

## Integration of Islamic Values Within Science Based on Islamization of Human Knowledge (IOHK) Theory or Philosophy

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### **Abstract**

*This discussion on the integration of Islamic values within the sciences is focused mainly on the views and preoccupation of Malaysian proponents of the Islamization of human knowledge (IOHK) concept who expressed their views and views of their other Muslim associates either in Malaysia or abroad. Necessarily, a historical backdrop on the significance and centrality of knowledge in Islamic civilization is mentioned to emphasize why some proponents of IOHK regard this approach as a jihad of the 21st century. It is in particular to them a jihad to restore science to its rightful position within the trajectory in conformity with the teaching of Islam so that science would not be used without impunity to fuel human greed that could cause serious hazards to humankind. Islamization enterprise or Islamicization (a more appropriate term) has been triggered mainly to protect the sanctity of knowledge as conceived and understood in the Islamic perspective from the onslaught of the conception of knowledge purported by Western scientists and scholars within the worldview formed and shaped by naturalism, materialism, and positivism perspectives. The analytical and critical approaches are used as methods of discussion.*

**Keywords:** *Scientific of Civilization, Theory, Language, Philosophy, Islamization of Knowledge*

### **INTRODUCTION**

There is a growing belief that Islamic knowledge must be prioritized due to the influence of cross-cultural interactions that impact Muslims worldwide. Western civilization has been shaped by laissez-faire principles, which have resulted in uncontrolled capitalism. These principles are supported by the secular paradigm's philosophical foundations of democracy and human rights, which have made Western society materialistic and caused Western science to reject the idea of revelation. This rejection has led to a need for a new paradigm, as the world is at risk of destruction. Many Muslim scholars are concerned about Western science's negative effects, as it can lead Muslims to become caught up in religious liberalism, pluralism, atheism, and apostasy. This is especially true in the age of information and computer technology, where Muslims consume Western knowledge, which can challenge their religious beliefs.

The Islamicization of human knowledge is seen as a way to awaken Muslim scholars and thinkers to interpret knowledge within the Islamic worldview. The idea is to integrate knowledge from non-Muslim sources into the Islamic worldview, filtering out elements that are not compatible with religious and moral values. This approach is necessary due to the cross-cultural influences on Muslims worldwide, especially the negative impact of Western science on Muslims. Muslim scholars of the past assimilated knowledge from various sources and were pioneers in the discovery of knowledge within Tawhîdic, moral, and ethical values. The Islamicization of human knowledge aims to promote the discovery of knowledge while maintaining Islamic values.

The Islamicization of human knowledge has been deemed necessary because of the influence of cross-cultural interactions on Muslims globally. Western civilization has a laissez-faire approach that has resulted in uncontrolled capitalism and a scientific community that consciously disregards the concept of revelation. This has led to a materialistic society, which poses a significant risk to the world. Many Muslim scholars are concerned about the negative impact of Western science on Muslims and therefore view the Islamicization of human knowledge as an opportunity to awaken Muslim scholars and thinkers and help them develop and interpret knowledge within the Islamic worldview. The IOHK initiative aims to integrate knowledge from non-Muslim sources into the Islamic worldview, after filtering out elements that do not align with religious and

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moral values. Muslim scholars from the past have assimilated knowledge from various sources and were pioneers in discovering knowledge within Tawhîdic, moral, and ethical values.

There exists a group of Muslim scholars who have engaged in deep conversations about the Islamicization of human knowledge, which they consider both possible and important. Even non-Muslim theistic scientists agree that science and religion need to find a new common ground. The Islamicization of knowledge is based on both revealed sources and the legacy of scientific and philosophical knowledge from ancient Muslim philosophers. The Qur'an has always emphasized the importance of acquiring knowledge through genuine inquiry, while the hadiths of the Prophet (SAW) highlight the importance of seeking wisdom as a right for all Muslims. Knowledge obtained within the Islamic worldview is not just for practical purposes, but also to enhance the faith of Muslim seekers of knowledge. The proponents of IOHK believe that they need to create a larger critical mass of supporters to gain wider acceptance from intellectuals, teachers of science, and policymakers. Despite the slowing down of the Islamicization of human knowledge efforts, many Muslim scholars and scientists remain convinced that the Muslim mind needs to be free from Western values that can be detrimental to the foundations of the Tawhîdic conception of belief and knowledge. Sharifah Shifa al-NâïïÊs believes that Muslim intellectuals and scholars must work towards freeing the Muslim mind from the influence of Western civilization. They should scrutinize human knowledge and eliminate values that do not align with Tawhîdic principles, as they pose significant challenges to the traditional way of life of Muslims. The highest level of knowledge is "numina," which connects phenomena to their true origin, and recognizes an ordered hierarchy of knowledge with revealed knowledge as the ultimate truth. Osman Bakar suggests that this knowledge is based on the idea of the Unity of God and the unity of knowledge.

