

# **ISLAMICIZATION AND RELEVANTIZATION OF UŞÖL AL-DÖN**

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## **Introduction**

The International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) is promoting the missions of Islamicization, Integration, Internationalization and Comprehensive excellence. All the missions are very much related to all disciplines taught in the IIUM except for the mission of Islamicization in relation to the division of Islamic Revealed Knowledge (IRK) division. This division consist of departments like UŞÖl al-dÖn and Comparative Religion, Fiqh and UŞÖl al-Fiqh, Qur'Ön and Sunnah Studies, Arabic Language and Literature, and General Studies. All the courses in this division are of Islamic in nature as they are dealing directly with two major sources of Islam, al-Qur'Ön and Sunnah of the prophet (s.a.w). Most of the subjects are taught in Arabic except for the subjects taught in the department of General Studies and some subjects in UŞÖl al-dÖn and Comparative Religion. Due to this reason it seems unfit to use the term Islamization or Islamicization to the IRK division. Thus, the term relevantization is being employed to this division in the sense that it can be contextualized with current issues and modern sciences.

The IRKH division teams up with another division, the Human Sciences (HS) to form the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (KIRKHS). The HS division which consists of five departments is teaching the modern acquired sciences such as Psychology, Sociology, Political Sciences, History and Civilization, English Language and Literature. The HS division uses English language as medium of teaching. One of the purposes of this Kulliyyah is to integrate between the revealed based sciences and the modern contemporary sciences. Thus, another issue that comes to surface is that how to integrate the two which seems to be contradicted each other.

## **Background of the terminologies**

Many scholars have employed the term Arabization, Muslimization, Muhammadanization and Islamization to indicate the process of conversion of an individual,

people and society from their old religion to the religion of Islam. One of the definitions given by Ramesh R. Desai of the FaithFreedom Organization is “Islamization means conversion of a country or a state or a region’s legal system to Islamic (or Quranic or Sharia) law”.<sup>1</sup> Scholars like Lapidus, Weese also employed these terminologies to the same phenomena. This process took place in the Islamic history from the time of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) until present days.

One of the scholars who employs the term of Islamization is S.M.Naquib al-Attas as he expounds the theory of Islamization of the Malay Archipelago from Hinduism and Buddhism in 1960s.<sup>2</sup> Al-Attas who later on proposes the theory of Islamization of contemporary knowledge,<sup>3</sup> explains that it is a process in which effort is made to liberate man’s reason and language from the control of Secularism. Furthermore, it is Secularism which isolates man and educational system from religious values. Following al-Ghaz  l   (d.1111) in classifying the concept of knowledge into *far  ‘ayn* and *far   kif  yah*,<sup>4</sup> al-Attas includes some of the contemporary knowledge under the ambit of *kif  yah*, whose acquisition is obligatory to some. In his explanation of this category, only knowledge of sciences such as the Natural, Physical, Applied, Human Sciences are subjected to the process of Islamization for they have been secularized by the modern western scholars. Unlike al-Ghaz  l   whose categorizations is very much wider in scope, and proposed the method of revivification (*i  y  ‘*) on religious knowledge (*‘ul  m al-d  n*) regardless of whether they fall under the *far  ‘ayn* or *kif  yah*, al-Attas includes all religious sciences under the category of *far  ‘ayn* which does not subject to the process of Islamization.

Another modern Muslim scholar who worked on the same theory was Isma‘il Raji al-Faruqi. His theory mainly refers to modern sciences that were developed by the western secularized societies in the modern period (1600AD until 1900AD). This took place during the process of modernization in which the secularization and colonialization worked hand in hand in the Muslim lands. Al-Faruqi of the opinion that the colonialist administration and secularist educational system sidelines the Islamic system until the later becomes the private affair of the Muslims. Without listing any specific sciences, he goes on to suggest that the Islamization of knowledge can be achieved through the integration between the western

<sup>1</sup> [www.faithfreedom.org/.../Desai/](http://www.faithfreedom.org/.../Desai/) retrieved on 14-2-2011.

<sup>2</sup> S.M.Naquib al-Attas, (1972) *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu*, Petaling Jaya, ABIM.

<sup>3</sup> S.M.Naquib al-Attas, (1978) *Islam and Secularism*, Petaling Jaya, ABIM.

