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# **An Analysis of Ziauddin Sardar's Approach to Integration of Knowledge**

## **Analisis Pendekatan Ziauddin Sardar terhadap Integrasi Ilmu**

Helal Uddin\* and Thameem Ushama\*\*

### **Abstract**

This paper analyses Ziauddin Sardar's (b. 1951) approach to integrating knowledge. He is a prominent British-Pakistani Muslim scholar. He is a polymath writer, cultural critic, broadcaster, futurist, internationally renowned scholar and public intellectual. He is the author of over 50 books. Sardar's main concern is that the world is changing rapidly with the advancement of technology. People are getting closer to each other irrespective of religion, caste, civilisation, culture, and race. The knowledge production and process cannot be used to dominate a particular civilisation. Hence, a holistic, diverse, integrated, and universal approach is needed. Integration of Knowledge is the most appropriate term for this changing world. This study employs a descriptive and analytical approach for gathering and examining data. This research has primarily relied on library research, utilising books, papers, and online databases. The research findings are anticipated to enhance the understanding of Sardar's method of knowledge integration among students, teachers, and academics.

**Keywords:** Ziauddin Sardar, Integration of Knowledge, Islamization of Knowledge, Muslim Education.

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### **Abstrak**

Kertas kerja ini menganalisis pendekatan Ziauddin Sardar (b. 1951) untuk mengintegrasikan pengetahuan. Beliau adalah seorang ulama Islam British-Pakistan yang terkemuka. Beliau adalah seorang penulis polymath, pengkritik budaya, penyiar, futuris, sarjana terkenal di peringkat antarabangsa dan intelektual awam. Beliau adalah pengarang lebih 50 buah buku. Kebimbangan utama Sardar ialah dunia berubah dengan pantas dengan kemajuan teknologi. Orang ramai semakin rapat antara satu sama lain tanpa mengira agama, kasta, tamadun, budaya dan bangsa. Penghasilan dan proses pengetahuan tidak boleh digunakan untuk menguasai tamadun tertentu. Oleh itu, pendekatan holistik, pelbagai, bersepadu dan universal diperlukan. Integrasi Pengetahuan adalah istilah yang paling sesuai untuk dunia yang berubah-ubah ini. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif dan analitikal untuk mengumpul dan memeriksa data. Penyelidikan ini terutamanya bergantung kepada penyelidikan perpustakaan, menggunakan buku, kertas kerja, dan pangkalan data dalam talian. Penemuan penyelidikan dijangka dapat meningkatkan pemahaman kaedah Sardar kepada penyepaduan pengetahuan dalam kalangan pelajar, guru dan ahli akademik.

**Kata Kunci:** Ziauddin Sardar, Integrasi Ilmu, Islamisasi Ilmu, Pendidikan Muslim.

### **Introduction**

Today's civilisation is going through the biggest crisis of knowledge and education. This affects not only people of any particular race, religion, or civilisation but all. Nevertheless, at the same time, the world has come a long way in science and discovery. Knowledge or education will make a person better than a good citizen. However, today, there is a severe problem with knowledge and education worldwide. The root cause of this extreme crisis is how knowledge is formulated by Western civilisation. This civilisation is the most powerful in the world today in every aspect of human life, especially in education, knowledge, military, economics, science, and discoveries. However, the dominant

Western knowledge is a severe problem for human civilisation. Al-Attas stresses that:

Knowledge whose nature has become problematic because it has lost its true purpose due to being unjustly conceived and has thus brought about chaos in man's life instead of, rather than, peace and justice; knowledge which pretends to be real but which is productive of confusion and scepticism.<sup>1</sup>

During the Golden Age of Islam, which lasted from the eighth to the fourteenth century, Muslims and Islamic civilisation were perhaps the world's greatest civilisations and nations. During this time, Muslims have led the world through discoveries in knowledge and science. There is no denying the contribution of Muslims behind the development and discovery of today's Western civilisation. Significant scientific progress was achieved during the Islamic Golden Age, specifically in astronomy, mathematics (including algebra and spherical trigonometry), and chemistry. These developments were subsequently transmitted to the Western world.<sup>2</sup> The rise and fall of civilisation are followed by the fall of Muslim civilisation. The rise of Western civilisation came after the fall of Islamic civilisation, and they occupied Muslim territories, making these places their colonies. Following the annexation of Muslim territories, Western colonisers proceeded to partition Muslims into nationalist factions, undermine Islamic education and knowledge in the name of advancing modern and secular education systems, fragment the education systems of Muslim countries, establish distinct branches of knowledge, and ultimately disintegrate knowledge. These all have turned Islamic civilisation and Muslims into weak nations.

Additionally, internal conflict among Muslims was also a factor in the fall of the Ummah.<sup>3</sup> Since this fall, Muslim scholars have been trying to revive Islamic civilisation. Some scholars try to revive Islamic

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<sup>1</sup> Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1993), 133.