## **IOHK IS A MEANS TO RESTORE KNOWLEDGE TO BE IN CONFORMITY WITH THE ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF KNOWLEDGE**

The Islamic civilization flourished due to the rich Islamic intellectual tradition that was a crucial source of knowledge and ethics for Muslims. From the 7th century, there was significant growth in religious and scientific knowledge in most Arab city centers as well as in Andalusia, Spain. Muslims believed that the hierarchical nature of knowledge was a manifestation of the divine principle. In the beginning, Muslim scholars were fascinated by Greek logic, but later, they shifted their attention to the details of things, generating scientific knowledge based on observation and experimentation. Islamic science reached the pinnacle of its success during the golden age, with many cities becoming centers of learning. Muslims were pioneers in science, and their knowledge became an important reference for Europeans. However, the 12th century saw a decline in the scientific and moral spirit in Muslim societies, and with the advent of colonialism, the negative trend became more acute. Muslim intellectuals expressed concerns over the educational system and the incorporation of Western values at the expense of their own culture. They called for the integration of knowledge within the Islamic perspective.

Muslim intellectuals in the 19th century were faced with the scientific advancements of Europe and questioned whether they could maintain their religion while achieving material progress. Consequently, many of these intellectuals worked towards modernity discourse to bring progress to Muslim communities, similar to that of Europe. This resulted in a reformation of Islamic education, which established the foundation for modern thought among Muslim intellectuals. The idea of Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) was born out of the recognition of the need to Islamize knowledge, with the aim of reviving the Islamic intellectual tradition based on the Islamic worldview. Muslim intellectuals such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, Sayyid Hussein Alatas, Syed Naquib Al-Attas, and others emerged as proponents of IOK in the following decades of the 20th century.

During the early 19th century, the progress of science in Europe posed a great challenge to many Muslim intellectuals. They were skeptical about the possibility of Muslims achieving material progress while retaining their religion by following Western ways. To bring about a similar awakening, renaissance, and progress in Muslim communities as in Europe, many intellectuals of the time used modernity discourse. Some of them attempted to modernize the traditional curriculum of Islamic education. The main consequence of the reformist discourse was that it formed the basis of the modern thinking of Muslim intellectuals and influenced their discourse toward modernization.

During the early 19th century, the rapid scientific progress of Europe posed a great challenge to many Muslim intellectuals. They were concerned about whether it was possible to achieve material progress by adopting Western ways while still preserving their religion (Amr Shakib Arsalan, 2004: 23). In response, some Muslim intellectuals used the discourse of modernity to awaken, reinvigorate, and modernize Muslim communities, similar to what had happened in Europe. Some of them attempted to transform traditional Islamic education into a more modern method. This reformist discourse laid the groundwork for modern thought among Muslim intellectuals and influenced their discourse toward the modernization of Muslim communities. By the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries, al-Afghanî, ‘Abduh, Riî, and Muhammad Iqbâl had described and analyzed the condition of the Muslim ummah, both intellectually and materially (Mohamed Aslam Haneef, 2005: 2). Muhammad Iqbâl was one of the first to advocate for the Islamization of knowledge in the early 1900s. Many other Muslim intellectuals at the time called for educational reforms to transform Muslim societies. For example, in the Indian subcontinent, Sayyid Abî al-Nâla Mawdudi proposed an educational system that integrated worldly knowledge with religious knowledge. He believed that the separation of religious and worldly knowledge within the secular framework introduced by the colonialists was the root of the ummah's problems. The need to Islamize knowledge is considered the intellectual dimension of the "Islamic Resurgence," in contrast to the "militant form" of Islamic fundamentalism exemplified by the Islamic revolution in Iran, the takeover of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, the war in Afghanistan, and various oppositions, attacks, and struggles throughout the Middle East (Aslam Haneef, 2005, 1-2). The realization of the need to Islamize knowledge gave rise to the idea of Islamization of Knowledge (IOK), which became popular among Muslim intellectuals in the following decades of the 20th century. Intellectual discourses on the Islamization of knowledge were focused on the need to revive the Islamic intellectual tradition based on the Islamic worldview. The IOK concept was seen as an application of the doctrine of "Unity of the divine principle" to human intelligence and its activities of thinking and knowing (Osman Bakar, 43-44). This period saw the emergence of exponents and proponents of IOK among Muslim intellectuals such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Ismâîl RËjî al-FËrËqË, SayyËd ×usayn Alatas, Syed Naquib Al-Nâîîs, and others.