<sup>4</sup> Ab     mid al-Ghaz  l  , (1988) *Kit  b al-‘ilm*, tr. Nabih Amin Faris, *The Book Of Knowledge*, New Delhi, International Islamic Publisher.

education and Islamic educational system. However, prior to the integration process take place, the Muslims should master the western educational system and its disciplines. By mastering al-Faruqi means to attain the highest comprehension of western educational system offered by the secularized western educationists.<sup>5</sup>

The term Islamization proposed by al-Attas and al-Faruqi seem only to apply on the contemporary, human and applied sciences. This is perhaps due to the word knowledge in English does not differentiate between God's knowledge (*al-'ilm*) and human's knowledge (*al-ma'rifah*). The Arabic phrases of *islam* *al-ma'rifah* renders a correct meaning as the word *islām* derived from the verb *s, l, m*, and *aslama* among its meanings is to surrender something to the will of God, and *al-ma'rifah* always refers to human acquired knowledge, let alone the phrase *ma'rifah al-bashariyyah*. Thus, it connotes surrendering human knowledge before God.

Before the use of the terminologies of Islamization and Islamicisation (*islam*, *islamiyyat*), classical scholars have employed many terminologies such as renewal (*tajdīd*), reform (*iḥlāl*), totality of knowledge (*jim' al-'ilm*), revive (*iḥyā'*), adaptation/accommodation (*taḥbīq*), harmonisation (*tawfīq*) and others. The totality of knowledge (*jim' al-'ilm*), for example is employed by al-Shāfi'ī (d. 820) to show the comprehensive nature of two revealed sources of knowledge in Islam, al-Qur'ān and al-sunnah. With the exception of *jim' al-'ilm*, all these terminologies are applied on the human knowledge regardless of religious or applied sciences. One of the outstanding modern Muslim scholars who also contribute to the discourse of reformation of acquired sciences is Muhammad Iqbal (d.1938). Referring to the same efforts, he employs the English word 'reconstruction' as evident from his book entitled *Reconstruction of religious thought in Islam*. He suggests the Muslims to take the positive aspects which are in line with the Islamic values, and reject the negative aspects of the Western secularized civilization.<sup>6</sup>

The term *iḥyā'* proposed by al-Ghazālī, *taḥbīq* proposed by al-Dihlawī, *tajdīd* and *iḥlāl* proposed by many classical and modern scholars cover the *ma'rifah al-bashariyyah* (human knowledge) which includes religious and contemporary acquired sciences regardless of *far' ayn* or *far' kifāyah*. All the terminologies used by Muslim scholars connote one spirit that is a need to reform all the sciences and the methodologies so that they are in line with the

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<sup>5</sup> Ismā'īl Rājī al-Farūqī, (1982) *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and work plan*, Wahington DC, IIIT.

<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Iqbal, (1982) *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, Javid Iqbal.

spirit of Islam, leading towards acknowledging the oneness of Allah (*al-Tawhîd*). This is evident from the classification of knowledge made by classical scholars. For the purpose of this, the researcher will make use of al-Ghazâlî and al-Dihlawî's classification of knowledge as both of them have come up with a special terminologies; *iḷỵ'* and *taḷḅq* respectively.

Al-Ghazâlî has many different systems of classification of knowledge which he employs in his epistemology.<sup>7</sup> They are presentia knowledge (*'ilm al-ÎḷËṛ', 'ilm al-mukËshafah, 'ilm al-laduniyyah*) and acquired knowledge (*'ilm al-ÎḷËḷ*); religious (*shar'iyah, al-dËn*) and intellectual (*'aqliyyah, ghayr shar'Ë*) knowledge; individual obligation knowledge (*farḷ 'ayn*) and collective obligation knowledge (*farḷ kifËyah*); theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge (*'ilm al-mu'Ëmalah*). In his discourse of knowledge, he reluctant to talk on *'ilm al-ÎḷËṛ* or *'ilm al-mukËshafah* for it is beyond the grasp of the capacity of human mind and describes this type of knowledge as *al-malakah fawq al-'aql*. Most of his discourse of knowledge centres on the human acquired knowledge including religious knowledge (*'ulËm al-shar'Ë, 'ulËm al-dËn*) and intellection based sciences (*'ulËm ghayr al-shar'Ë*).

In the spirit of the reformation and relevantization, al-Ghazâlî has contributed a remarkable effort in reforming the Greek philosophy especially in Epistemology, Ontology, Cosmology and Axiology. He also gives special attention to the aspect of methodology of Greek philosophy in the sense that he praises the efforts made by those philosophers for exercising their intellectual power to find the truth. He however, isolates the elements which are not in line with Islam especially the wrong use of syllogism, the concept of human soul and its relation with mind and body, and others. This is evident from his books on philosophy and Sufism such as *MaqËlîd al-falËsifah, TahËfut al-falËsifah, al-Munqidh min al-ÎalËl, al-QisËs al-mustaqËm, IËyË' 'ulËm al-dËn* and others. His remarkable effort can be considered in modern terminologies as Islamisation, Islamicisation, relevantization for making the Greek philosophy and its methodology in conformity with Islamic values.