<sup>2</sup> Abdullah Bin, Berhanuddin, Azli Fairuz bin Laki, and Mohamad Zaidin bin Mat. "The Weakness of the Islamic Civilization: The Causes and its Solution." *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 7, no. 10 (2017): 255-256. 10.6007/IJARBS/v7-i10/3374.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*,

civilisation following Western civilisation. Some scholars try to revive Islamic civilisation according to the Islamic method, but the truth and reality are that Islamic civilisation has not been revived to date. Many reasons have been identified behind this backwardness of Islamic civilisation, such as the crisis in the Muslim mind<sup>4</sup> and the Muslim dilemma.<sup>5</sup> However, some scholars agree that the main reason for this backwardness of Muslims is education and knowledge. Many scholars have offered various methods for overcoming this crisis, such as the de-westernisation<sup>6</sup> and Islamisation of knowledge.<sup>7</sup>

A conference on the Islamic education system was organised in 1977, and a plan was drawn up based on the Islamization of knowledge to overcome the crisis in the Muslim education system. Since its emergence, much criticism has been for and against this concept. Ziauddin Sardar is one of those who have criticised this idea. He points out that the Islamization of knowledge concept is short-lived and lacks appeal in a rapidly changing world. According to him, integrating knowledge can be an essential idea to overcome the current educational knowledge crisis. The primary purpose of this research is to discuss Sardar's Approach to integrating knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

### **A Brief Biography of Ziauddin Sardar**

Islamic civilisation and Muslims have suffered various difficulties for several centuries. Throughout the ages, especially after the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, many Muslim scholars such as Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Ismail Razi Al-Faruqi, Abu Sulayman and many others worked tirelessly to identify the malaise or reason for the backwardness of the Ummah and revive it. Sardar is an intellectual

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<sup>4</sup> Abdul Hamid A. AbuSulayman, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*. Trans. Yusuf Talal DeLorenzo (Herndon, Virginia USA, International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993), 9

<sup>5</sup> Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, 97

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 133

<sup>7</sup> Nabila Huringiin and Halimah Nisrina Azfathir, "The Concept of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas on De-Westernization and Its Relevancy toward Islamization of Knowledge." *Kalimah: Jurnal Studi Agama dan Pemikiran Islam* 16, no. 2 (2018): 266-284. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21111/klm.v16i2.2867>

<sup>8</sup> Sa'idu Sulaiman, "Islamization Of Knowledge And Integration Of Knowledge: A Conceptual Clarification." *Academia.edu*, (December, 2016):1. [https://www.academia.edu/30341820/islamizati\\_on\\_of\\_knowledge\\_and\\_integration\\_of\\_knowledge\\_a\\_conceptual\\_clarification](https://www.academia.edu/30341820/islamizati_on_of_knowledge_and_integration_of_knowledge_a_conceptual_clarification)



writer, researcher, scientist, theorist, speaker, commentator, columnist, and futurist. He is a Muslim scholar who is both orthodox and modernist.<sup>9</sup> This Muslim scholar was born in Pakistan on October 31, 1951. Although Sardar was born in Pakistan, at a young age, he migrated to England with his family, where he grew up and studied. Not much information is available about Sardar's formal education. From 1971 to 1974, he pursued physics and information science studies at the City University of London.<sup>10</sup> Lady Birdwood lectured Sardar on his English as a child in 1960s London.<sup>11</sup> Now, he is well known as a British-Pakistani Muslim scholar with many contributions to the development of the Ummah.<sup>12</sup> For example, in 1977, Muslim scholars organised a conference on the Muslim ummah education crisis, namely the World Conference on Muslim Education 1977, Makkah, which aimed to discuss Islam and Muslim education. Sardar was one of the conference critics. A prominent British publication, *Prospect*, ranked him among Britain's one hundred public academics, and another renowned British publication referred to him as "Britain's polymath."<sup>13</sup>

Sardar has had a colourful career, mainly as a journalist. During his career, he worked in various magazines and journals. He was a member of the Saudi Arabian faculty at King Abdul Aziz University's Hajj Management Department. For the scientific periodicals *Nature* and *New Scientist*, he covered the Middle East. He began his reporting career in 1982 with *London Weekend Television*, where he was a regular on the Asian news show *Eastern Eye*. He helped establish the Center for Policy and Future Studies at East-West University and was a founding member of the magazine *Inquiry*, both of which emerged in the 1980s. In 1987, he served as an advisor to Anwar Ibrahim, who had previously served as Malaysia's education and deputy prime minister. He was a journalist for

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<sup>9</sup> Ziauddin Sardar, *How do you know? Reading Ziauddin Sardar on Islam, science, and cultural relations* (London, Pluto Press, 2019), 11

<sup>10</sup> Ziauddin Sardar, accessed 2 January, 2022, <http://ziauddinsardar.com/>

<sup>11</sup> Ziauddin Sardar, *Other than identity: The subject, politics, and art*. Ed. Juliet Steyn (London, Pluto Press, 2006), 68-69

<sup>12</sup> Emma Mason, ed, *Reading the Abrahamic faiths: rethinking religion and literature*, (London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), ix

<sup>13</sup> Pat Kane, "The A to Z of Postmodern Life, by Ziauddin Sardar," *The Independent*, May 28, (2002), retrieved 2 January, 2022, <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/the-a-to-z-of-postmodern-life-by-ziauddin-sardar-5361451.html>

New Statesman and a visiting professor of scientific studies at Middlesex University. From 1999 to 2005, he was the editor and co-editor of *Future* and *Third Text* monthly journals. Between 2001 and 2013, he taught law and society at Middlesex University, and in 1999, he was a visiting professor of postcolonial studies there. The media have greatly influenced Sardar's life. Throughout his career, he has been instrumental in writing, making documentaries on various issues, and presenting various programs for the media. He has worked for various media outlets like BBC, TV 3, and Channel 4.<sup>14</sup>

He was involved in various social and human rights organisations. Prominent daily, weekly, and monthly newspapers and *periodicals* publish his articles, including *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Times*, and *New Internationalist*. Moreover, he worked in many Muslim institutions that launched projects to advance thought, knowledge, research and innovation of Islam and Muslim culture, such as Muslim Institute Hurst & Co. and *Critical Muslim*.<sup>15</sup> In addition, He wrote more than 50 books and numerous articles on various issues, particularly on Islamic Reform, developing Islamic critical thinking, postmodernism, and multiculturalism.