The World Conference on Muslim Education that took place in Makkah in 1977 emphasized the need for a new educational system that integrates "revealed" and "acquired" knowledge. Following this line of thought, Muslim scientists in Malaysia have been advocating for the concept of Islamic science or Tawîdic science, which led to the establishment of ASASI (Akademi Sains Islam Malaysia) in 1977. The idea of Islamization and integration of knowledge dominated the scientific discourse after the Makkah Conference in the 1980s. There were several intellectual discussions on pursuing the objectives of Islamization of knowledge (IOK). According to Aslam Haneef's survey on the development of the Islamization of knowledge, the late 1980s and early 1990s were a period of "enthusiasm" and "active pronouncements" in the development of the concept. Attempts were made to develop "Islamized textbooks," but by the second half of the 1990s, questions were raised about these "Islamized products." This led to the whole project being criticized. Since then, the agenda of Islamization of knowledge has faced obstacles, mainly due to attitudinal challenges. Many Muslim intellectuals and scholars have been skeptical of the idea, preventing the formation of a critical mass to support the IOK agenda. The term for Islamization of knowledge has been refined through various discourses among its exponents. IOK has been rephrased as Islamization or Islamicization of Human Knowledge (IOHK) to differentiate between acquired knowledge and divine knowledge. In Malaysia, this agenda has been pursued by Muslim intellectuals and scientists such as Prof. Shaharir, Kahiljah Salleh, Osman Bakar, Muhamad Kamal Hasan, Mohd Yusof Othman, Mohd. Rofa, Azizan Baharudin, and others. The International Islamic University (IIUM) and the Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) have been integral players in promoting the IOHK agenda. Prof. Syed Naquib al-'Aîîs's intellectual output was one of the major pioneering efforts. One of the main goals of this project is to eliminate the dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge in Muslim education and revitalize holistic and integrated Islamic thought. Prof. Ismâîl RËjî al- FËrËqË (1921-1986) conceptualized the Islamization of modern knowledge program, which offered an initial 12-step program for such an undertaking. All the Rectors of IIUM, including Dr. Abdul Rauf, Dr. Abdul Hamid Abu Sulyman, Dr. Muhamad Kamal Hasan, and Dr. Syed Arabi Idid, have contributed significantly to upholding the IOHK agenda. In the 1990s, the respective faculties of IIUM pursued IOHK goals. As a result, the establishment of the Centre for Islamization (CENTRIS), headed by Distinguished Professor Tan Sri Muhamad Kamal Hassan

at the International Islamic University (IIUM), could be seen as a significant step in strengthening IIUM's role as a champion of the IOHK agenda.

## **IMPORTANCE OF IOHK TO COUNTER FALLACIES AND DANGERS POSED AS A RESULT OF ABUSE OF KNOWLEDGE IN SCIENCE**

Some scientists and philosophers have argued that Western science is built on beliefs and dogmas, which have been accepted as scientific facts without question for centuries. However, in the 20th century, some thinkers started to challenge these assumptions and pointed out that they were not verifiable through scientific methodology. Richard Tarnas, a philosopher, has noted that modern science is facing a crisis in the 21st century and that the ancient paradigm of science needs to be re-evaluated. While modern science emerged as a secular activity during the Scientific Revolution, Tarnas argues that the original revolutionaries continued to view their work in religious terms. However, by the 19th century, modern science had taken on a completely secular identity, with questions about the existence of God and the concept of cosmic design being relegated outside the purview of science.