Another salient feature of al-Ghazâlî's concept of reformation is his concept of *iḷỵ'* or revivification of religious knowledge or sciences (*'ulËm al-dËn*). He confines his concept of *iḷỵ'* only to the science of practical religion (*'ilm al-mu'Ëmalah*) but not on the science of

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<sup>7</sup> Osman Bakar (1992), *Classification of Knowledge in Islam*, Kuala Lumpur, Institute for policy research. p.203

unveiling (*'ilm al-mukÉshafah*).<sup>8</sup> It can be assumed that this category of *'ilm al-mu'Émalah* is also similar to another classification of his, the acquired science (*'ilm al-ÍuÎËlÊ*). Most of the branches of sciences of practical religion that are arranged systematically in his categorisation of *farÎ 'ayn* and *farÎ kifÉyah*, are in need of revival for they are misused by certain learned men of worldly interest (*'ulamÉ' al-dunyÉ*).

The practical religion consists of three things: beliefs, works, and prohibitions. A sane adult individual has to observe the three things when he attains the age of puberty. The first thing which is an obligation is to learn the two utterances of faith (*al-shahÉdah*) and to understand them. Thus, it is called *farÎ 'ayn* for it is an individual effort to acquire such knowledge. The detail discussion about the God and Prophet is not required at that particular time for a mere utterance and to understand it is acceptable. Once an individual has faith (*ÊmÉn*) by confessing the *shahÉdah*, he has to acquire knowledge about five daily prayers and what are related to them like prayer times, ablution, and method of prayer, and what are the requirements and prohibitions entailed. The science of *farÎ 'ayn* covers knowledge about the tenets of Islam such as the *shahÉdah*, *ÍalÉt*, *Íawm*, *zakÉt* and *Íajj al-bayt*. To protect the faith from being misled by passing thought of doubt (*khaÎËr*), impulses of evil, hypocrisy and envy and their eradication is also *farÎ 'ayn*. This area is discussed by al-GhazÉlÊ in the quarter on the destructive matters of life of his book the *ÍÍyÉ' 'ulËm al-dÊn* under the topic of 'on the wonders of the heart' whose main theme is the concept of *íÍyÉ'*.

He goes on to divide the *farÎ kifÉyah* into two divisions, the *shar'É* (sciences that are derived from the revelations by using human reasoning) and *ghayr shar'É* (sciences that are derived from human reasoning). The *shar'É* sciences are of two types; the praiseworthy (*al-maÍmËdah*) and blameworthy (*al-madhmËmah*). The praiseworthy sciences are established on four basis; the *uÎËl* (sources), *furË'* (branches), *muqaddimÉt* (auxiliary) and *mutammimÉt* (supplementary). The sources are al-Qur'Én and al-sunnah, the consensus of all Muslims (*ijmÉ'*) and the traditions of the companions (*ÉthÉr*).<sup>9</sup>

The branches (*furË'*) are the sciences that are derived from the sources (*uÎËl*), and they are adduced by the mind to widen the understanding of the sources.<sup>10</sup> They are like collection of the laws from the Qur'Én and *ÍadÊth* that pertain to this world, and science that

<sup>8</sup> Al-GhazÉlÊ, (1988) *KitÉb al-'ilm*, tr. Nabih Amin Faris, *The Book of knowledge*, New Delhi, International Islamic Publisher.

<sup>9</sup> *Book of knowledge*, pp.30-31

<sup>10</sup> Al-GhazÉlÊ, (n.d) *JawÉhir al-Qur'Én*, Beirut, al-Markaz al-'arabÊ.

pertains to the hereafter like science of the conditions of the heart. He goes on to describe the auxiliary (*muqaddimÉt*) sciences. They serve as the tool for the *shar‘É* sciences such as Arabic language. Sciences that come from it are like linguistic science and syntax, the science of writing which are required to understand the Qur‘Én, sunnah and others. According to al-GhazÉlÉ, some of them are included under the *ghayr shar‘É* science such as linguistics and syntax.

The *mutammimÉt* (supplementary) are the sciences which enhance the understanding of the sources. Such sciences are like the sciences of Qur‘Én, sciences of *ÍadÉth*, biography history of the Prophet (*sÉrah*), Quranic exegesis (*tafsÉr*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and the principle of jurisprudence (*uÉlÉl al-fiqh*) and so on.