### **The History and Concept of Integration of Knowledge**

The word integration is derived from the Latin integer, used in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> The word integration means merging two or more objects into one. The word "integration of knowledge" has multiple definitions, interpretations, and applications subject to the context. Regarding integration and religion, Muhammad Solikin and Muhammad Muda contend that "*the integration of knowledge and religion refers to the integration of knowledge and Islam as a unit.*" The term has also been defined from the perspective of *Aqli* (Human) and *Naqli* (Revealed) knowledge by Nurkhamimi, Idrus and Ahmad as bridging the gap

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<sup>14</sup> *The Life of Muhammad* at IMDb, TV mini series,(2011), <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1944942/>

<sup>15</sup> Ziauddin Sardar, *Critical Muslim 48: Saliha*, (London, Muslim Institute and Hurst Publishers, 2024), 3.

<sup>16</sup>Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. "integrate," accessed October 2, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/integrate>.

between *Aqliyyah* and *Naqliyyah*. This is also known as knowledge integration.<sup>17</sup>

Integration of knowledge is not only the unification or combination of dual ideas. As an alternative, it should be explored from the Islamic point of view. For instance, Mohd. Kamal Hasan states, "*to [DE] secularise their contents and begin to investigate the human situation from a holistic and tawhidic perspective, the human sciences would be infused with Islamic revealed values, views, and worldview.*"<sup>18</sup> Omar Hasan Kasule shares a similar view, as he states: "*[I]t includes integrating Islamic moral and epistemological norms in the many disciplines of knowledge that are taught,*" and explains the idea as a process of gradual improvement that, rather than rejecting existing knowledge, expands upon it.<sup>19</sup>

Integration of knowledge has a long history in Islam. This amalgamation has been encouraged in the Qur'an and Hadith, as the intellectual contributions of the Companions and the Muslim scholars are observed and heavily used in understanding the knowledge in the holy Book. Thus, the integration of knowledge is not a new concept. The Qur'an does not mention any knowledge separately but in consolidation. In the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), there was no dualistic education system. Muslims were enlightened on all levels—spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, and cultural—through the holistic dissemination of knowledge. During the Prophet's (peace be upon him) lifetime, the mosque was the centre of knowledge and practice of the Muslims. Muslims used to study essential knowledge of Islam, such as the Qur'anic or divine knowledge, and human knowledge and practice, such as mathematics and science, in the mosque. Aside from language, history, poetry, and genealogy, the Companions of the Prophet (peace be

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<sup>17</sup> Zainuddin, Nurkhamimi, Rozhan M. Idrus, and Ahmad Farid Mohd Jamal, "Integration of Naqli (Revealed) Knowledge and Aqli (Rational) Knowledge in Postgraduate courses for open and distance learning." *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity* (December, 2016): 1.

<sup>18</sup> Syed Abdullah Idid and Syed Arabi, ed., *IIUM at 25: The Path Travelled and the Way Forward* (Kuala Lumpur, IIUM Press, 2009), 111.

<sup>19</sup> Omar H. Kasule, "Integration of Knowledge (IOK) and Textbook Writing for Islamic Universities," *International Journal of Islamic Thoughts* (2015), 4 (1) 2014 pp123-126. Retrieved on December 3, 2016, from <http://www.ijits.net/integration-knowledge-iok-textbook-writing-islamic-universities-omar-hasan-kasule-sr/>

upon him) were proficient in numerous other fields of study. Regarding genealogy, Abu Bakr was a notable example.<sup>20</sup>

The period after the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers, particularly from the seventh to the fifteenth century, is referred to as the Golden Age of Islam. Muslims have attained the highest level of knowledge. Their scholars practice the Qur'an and Hadith as well as other knowledge and practices. Primarily, they approached scientific studies through the lens of the Qur'an, given that Muslims regard it as the leading source of knowledge. It has been observed that Muslim scholars at that time also acquired and discovered knowledge from other civilisations, mainly from Greece to Arabic. They have integrated the knowledge of other civilisations with the Islamic sciences. Muslim scholars who made outstanding contributions to the golden age of Islam include, among others, Ibn Sina, Jabir ibn Hayyan, al-Khawarizmi, al-Farghani, Thabit ibn Qurra, al-Battani, Hunayn ibn Ishaq, and al-Farabi. All these Muslim scholars have studied the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as other sciences, and discovered them through a combination of knowledge.<sup>21</sup>

From Muhammad bin Qasim (695–715) to the time of Mughal Emperor Humayun (1540–1556), educational institutions in the Indian subcontinent were completely democratic in handling their internal affairs and management. Instructors were free to train their pupils in whichever way they saw fit, using whatever methods and curriculum they saw fit. Due to the establishments' increasing dependence on the government and the general populace, substantial portions of land were bestowed upon them as endowments. This emphasised the importance of education for Muslims at that time. This attitude is not limited to studying the Qur'an and Hadith but to other fields. In summary, the scope of education extended beyond acquired and revealed knowledge to