Science progressed rapidly, leading to religion being viewed as more relevant to the inner self, tradition, and the afterlife, rather than the outer world and contemporary spirit. Mechanistic materialism became widely accepted and questions regarding gods or a transcendent reality were deemed unnecessary. Science focused on tangible causes and empirical correlations that could be experimentally confirmed, while spiritual causes and teleological designs were excluded from the scientific discussion. This was not due to myopia, but rather because spiritual causes could not be systematically isolated or tested. Therefore, many scientists believed that it was more productive to work with empirical categories that could be scientifically proven.

The 19th and early 20th centuries were a time of great scientific advancement, with many branches of science making progress and practical applications being developed. This progress gave people great confidence in science's ability to improve human knowledge, health, and well-being. As a result, religion and philosophy had to define their position concerning science. However, two developments in the 20th century changed the status of science. One was theoretical and internal to science, while the other was practical. These developments challenged the accepted scientific paradigm and showed that the old materialistic worldview was flawed. New models of reality were needed that included human values. Many scientists no longer believed that "pure science" was possible, and the idea that science had unique access to truth was no longer accepted.

The classical Cartesian-Newtonian cosmology gradually and then dramatically broke down over time as several astonishing developments in physics accumulated. By the end of the 1920s, virtually every major postulate of the earlier scientific conceptions had been overturned. The idea of atoms as solid, indestructible, and separate building blocks of nature was challenged, as were the concepts of space and time as independent absolutes, the strict mechanistic causality of all phenomena, and the possibility of objective observation of nature. There have been challenges to the previous scientific assumptions about matter, and it is now widely accepted among many scientists that matter and energy are interchangeable. In this connection, many scientists now regard a three-dimensional space as untenable and instead accept a new conception of a four-dimensional space-time continuum. Time is not absolute but rather flows at different rates for observers moving at different speeds. With this change in the conception of matter, some scientists have revised their views on science. In particular, for unexplainable phenomena of the complementary relationship between waves and matter, subjective judgment needs to be taken into account. The revised position is that the subjectivity of the observer plays a part that cannot be eliminated. Therefore, to arrive at the truth, there is a need for holistic thinking, as current knowledge suggests that the world is interconnected to a greater degree than previously thought. Some scientists propose a complementary relationship between science and religion to understand the elusive phenomena of the world. They believe that science and religion should not be considered separate categories and should instead be in a complementary relationship. Increasing numbers of scientists are concerned that the reductionist approach of science to reduce all reality to the smallest measurable component for scrutiny and objective study may result in a distortion of the real essence of the nature of things and miss the fundamental principle for understanding the reality of the natural world and the humanistic aspect of man in the entire scheme of creation.

These scientists see the need for science to incorporate subjective elements that relate to humanistic aspiration into the interpretation of scientific facts. Tarnas quoted P.W Bridgman:

*The world fades out and eludes us...We are confronted with something truly ineffable. We have reached the limit of the vision of the great pioneers of science, the vision, namely, that we live in a sympathetic world in that it is comprehensible by our minds. Philosophy's conclusion was becoming a science as well. Reality may not be structured in any way the human mind can objectively discern. Thus incoherence, unintelligibility, and insecure relativism compounded the earlier modern predicament of human alienation in an impersonal cosmos.*

