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From the Editor's Desk: Islamic Epistemology, Ontology, Axiology, and Teleology (I-EOAT)

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The discourse of Islamisation of Human Knowledge (IoHK) needs to be revived from time to time. Generally, this is the obligation bestowed upon every Muslim. Particularly it is the responsibility of those in academia, and since it is the University's unique philosophy, we must ensure its continuation. The main purposes are to break free from the colonization of knowledge by the Western-secularized capitalist-driven framework and create our own framework that is in line with Islamic belief and precepts. Since it is a continuous project, as we proceed, we must be dynamic without neglecting its fundamentals or guidelines.

As an academic who works in IIUM, sometimes I came across others who complained that they could not understand the steps in doing IoHK. One of the typical reasons given was that the steps outlined by IoHk founding fathers were too "complicated" and "complex."

Hence, I humbly would like to offer perhaps a simpler guideline to doing it - without neglecting the importance for us to study the founding fathers' works - which I believe can be done by everyone. In fact, realized it or not, as Muslim academics, such a guideline has been followed by many of us for years. It is called as a guideline because if we ensure that all the elements in the guideline are in line with Islamic teachings, then we can, to a certain extent, say that we have done IoHK.

The guideline is called EOAT, the acronym for epistemology, ontology, axiology and teleology. The first time I heard about this acronym was from the Dean of AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (AHAS KIRKHS), Prof. Dr. Shukran Abd Rahman. When I heard about it and reflected upon it, I realized that this was what I had been doing. In research, I had been searching for a term that can explain the guideline that I used. It was the guideline that guided the whole research, from the theoretical framework to the research findings and suggestions. The guideline was of course had to be Islamic since as a Muslim, I must not do anything outside the Islamic teachings.

It was EOAT that encapsulated my works, imbued with Islamic faith and teachings. Hence, it was an Islamic EOAT or I-EOAT, which guided the whole discourse.

Basically, epistemology is about how we arrived at the knowledge that we have. As Muslim researchers, we based our knowledge on the Revelations, which are the Qur'an and Sunnah. Our knowledge vis-à-vis the way we think and reasoning, must be in lined with Islamic teachings.

Then ontology is about the definition given to a being or a

concept. For example a leader, a state, or a constitution. When defining anything, Muslim researchers supposedly will automatically put aside any properties or features that are not in line with Islamic precepts.

Next, axiology is about what we value when we do our analysis. Of course, as Muslim researchers, we will value correctly i.e. those elements that are considered as good and promoted in Islam will be the ones that we appreciate in our research.

Lastly, teleology is about the objective of anything, including research. As mentioned by Aristotle when he conceptualized *telos*, everything has its objective or purpose in this world. Therefore, as Muslim researchers, we must ensure that our research objectives are within the Islamic guidelines and serve the Ummah.

Hence, if we ensure that we are following this Islamic EOAT, every devoted Muslim researcher can do IoHK. Not only academics, but administrative staff can also do it too. However, the question of whether this is a "low level" or a "high level" stage of doing IoHK is another matter. Nonetheless, the most important point is that Muslim researchers can always do it if we are sincere and steadfast in the Islamic faith. This is despite the challenges that we may face from other secular schools of thought or "conventional" academic practices that are dominant in academia and can be antagonistic toward our Islamic approach. This is also why I include the word "Islamic" in the EOAT, to differentiate it from other secular or religious perspectives, and thus will arrive at different findings and conclusions.

Therefore, we invite all the University's community to contribute to this CENTRIS E-bulletin by channeling your thoughts through article writing. Hopefully, the E-bulletin can be the platform for us to showcase our perspective on issues that happened throughout the world, thus countering the hegemonic non-Islamic paradigms surrounding us.

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