Surprisingly al-GhazÉlÉ classifies the science of jurisprudence and its principles under the ambit of the worldly sciences (*‘ulÉm al-dunyÉ*) yet praiseworthy for it deals with the administration and governance of this world only.<sup>11</sup> Without denying the importance of jurisprudence, he says:

Upon my life I declare that jurisprudence is also connected with religion, not directly but (indirectly) through (the affairs of) this world, because this world is the preparation for the hereafter, and there is no religion without it. Furthermore, the state and religion are twins. Religion is the foundation while the state is the guard. That which has no foundation will certainly crumble and that which has no guard is lost.<sup>12</sup>

The *ghayr shar‘É* sciences are also of three categories; the praiseworthy (*maÍmÉd*), blameworthy (*madhmÉm*) and permissible (*mubÉÍ*). As mentioned elsewhere, the praiseworthy are like science of linguistics and syntax, science of writing, Jurisprudence, science of principles of Jurisprudence and others. Adding to the list, al-GhazÉlÉ puts the science of medicine and physics (physiology) to the praiseworthy. He classifies Philosophy in which consist of four main subjects; geometry, arithmetic, logic, and divinity, under the ambit of permissible (*mubÉÍ*) sciences to be learnt. Since the science of logic (*manÍiq*) and divinity (*ilÉhiyyah*) are parts of theology and philosophy, pursuing them is also *farÍ kifÉyah* for whose task is to guard the laymen’s faith against the innovations of the philosophers’ disputations and erroneous views of theologians.

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<sup>11</sup> *Book of knowledge*, p.33.

<sup>12</sup> *Book of knowledge*, p.34.

He classifies the sciences of magic, talisman, juggling, trickery and others under the blameworthy.<sup>13</sup> These sciences however are not evil in themselves but because of others especially those who seek the worldly benefits. This also goes to the *shar‘Ê* and *ghayr shar‘Ê* sciences which basically are praiseworthy in nature, but if they were in the hand of bad people who seek for worldly interests, they become blameworthy. Al-GhazÉlÊ gives the example of the science of ‘*ilm al-kalÉm, uÎËl al-fiqh*, astronomy, geometry, arithmetic which can be misused by evil people. Therefore, in order to guide them to the right path he suggests the concept of *iÎyÉ*’ to be applied on sciences of *farÎ ‘ayn* and *farÎ kifÉyah* or in a wider scope ‘*ilm al-mu‘Émalah*.

Another learned figure that is reputed for his theory of reformation is ShÉh WalÊ AllÉh al-DihlawÊ. His theory of adaptation/accommodation (*taÎbÊq*) applies not only on the social life but also on his theory of *ma‘rifah*. Basically al-DihlawÊ classifies human knowledge into presentia knowledge (‘*ilm al-ÎulËrÊ*) and acquired knowledge (‘*ilm al-ÎulÊlÊ*). Like al-GhazÉlÊ, he of the opinion that ‘*ilm al-ÎulËrÊ* is a gift from God to a selected few and it is beyond the capacity of man’s reason. Unlike al-GhazÉlÊ who refuses to speak on this type of knowledge, he goes on to describe in a much detail explanation in which he puts the *waÎy* (revelation) of the prophets and messengers on the first list. According to him, this is their privileges and cannot be obtained by others.<sup>14</sup>

The second on his list is the knowledge of unveiling (*al-makshËfËt*) in which he includes many types of unveiling knowledge like unveiling (*kashf*), true vision (*ru‘yah al-ÎÉlÍlah*), insight (*firÉsah*), divine whisper (*hËtif*), spiritual vision (*al-mubasshirËt*) and others. This type of knowledge falls under the ambit of extra-ordinary happening (*khawËriq al-‘Édah*) which is granted by God to a selected few only. He of the opinion that since this is only to a selected few, it is of no use to elaborate much on it and it is also not subjected to his formula of adaptation (*taÎbÊq*).

Like al-GhazÉlÊ who classifies ‘*ilm al-mu‘Émalah* into *shar‘Ê* and *ghayr shar‘Ê*, al-DihlawÊ has another classification that is ‘*ilm al-ÎulÊlÊ* from which branches out transmitted sciences (*al-manqËlËt*) and intellectual sciences (*al-ma‘qËlËt*). *Al-ManqËlËt* means the sciences that are derived from two transmitted sources al-Qur‘Ên and al-sunnah by using man’s reason. Examples of this is like ‘*UlËm al-Qur‘Ên*, ‘*ulum al-ÍadÊth*, Qur’anic exegesis

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.31.