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<sup>20</sup> Rahmah Bt Ahmad H. Osman and Mohammad Quayum, "Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, IIUM: a successful story of the integration of Islamic and human sciences." *International Journal for Muslim World Studies (IJMWS)* (July, 2018), 13

<sup>21</sup> Yasmeen Mahnaz Faruqi, "Contributions of Islamic scholars to the scientific enterprise." *International Education Journal* 7, no. 4 (September, 2006): 391-392.

encompass various disciplines, including architecture, calligraphy, sculpture, medicine, pharmacy, surgery, fine arts and sketching.<sup>22</sup>

### The Necessity of the Integration of Knowledge

The European powers colonised one Muslim country after another. For example, France occupied Algeria in 1830, Tunisia was occupied in 1881, the Indian subcontinent was colonised by Britain in 1757, and other Muslim countries were occupied similarly.<sup>23</sup> After the colonisation of the Muslim countries, they implemented a contemporary secular education system in primary and higher education institutions, rendering the traditional Islamic education system less important in a substantial portion of the Muslim community. In other words, two types of education systems are revealed: dual education system. That means a group of people is educated in a secular education system.

In contrast, another group is only educated in traditional or religious education and avoids modern education in the same society. The vital point is that colonial rulers promoted a secular modern education system. As a result, a faction emerged that aimed to disentangle religion from the government, diminish religious practices in personal life, and ultimately deny religion itself.<sup>24</sup> The secular modern education system separated the study of revealed knowledge from other fields. It resulted in the separation of less value of integration of knowledge and education, i.e., human knowledge and revealed knowledge. However, the primary intent of the integration of knowledge project is to bring back the integrated knowledge and education system by eliminating secularism in education.

Most importantly, because there is no unity between human knowledge and revealed knowledge, today, there is a catastrophe in the

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<sup>22</sup> Salim Mansur Khalid and M. Fayyaz Khan, "Pakistan: The state of education." *The Muslim World* 96, no. 2 (April, 2006): 305-306. 10.1111/j.1478-1913.2006.00130.x

<sup>23</sup> Karen Armstrong, "An Overview of the European Invasion of the Islamic World." PBS Frontline. Available online: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/muslims/etc/armstrong.html> (accessed on 17 January 2016).

<sup>24</sup> Mohammad Abdul Aziz. "Designing an Islamic integrated university curriculum: a case study of the undergraduate Political Science Program, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh." (Ph.D. thesis, department of Education, Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Malaysia, 2018), 1-6.

knowledge and education system.<sup>25</sup> According to Al-Attas, Western-generated knowledge has lost its original purpose, leading to chaos and scepticism instead of peace.<sup>26</sup> An entire generation of the Muslim world is being deprived of balanced and constructive learning due to the secular knowledge and education system. The ultimate goal of integrating knowledge is to build a generation that will excel intellectually, morally, socially, and spiritually.

The *Tawhid* paradigm, the belief in one God, is absent in the current Western knowledge acquisition, distribution, and dissemination methods. As a result, Muslims have forgotten the responsibility to uphold God's *Amanah* (trust). Integrating the *Tawheed* paradigm is essential for knowledge. The present Western knowledge system does not benefit humanity because knowledge is being produced and distributed for one nation or part of the world and not for the benefit of others. Muslims, arguably, are the most affected by this limitation. The education that they acquire is lacking in the Qur'anic worldview, which plays a significant role in shaping a Muslim's life. Therefore, including the Qur'anic worldview throughout the present education system is crucial. As the ultimate purpose of the revelation of the Qur'an is the welfare of the people,<sup>27</sup> this integration will benefit not only the Muslims but also the whole of humanity. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that incorporating the philosophy of integrating knowledge is crucial to the current education system.

### Education Crisis

Since the decline of the Ummah in the 18th century, the Ummah has suffered many losses, such as the loss of the true meaning of education, loss of spirituality, loss of *adab*, and loss of authentic and ideal leadership. The West has captured the Muslim land through colonisation and introduced a new education system in the Muslim countries, which is known as modern secular education. Since the beginning of the modern education system, Muslims have been familiar with two: the traditional education system, which only focuses on religious education,

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<sup>25</sup> Rahmah & Quayum, "Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences," 1-20.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Attas, *Islam and secularism*, 133.

<sup>27</sup> Rahmah & Quayum, "Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences," 1-20.

particularly the Madrasah education system, and the modern Western education system. The latter, based on Western education philosophy, is the only Western civilisation and offers only the development of worldly life. As a result of Western imposition on Muslims, generally, they do not have an education system. Al-Faruqi and Al-Attas then suggested that the Islamization of knowledge could be a way to overcome this state of the education system; however, this framework, as criticised above, is not enough to pull Muslims out of their general educational slump.

