstitious, and that it had exhausted all its usefulness(Qutb, 1979). It must therefore, surrender to Science. This trend came to be the major characteristic of the Western approach to knowledge. It has pervaded all disciplines of knowledge and has succeeded in shaping and moulding the entire life and overall civilization of the West. Western life has become exaggeratedly materialistic. According to Qutb,(1979,p.7), "men are (now) enslaved by greed, lust and avarice. Blind appetites gain control over

them. They lose their grip on them and become their slaves. This results in the dehumanization of man."

A great misfortune that has befallen humanity is the predominance of this materialistic worldview and civilization all over the world. The whole world has been entangled by misery and gripped by meaninglessness in life, therefore. Humanity is blinded by greed and lust, moral and spiritual degeneration, mutual rivalry, savagery and wickedness. Peace and tranquillity seem to elude the world. There is an urgent need for efforts towards salvaging humanity. No civilization or worldview has the potentials of undertaking this except Islam and no people can take up the challenge except Muslims. As pointed out earlier, there is already an ensuing contention between the Islamic and Western secular worlds. This contention manifests itself in different aspects of life. The Islamization of knowledge should be seen as Islam's intellectual and psychological wing in this struggle. Viewed as a force for global cultural renewal (as asserted by Abu Fadi, 1989) Islamization of knowledge definitely has the prospects of redeeming mankind from the yokes of exaggerated materialism that has been imposed on it by the so-called "dominant culture". Thus, Islamization of knowledge in this regard is a move towards salvaging humanity.

**May the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad.
All Praise is due to Allah**

Endnotes

1. This refers to one of the earliest publications of the IIIT, i.e: Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Workplan. It was authored by Late Professor Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, and was first published in 1982.
2. See Qur'an, Surah al-Fatihah(1), verse 1; Surah al-An'am(6), verses 1 and 2; and Surah al-Nahl(16), verses 3 - 21.
3. These are the verses which more than any ones in the Qur'an clearly and directly declare to us the purpose of our creation and existence. Several other verses also allude to this fundamental purpose. These include: Surah al- Mulk(67), verse 2; Surah al-A'araf(7), verses 35 and 36; Surah Ta Ha(20), verses 123-127; Surah al-Mu'minun(23), verse 115, etc.
4. Qur'an mentions this in a number of verses such as: Surah al-Baqarah(2), verse 29; Surah Ibrahim(14), verses 32-34; Surah al-Isra'ili(17), verse 70; Surah al-Jathiyah(45), verse 13, etc.
5. See also Qur'an, Surah al- Mu'minun (23), verses 36-37
6. See Qur'an, Surah al-Maidah(5), verse 107, and Surah al-Zukhruf(43), verses 23-24.
7. Another verse that conveys the same message is verse 36 of Surah Yunus(10).
8. All emphases made in this quotation are mine.
9. Examples of such verses are: Surah al-Fatihah(1), verse 7; Surah al-Baqarah(2), verse 44; Surah al-A'araf(7), verses 175 and 176; Surah al-Jumu'ah(62), verse 5
10. Surah al-Saffat(37), verse 102.
11. Surah al-Fath(48), verse 27.
12. Surah aal-Imran(3), verse 42 and 45.
13. Surah al-Qasas(28), verse 7.
14. Surah al-Nahl(16), verse 68.
15. Surah al-An'am(6), verses 112 and 121.
16. Surah al-Nahl(16), verse 78; and Surah al-Sajdah(32), verse 9.

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THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT (IIT)

The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIT), a cultural and intellectual institution, was established and registered in the United States of America at the beginning of the fifteenth Hijrah century (1401/1981) with the following objectives:-

- * To provide a comprehensive Islamic outlook through elucidating the principles of Islam and relating them to relevant issues of contemporary thought;
- * To regain the Intellectual, cultural, and civilizational identity of the Ummah through the Islamization of the humanities and social sciences; and
- * To rectify the methodology of contemporary Islamic thought in order to enable it to resume its contributions to the progress of human civilization and give it meaning and direction in line with Islamic values.

The Institute seeks to achieve its goals through:

- * Holding specialized academic conferences and seminars;
- * Supporting and publishing selected works of scholars and researchers in universities and academic research centres in the Muslim world and the West; and
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International Institute of Islamic Thought
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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Amidst unprecedented trends and sophisticated dimensions of westernization, occasioned among other things by the hitherto unimagined advancements in information technology, the momentum of Islamic awareness and estrangement of Western concepts, values and styles of life are consistently on the increase all over the Muslim world. There is a growing disenchantment with and resistance to Western ideologies and systems of life. The Islamization of Knowledge Undertaking is one of the endeavours that at present demonstrate this trend. Essentially, it is an attempt to reorient and recast knowledge in a way that will make it conform to Islamic belief system and worldview, in the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

In the context of the fundamental contradictions and differences between the Islamic and Western secular worldviews this book attempts to expound the conceptual background of the Islamization of Knowledge Undertaking. Through a fairly analytic discussion of some of the essential components that constitute the Islamic Conception of Knowledge, this book attempts to propound the Vision of this endeavour. An attempt is also made in the last section to identify and suggest the major important tasks envisaged in the overall programme.