K. Popper, in his writings from 2012, 1972, and 1976, argued that science is incapable of producing certain knowledge, not even probable knowledge. According to Popper, humans cannot obtain knowledge of the true nature of things through observation of the world. This is because what an observer perceives and interprets is not a direct reflection of natural phenomena, but rather is influenced by the observer's own biases and interpretations. The observer's interpretation of the facts is embodied in a theory, which is essentially a conjecture of the human mind. The validity of a theory cannot be conclusively tested or proven, and the framework within which a theory is derived is ultimately a matter of personal choice for the observer. As such, humans can never know the absolute truth of things; their understanding of reality is always subject to reinterpretation in a new framework. A new framework may invalidate earlier findings, demonstrating that the essence of things cannot be fully understood or ascertained and that human ignorance is infinite in the face of the world's phenomena. Therefore, the pursuit of knowledge must continue indefinitely. T.S. Kuhn added that differences in interpretation can arise not only from differences in the framework of thinking but also from differences in the data that scientists use, which can sometimes conflict with each other. Ultimately, a new imaginative synthesis emerges and becomes accepted by the scientific community, but the process by which this revolution takes place is far from rational. To interpret and analyze observed phenomena, a new imaginative synthesis is needed. This highlights the fact that scientists cannot arrive at a complete and objective truth, as elements that are considered non-rational become a part of the interpretation of observed phenomena.

Many people, not just professional philosophers, have had to reassess human knowledge. The reliability of scientific knowledge has been called into question, as there is no guarantee that what we think we know is true. Empirical data are always relative to the observer and theory-soaked. Furthermore, the scientific worldview, once considered reliable, appears to be exacerbating problems on a global scale. Despite its effectiveness, scientific knowledge can be dangerous if it is limited in perspective. Rupert Sheldrake, a scientist, rejects the idea that Western science is objective and universal. He argues that unverifiable assumptions have been the basis for scientific thinking for centuries, limiting our understanding of consciousness and other aspects of reality. The need to preserve scientific authority often leads to dissent and debate being kept behind the scenes. Although science has evolved, the old ethos of monopoly, universality, and absolute authority remains. According to Rupert Sheldrake, scientists are not perfect and can make errors in interpreting information from scientific discoveries. While science is highly regarded as a source of knowledge, it does not provide absolute truth. Sheldrake argues that deep-rooted assumptions and beliefs held by scientists act as barriers against open-minded thinking and prevent the advancement of scientific knowledge. The traditional scientific belief system is still based on outdated 19th-century ideology.

The world is currently facing a severe ecological crisis and scholars argue that the free-market and techno-scientific approaches have failed to sustain ecological balance. This has resulted in a dangerous direction towards extinction of various species, destruction of their habitats, deforestation, desertification, and depletion of resources. The Gulf of Mexico oil spill of 2010 is an example of a disaster with major ecological ramifications. The climate change debate has entered into a period of uncertainty without any legally binding agreement to mitigate global warming. World leaders have not taken climate change seriously, and if we defer action until 2020, we will exceed the dangerous limit for a temperature rise of two degrees Celsius. Industrial pollution has entered into the food chain and our bodies, manifested by the proliferation of all kinds of cancers and new varieties of diseases. The impacts of the devastating floods are exacerbated by widespread deforestation, conversion of wetlands to farms or urban sprawl, and clogging up of natural drainage systems with garbage. Businesses and civil society need to become more proactive and put pressure on governments to take action before it is too late.

During the twentieth century, approximately half of the world's forests disappeared, and fish stocks declined by two-thirds. Peru's fishing industry, for example, experienced significant fluctuations in the 1960s and 1970s, with a peak of 13.5 million tons in 1970 followed by a sharp decline to 1.5 million in 1978. Despite these environmental concerns, the United States did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol and adopted questionable attitudes during the Copenhagen conference. The conference failed to produce any binding treaty as the United States refused to agree to one. The Copenhagen Accord, a non-binding document, was drafted by the United States and a group of countries known as BASIC (Brazil, China, India, and South Africa), with no concrete decisions made on emission reductions. China has become the largest energy consumer and the largest emitter, surpassing the United States in 2008.