Muslims are not the only ones affected by the changes brought by secular education, as it seems that Western societies bear the brunt of the failure of education as well. According to Harry R. Lewis, universities, institutions that are supposed to produce knowledge, and scholars have forgotten the mission and vision of proper education. He argues that universities only aim to produce graduates and ensure a better career for a better job rather than producing a good human being. He comments in his book, "*[O]ver the decades, I have heard many academic discussions about teaching, curriculum, grading, athletics, and responding to students' misdeeds. I have rarely heard discussions among professors about making students better people*".<sup>28</sup>

The university is one of the institutions that practice produces knowledge, the playing field for education to grow. After one graduates, they are expected to do meaningful service to society, country or world. Without education for the soul, one may question the kind of graduates that are produced. We see that the heads of many countries have graduated from reputed universities. However, after coming to power, it has been seen that the university graduates have done inhumane acts. Universities today seem to be doing little more than providing jobs and certification. One thing that can be clearly said is that university is far from the primary purpose of knowledge and education, which is why today's human civilisation is going through a catastrophic situation. As evidenced from the above, it can be argued that universities are turning away from their true purpose, and this is a result of secular education, separating the teaching of spirituality, religion, and morality from other fields.

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<sup>28</sup> Harry R. Lewis, *Excellence without a Soul: How a great university forgot education*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2006), Xiii.

Today's modern Western knowledge and education are nothing more than a tool for colonised lands to bow to the coloniser's nation, culture, education system, and power. Every Muslim nation today has long been a victim of colonisation through the Western education system. In this system, it may seem that Muslims are improving, but in reality, they are being deprived of the fundamental purpose of education. This education system has created primitivism by removing knowledge of other religions, races, and beliefs. In the name of advancing knowledge and science, the human race has been enslaved by the Western powers, bringing about a moral decline.<sup>29</sup> The Western education system creates some disciplines that are viewed only through the Western worldview. In this case, Sardar argues,

[T]he idea that reality is compartmentalised as physics and chemistry, sociology, and anthropology, religion, and politics, law and ethics is not based on some objective and universal axioms; rather, it is a construction designed according to how a particular culture sees reality and how it seeks to understand, manage, control and subjugate all that is out there.<sup>30</sup>

According to Sardar, western education has created three disciplines besides academics. These three disciplines were created for new persecutions, future colonialism, and Western power. More importantly, these disciplines are not limited to economic superiority, military superiority, or technological advancement but have given the West the power to define humanity, what is inhumane, freedom, civilisation, human rights, democracy and others. Other civilisations must adhere to the West's definition because no dominant knowledge and education paradigm can challenge Western knowledge and education. In its ideology, the secular academic model is not neutral as it benefits only the Western civilisation. If any other civilisation works within this education model, they may be unable to avoid ideological and cultural biases. In response to this issue, Sardar proposes a new

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<sup>29</sup> Ziauddin Sardar and Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, *Rethinking Reform in higher education: From Islamization to integration of knowledge*, (Herndon, USA: International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2017), 95-100.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-96



paradigm: integrating knowledge<sup>31</sup> that will be used for the Muslim community and humanity.

### **Sardar's Approach to the Integration of Knowledge**

Holistic is defined as being connected to or preoccupied with totality or whole systems instead of the investigation, treatment, or deconstruction of portions.<sup>32</sup> In the case of a person, a holistic approach means cooperating with the person by combining all the necessary aspects, including physical, mental, educational, social, and spiritual. In education, holistic means the integration of many subjects such as intellectual advancement, social competence, personal advancement, and integrated education for spiritual development, and combining all these is adopting a holistic approach. A holistic approach to education can ensure that a person acquires worldly skills and support for spiritual advancement.<sup>33</sup> However, current knowledge and education have been divided into different parts. A person is being deprived of holistic knowledge and education. This divisive education deprives people of social, intellectual, spiritual, and academic knowledge simultaneously. As a result, even if a person studies academic social sciences, they have no relation with society, and there is no spiritual improvement. As a result, complete education is not achieved, severely impacting society.

Sardar realises this and emphasises the importance of adopting a holistic approach to knowledge and learning. He contends that knowledge is not divided into several categories but integrated or whole. Knowledge creation necessitates a more comprehensive corporate structure. The current knowledge production and education system is disjointed—Sardar advocates for an integrated viewpoint on information that is neither fragmented, disintegrated, or separated. Most crucially, modern academic disciplines or knowledge are riddled with ideological and cultural biases and are the product of the West to sustain the Western worldview, further strengthening the nature of disjuncture prevalent in the academic world. As a result, there is a need for a

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 98-100

<sup>32</sup> Merriam-Webster, accessed January 22, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/holistic#other-words>

<sup>33</sup> What are Holistic Approaches and Why Are Companies Using Them? Accessed January 25, 2022. <https://beyo.global/thinking/what-are-holistic-approaches-and-why-are-companies-using-them>

balanced, universal methodology that incorporates science and technology to grasp the interconnectedness of anything and everything.

Universities play a significant role in practising, acquiring, researching, and disseminating knowledge. The essential foundation of university education is knowledge: its generation through research, dissemination through learning, and accumulation and application by students. As a result, the primary goal of any academic institution, particularly universities in any country, is to preserve quality. The university provides all the necessary assistance for a person to compete in a particular subject and become proficient in a changing world.<sup>34</sup> In support of Sardar's Approach, Henzell-Thomas stated that a holistic university is needed to develop, practice, and disseminate knowledge. The holistic university will also value knowledge, creativity, independent thinking, imagination, the emancipation of the minds and souls of humans, curiosity, and the acceptance of an open heart and mind. Education can only instil the transformative power of values, socially responsible qualities, and connections in students. He believes a holistic university teacher should be a spreader of knowledge and a nurturer of the heart.<sup>35</sup>

It is pertinent to observe the historical basis of overall knowledge and education. History attests to the practice of a holistic approach regarding knowledge and education. Prior to the 18th century, during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the knowledge and education system was holistic. Muslim cities like Baghdad, Cordoba, and Cairo were the centre of integrated knowledge practice. People from different religions and castes from different parts of the world used to come to these cities and enlighten themselves through integrated knowledge and practice. There was no notion then that the system of knowledge and education was tied to a particular race, religion or civilisation and the influence of a particular civilisation. Then, the stream of knowledge and the education system benefited humanity. The knowledge and there was no separation between religious and secular understanding in the education system. A student within the same class could acquire religious knowledge and social knowledge.