<sup>14</sup> Shah WalÊ AllÉh al-DihlawÊ, (1996) *×ujjat AllÉh al-BËlighah*, tr. Marcia K. Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, Leiden, E.J.Brill.

(*tafsîr*), science of jurisprudence (*‘ulûm al-fiqh*) and its principles (*uḥḍ al-fiqh*), theology (*uḥḍ al-dîn*), Sufism (*taḥawwuf*) and others.

Besides, *al-Ma‘qûlât* are the sciences that are derived by man’s reason on others except two revealed sources. Examples of this are like logic (*manḥiq*), physical philosophy (*al-ġab‘iyyât*), mathematics (*al-riyâḥiyyât*), metaphysics (*al-ilâhiyyât*), language (*al-lughah*) etc. He also terms these sciences as Philosophical Sciences (*al-‘ulûm al-ġikmiyyah*).

In light of the above discussion on the terminologies, it can be deduced that one of the features is to reform the acquired sciences so that they are in line with Islamic values, applicable to the society and leads to knowledge of Tawḥîd. Since the field of *Uḥḍ al-dîn* also comes under the category of acquired science, it also falls under the concept of reformation, reconstruction, Islamicisation, relevantization, contextualization, revivification, (*ihyâ’*), accommodation (*taḥbîq*) and others. Since the content of *uḥḍ al-dîn* are basically the teaching of Islam, its methodology and approach of teaching and learning should be reformed. For the purpose of this, the department has taken several steps to meet the said objectives.

#### A. Approach of teaching and learning

##### i. **Minor and double degree.**

In this aspect besides majoring in *Uḥḍ al-dîn*, a student is encouraged to take minor subjects in many areas of human and applied sciences from the kulliyah of Economics and Management, Law, Information and Communication Technology, Science, and mainly also from the Division of Human Sciences of KIRKHS.

A student is also encouraged to pursue for the double degree program after finishing his first degree.

##### ii. **Fieldwork.**

All students of the department of *Uḥḍ al-dîn* have to take the research methodology course RKUD 4999. This course is a common course for all students of the Kulliyah of IRKHS. Some of the courses that require fieldwork are like RKUD 3030 Methods of Da’wah, RKUD 4110 Contemporary Moral Issues, RKUD Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thoughts and others.



**iii. Critical analysis of classical and modern texts.**

All students of the department of UĤĤĤ al-dĤĤ have to take:

- a. RKGS 2010 Creative Thinking and Problem Solving offered by the Department of General Studies.
- b. Logics RKUD 3350 Formal and Symbolic Logic.
- c. RKUD 3340 Introduction to Philosophy.
- d. RKUD 3330 Contemporary Philosophy.
- e. RKUD 4310 Philosophy of Science.
- f. RKUD 4350 History of Islamic Philosophy.
- g. RKUD 3140 UĤĤĤ al-dĤĤ I
- h. RKUD 4130 UĤĤĤ al-dĤĤ II.

**iv. Comparing Classical issues with current issues.**

Examples of this are:

- a. RKUD 3130 Issues in Tasawwuf
- b. RKUD 3350 Formal and Symbolic Logics.
- c. RKUD 4140 Critical Review of Islamic philosophy.
- d. RKUD 3150 Al-Firaq.
- e. RKUD 4110 Contemporary Moral Issues.

**v. Approach in teaching and learning.**

Besides practicing the conventional technique like reading the classical text, lecturing, the department is also adopting some modern techniques in this regard such Problem Based Learning (PBL), Seminar and others.

The out-put of the department:

**i. The graduates.**

- 1. To develop students to have an Islamically based integrated holistic approach to education and career.

2. To provide students with proper understanding of the worldview of Islam and promote Islamic sciences relevant to contemporary discipline of study.
3. To offer students to have comparative approach in the study of Islamic Heritage, Thought and Comparative Religion

ii. The text books and publications.

Many text-books have been published to fulfill the mission of Islamicization and Relevantization: Books In the field of Islamic Da‘wah, KalÉm, Contemporary Islamic Thought and others.

iii. Consultancy

The Department of uÎËl al-dÊn becomes the consultant for Bachelor of uÎËl al-dÊn program in Singapore (conducted by PERGAS) and also Post-graduate diploma in Islamic studies conducted by MUIS.

**Conclusion.**

The spiritual-based program is scanty because it does not come under the jurisdiction of the department and it is under other divisions of IIUM. However, the lecturers of the department are encouraged to advice their students on this issue.