Scientists have been uncomfortable with the incompleteness of science for decades, as it is based purely on the principle of objectivity within a limited physical domain of existence. Nobel Laureate Paul Davies argues in his book "God and the New Physics" that science has now come of age and can offer a surer path to divinity than religion. Recent discoveries in physics are revolutionizing our world and providing answers to many of the questions once posed by religion, such as the origin of the universe, our own origins, the nature of life, and the organization of the world. Davies explores a range of subjects, from creation to the soul, free will to time, black holes to miracles, and shows that there is more to the world than meets the eye. He believes that science is now on the brink of answering our most profound questions about the nature of existence. Some scientists and philosophers have exposed that much of the paradigm of Western science is based on beliefs or dogmas, which have been accepted without question as scientific facts for hundreds of years. In the 20th century, some philosophers and scientists began to scrutinize these assumptions and found that they could not be verified using the scientific method. There is a fundamental difference between the worldview and epistemology of science based on secular ideology and that based on religion, as secularism separates religious activities from the otherworldly aspect of living and relies solely on sense perception to observe and analyze the physical aspects of life. Meanwhile, a worldview based on religion includes both the physical and metaphysical or transcendent aspects of life, beyond sense perception and the faculty of thought.

In Islamic tradition, science is viewed within the framework of Tawhid, where Muslim scientists are expected to always be conscious of the existence of God. The separation of science from religion is seen as incomplete, as humans are both physical and spiritual beings, and require knowledge that encompasses both aspects. The classification of knowledge into worldly and otherworldly knowledge is also seen as incorrect, as all creation in the world is considered to be "Signs" from God. The interaction between religion and science has been studied by various thinkers, who have established typologies of interaction between the two. In the context of Islam, the separation model seems to be the most relevant at present, but the ideal model would be integration. Islamic sensitivities about halal and haram need to be considered when discussing scientific issues so that the Shariah can be adhered to and the dignity of Muslims can be safeguarded. Failure to do so could result in Muslims becoming dependent on others for their needs.

For the past forty years, Muslim intellectuals have produced a large body of literature on the Islamization of knowledge. This literature has clarified what this concept means, explained why pursuing the IOK agenda is important, and guided how to implement it. Muslim intellectuals have increasingly recognized that the Western-oriented educational system in Muslim countries is not in line with the Islamic conception of knowledge and reality. Many thinkers and reformers have argued that knowledge needs to be Islamized. Abdel 'Aziz Berghout has highlighted the importance of viewing Islamization as a scientific activity that occurs within a university context. In addition to conceptualization and theorization, the process of Islamization must involve strategy formulation, planning, implementation, and evaluation from both methodological and educational perspectives (Abdel 'Aziz Berghout, 2011, 21-34). He stresses that the Islamization of knowledge must be done comprehensively and systematically.

The engagement of the Muslim mind is crucial to address the Islamization of science issues, as scientific thinking involves the mind, heart, conscience, spiritual, moral, and ethical dimensions. Malay scientists have called for the integration of knowledge, urging for an Islamic perspective to be included in the explanation and interpretation of scientific facts. According to Osman Bakar, Muslim philosopher-scientists consider the

principle of cosmic unity and the unity of the natural world, as well as the principle of knowledge and sciences, as both the foundation and goal of science. This means that the Muslim pursuit of science must be significantly related to the worldview of al-tawġġd. Islamic science and modern Western science differ in nature and philosophical character, as Islamic science is based on an Islamic religious worldview, while modern science has taken a secular path independent of religion (Osman Bakar, 2008: 52).

## CONCLUSION

The view that Western science has become godless has been expressed by some scholars. Although many theistic scientists in the West strongly believe in religion, they publicly agree with the secular view that science is based on facts, and religion is a matter of personal belief. Nonetheless, the existence of matter, which is a fundamental assumption in science, cannot be proven scientifically. Some proponents of IOHK believe that the Islamization of science is the way forward for Malaysia. However, our research has revealed that many experienced Muslim scientists do not think this approach is feasible or desirable. Instead, they believe that the root of the problem lies in the complacency of Muslim intellectuals who rely solely on Western scientific knowledge. To promote acceptance of IOHK, concerted efforts are needed to address its shortcomings, and working committees should be established to formulate action programs. The following are some ideas and questions about how to revitalize and sustain the IOHK enterprise, bring together IOHK supporters to take action, encourage Muslim scientists to incorporate Islamic perspectives into their scientific work, address misconceptions about IOHK, and get policy support for IOHK at institutional and national levels. It also touches upon how to make sure that IOHK is not seen as a rejection of Western science and how to counter secular conceptions of science.

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