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<sup>34</sup> Global Education News, "Importance of Higher education for today's economy," accessed January 30, 2022, <https://qs-gen.com/importance-of-higher-education-for-todays-economy/>

<sup>35</sup> Sardar and Jeremy, *Rethinking Reform in higher education*, 156-163

Under the same education system, this same student could practice and acquire knowledge of mathematics, spirituality, history, medicine, and natural sciences, which can be seen in the biographical and historical information of earlier intellectuals, namely Ibn Sina, Imam al-Ghazali, al-Biruni and appreciably more.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Muslim scholars and scientists developed several methodologies that laid the groundwork for contemporary sciences, and their achievements were included in European institutions' curricula until the eighteenth century.<sup>37</sup>

From the above discussion based on historical evidence, it can be said that the practice, acquisition, and dissemination of holistic knowledge and educational approaches are not new phenomena. From the historical perspective, the holistic approach has a historical foundation. Sardar is to use the universal approach to reform the world's knowledge and education system. He argues that it is crucial to understand the current context for reforming the knowledge and education system. The world is changing very fast. Every nation, tribe, race, culture, religion, and civilisation in the world is highly globalised and connected to the advancement of science and technology. Recently, the United States of America may be experiencing a decline in power, with capitalism showing signs of failure and the economic system on the verge of collapse, modernity has failed, geography is not essential, and climate change is bringing on dire disasters worldwide. In other words, the present world is plagued with various complex problems, and due to increasing globalisation, people of all races, religions and cultures are suffering. For Sardar, a public initiative is needed to solve this complex problem; according to Sardar, the mainstream conceptions of knowledge generation, regulatory frameworks, and the institutions and processes that perpetuate and nurture must be included to solve the problem. He also underlines that education and information must be combined and harmonised in a sophisticated, interdependent world.

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<sup>36</sup> Matovu Musa, "Integration of Knowledge: An Approach to the Comprehensive Development of Learners' Body, Soul, and Spirit." *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* |Volume IV, Issue IX, (October, 2020), 43

<sup>37</sup> Aminuddin Hassan, Asmawati Suhid, Norhasni Zainal Abiddin, Habsah Ismail, and Haziyah Hussin, "The role of Islamic philosophy of education in aspiring holistic learning.", *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 5 (March, 2010): 2113-2118. 10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.07.423.

The notions of unity and diversity are opposed. The state of being one or oneness is described as unification. The term "unity" relates to accord or concord, whereas "diversity" implies multiplicity, mixture, or combination. In other ways, unity has something to do with similarities. Diversity signifies the point at which differences emerge. Diversification is related to distinctions and differences.<sup>38</sup> In other words, "unity in diversity" refers to the display of wholeness among diverse persons or classes. This phenomenon involves achieving unity without uniformity and diversification without decentralisation. It shifts the emphasis from merely tolerating differences in various aspects to a more complex unity that recognises how diversity improves social interaction.<sup>39</sup> From the beginning of the world to the present day, people of many races, religions, and castes have arrived and departed from the world. Sardar emphasised the need for unity in diversity for people of many races, tribes, religions, and castes. He believes that unity in diversity is needed for knowledge and education so that people of many cultures, religions, and castes can coexist peacefully in the same society. Most importantly, unity in diversity is divine. In the Qur'an, Allah says:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).<sup>40</sup>

The verse explains that Allah the Almighty created humankind as one and divided them into races, tribes, and clans so that people may get to know each other. Sardar explained that the first principle of Islamization of knowledge started from the divine concept of unity. The first principle systematically encourages and leads to unity of creation,

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<sup>38</sup> WikiBooks, "Social and Cultural Foundations of American Education/Relationships/Unity-Diversity," accessed January 25, 2022, [https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Social\\_and\\_Cultural\\_Foundations\\_of\\_American\\_Education/Relationships/Unity-Diversity](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Social_and_Cultural_Foundations_of_American_Education/Relationships/Unity-Diversity)

<sup>39</sup> Roxanne Lalonde, "Unity in diversity: Acceptance and integration in an era of intolerance and fragmentation." Unpublished MA Thesis. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Department of Geography CU [Carleton University] (1994): 39-73.

<sup>40</sup> Abdullah Yusuf Ali. "The holy Qur'an: Text, Translation, and commentary, Sura Al-Hujrat, verse, 13.

knowledge, life and humanity. Therefore, the work plan's first principle highlights the unity in variety approach. Violence, chaos, and conflict are created in society due to ignorance about other communities. Sardar claims that in the present knowledge and education system, people are not informed of religions, races, and castes of the society, and if there is no knowledge about other communities in the same society, misunderstandings, mistrust, and misinformation are spread, resulting in a conflict which creates chaos in society.

From Sardar's perspective, the unity in diversity approach to knowledge generation and education can minimise conflict among different societies. For example, Islam is a religion that promotes peace. However, there is a prevalent misconception about Islam in society. In a large part of the West, Islam is considered a threat and a militant religion, and this is due to limited knowledge of Islam and its principles. The result of this ignorance is the persecution of Muslims in many parts of the world. It can be argued that because the current Western knowledge and education system focuses more on science and technology, there is no way for knowledge seekers to know about other sections and components of society. Sardar emphasises that there is a need for a new paradigm in knowledge production and education that will not only make students aware of a specific subject but also give them diverse knowledge on other subjects. In addition to knowledge of science and technology, students will be encouraged to learn about other religions and communities.<sup>41</sup>

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) built a civilisation in which all people who believe in one God will have equal status. There is no difference between Arabs and non-Arabs. Because of this integration of knowledge and the application of the concept of unity in diversity, prior to the 16th century and continuing through the era of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Muslims led the world, advancing to the highest peaks in knowledge and education. Muslim scholars interpreted classical Greek philosophy and science, which had begun to influence Islamic ideas. The Arabic translations included Athenian and Hellenistic scientific and philosophical writings and Indian numerology. Religious scholars used Greek logic to argue

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<sup>41</sup> Sardar and Thomas, *Rethinking Reform in Higher education*, 95-100

and resolve logically sectarian issues and arguments among Jews, Christians, and other people of various religions.<sup>42</sup>

Many academic institutions rose due to this knowledge exploration, like Bait al-Hikmah (House of Wisdom), built in Baghdad, the empire's new capital, during the reign of the Abbasid caliphs. Persian, like Arabic, has grown in popularity. The reinterpretation of Platonic and Aristotelian literature sparked a remarkable scientific exploration. Today's Muslims are a shining example of how unity and diversity are applied in Islam and the lives of Muslims. Across the globe, 1.6 billion Muslims hold a common belief in God and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and spiritual ties bind them together, as evidenced by their participation in charitable endeavours and fasting during the sacred month of Ramadan. This unity does not mean they are all uniform in every way, as Muslims come from many different regions of the world, thus adopting many different cultural practices. This diversity extends to some other parts of their lives. The Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life conducted a global poll revealing significant differences among individuals about their beliefs, including the importance of religion in their life, defining a Muslim, and permissible activities in Islam.<sup>43</sup>

### **An Analysis of Sardar's View of the Islamization of Knowledge**

The Muslim *Ummah* has been in a severe crisis for the last several centuries in every aspect, including leadership, education, economics, and technology. Muslim scholars attempt to discover the reasons behind the fall of civilisation. Many believe that the educational crisis is the main problem of the *Ummah*. Many scholars have advocated a remedy for the educational crisis, namely, Islamization and Integration of knowledge. In favour of Islamic concepts, values, and worldview, Islamization of knowledge entailed the de-westernisation of knowledge or the

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<sup>42</sup> Mirza Iqbal Ashraf, "Diversity and Unity in Islamic Civilization *From the Perspective of Philosophy of History*, Academia, (May, 2016): 7

<sup>43</sup>The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity, (Pew Research Center. August 9, 2012), accessed January 30, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-executive-summary/>

detachment of knowledge from Western culture and civilisation.<sup>44</sup> Though Islamization of knowledge was introduced in the 1970s, it gained momentum since the First World Conference on Muslim Education held at Makkah in 1977. However, the Islamization of knowledge project has been advocated and criticised by some Muslim intellectuals since its beginning. One example is Ziauddin Sardar, who was initially critical of the Islamization project. However, why is Sardar critical of the Islamization of knowledge project?

It has been observed that Sardar is critical of al-Faruqi's Islamization of modern knowledge based on the first principles and mastering modern knowledge before mastering Islamic knowledge and Islam's relevancy to the Western discipline of knowledge. According to Rosnani and Imron, Sardar saw this as akin to prioritising the wrong thing or taking action before considering the necessary steps. He believed it necessary to establish a connection between modern knowledge and Islam. Islam is inherently applicable to all periods.<sup>45</sup>

Like others, Sardar argues that present science is not neutral; the West dominates its methods, process, and worldview. Additionally, Sardar contends that by separating ethics and morals from its epistemology, Western civilisation has generated a knowledge base that neglects the Islamic principles of human trusteeship, reverence for nature, social fairness, public welfare, and the pursuit of Allah's pleasure. Moreover, he claims that this collection of knowledge and its related fields advance the welfare and prosperity of Western civilisation.<sup>46</sup>

*Rethinking Reform in Higher Education: From Islamization to Integration of Knowledge* was written by Sardar and Henzell Thomas in 2017 and was published by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). It is evident that Sardar is critical of the Islamization of knowledge and emphasises the need for reform from Islamization to integrating knowledge. According to Sardar, Muslim society's main problems are

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<sup>44</sup> Mohd Faizal Musa, *Naquib Al-Attas' Islamization of Knowledge: Its Impact on Malay Religious Life, Literature, Language and Culture*. ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, (July, 2021): 3

<sup>45</sup> Rosnani Hashim and Imron Rossidy, "Islamization of knowledge: A comparative analysis of the conceptions of Al-Attas and Al-Fārūqī." *Intellectual Discourse* 8, no. 1 (2000): 17.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

intellectual and methodological decline, and higher education is in a crisis of epistemological and ethical nature. The concept of Islamization of knowledge was proposed as a solution to the educational problems faced by Muslims. However, it has presented numerous challenges to Muslim cultures, particularly those in the Western world, without necessarily offering any apparent advantages. As a result, Muslim scholars advocate for integrating knowledge, a notion still in its early stages of development. This book is a significant step towards achieving this goal.<sup>47</sup>

It was mentioned earlier that the Islamization of knowledge was introduced in the 1970s. The function of Islamization of knowledge was to produce more suitable and value-oriented knowledge for Muslim societies. Unquestionably, the goal of Islamization of knowledge was noble and quite advanced for its time. Sardar argues that the Islamization of knowledge was quite advanced in the 1970s and 1980s. However, the world has changed significantly since then and continues to change rapidly. Science and technology have progressed considerably, and there have been changes in people's thinking and behaviour. While it is true that the Islamization of knowledge has achieved many things, the idea is considered irrelevant in today's changing world. As Sardar said,

The king is dead: 'Islamization of knowledge', like most ideas, has moved on. It was a product of its time and context. But it has left a legacy: not least articulating concerns about the dire state of Muslim thought and education, drawing attention to the Eurocentric nature of social sciences and enunciating the first principles. We move forward with 'integration of knowledge'. Long live the king. We hope that the new king is suitably attired.<sup>48</sup>

Sardar claims that our worries and criticisms regarding knowledge and education align closely with the motivations that

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<sup>47</sup> Muhammad Yaseen Gada, "Sardar, Ziauddin and Jeremy Hanzell-Thomas, Rethinking Reform in Higher Education: From Islamization to Integration of Knowledge, London and Washington: The International Institute of Islamic Thought (paperback)." (June, 2021): 4. <http://dx.doi.org/10.29117/jcsis.2021.0293>  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10576/23257>

<sup>48</sup> Sardar & Thomas. *Rethinking reform in higher education*, 136.



prompted al-Faruqi and IIIT to undertake the Islamization of knowledge initiative.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, Sardar states,

The Islamization of knowledge project emerged as a response to the shortcomings of previous efforts to address the challenges faced by the Muslim community, but despite the fact that it was not clearly indicated.<sup>50</sup>

The integration of knowledge represents a transition away from the Islamization of knowledge based on time and context.<sup>51</sup> Sardar has provided a critical analysis of the Work Plan for the Islamization of knowledge. He acknowledges that the *Work Plan* is pertinent because it describes the malaise of thought and methodology in Muslim societies. Sardar criticises the concern of meaning in the *Work Plan*. He claims that the issues of *ijtihad* are restricted to those who believe it is no longer needed. He argues that Muslim societies lack purpose and a sense of direction because *fiqh* and its methodology, as well as Islam, have been drained of meaning. According to him,

Without meaning, there can be no purpose in the lives of Muslims. Without purpose, the Western or traditionally educated Muslim can neither be an agent who adopts some ends nor become the means to an end.<sup>52</sup>

However, Sardar acknowledges that the Work Plan's first principle represents Islam's basic worldview but lacks explicit methodology. He emphasises the first principles of the Work Plan because they promote unity in every aspect of Islam and humanity, including unity in creation and unity of humanity. He stresses that the statements of the first principles offer an excellent framework for the pursuit of knowledge and the reform of Muslim education.<sup>53</sup>

The proposed *Work Plan* aims to achieve mastery of contemporary social science disciplines and the legacies of Islam.<sup>54</sup> However, Sardar argues that there is an excessive emphasis on the social

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 89

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 90

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 90

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 92

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 92

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 93-94

sciences in pursuing the Islamization of knowledge. He believes that the practical crisis faced by the *Ummah* can be attributed to its technological and scientific lag behind non-Muslim communities.<sup>55</sup> Sardar suggests that Muslim scholars should incorporate newly acquired knowledge into the body of Islamic heritage through elimination, modification, reinterpretation, and adaptation of its elements according to Islamic worldview and values. He emphasises the need to establish a new pathway through which the reformed discipline can advance Islamic ideals.

The *Work Plan* suggests that knowledge is generated by establishing new institutions via the Islamization of the knowledge process. Sardar challenges this viewpoint by referencing El-Affendi's contention that generating new knowledge requires establishing new institutions, which depend on the emergence of novel forms of knowledge. Additionally, he argues that criticism of the Henzell Thomas Islamization agenda perpetuates detrimental elements of the secular/religious dichotomy. Furthermore, he supports his position by referring to Henzell Thomas's question of how Islamization can be protected against the adverse connotations associated not only with the term itself but also with the perceived threat of Islamification, which currently affects the Muslim world.<sup>56</sup>

The worldview and knowledge are intertwined. Sardar claims that the West created contemporary knowledge in its various fields. Modern knowledge, disciplines, and university education serve Western goals and are not intended to incorporate Islamic beliefs and values. Additionally, current knowledge, education, and technology serve the West's worldview. Similarly, the *Work Plan* implies that modern disciplines are meaningless in Muslim culture. Sardar argues that Muslim societies need to reform education in this context. He proposes deconstructing the modern knowledge system and creating new paradigms of knowledge formation that consider Islam's histories, legacies, and traditions, offering a more humane and value-based approach to scholarship and advancement.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 107

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 93-94

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-100

It can be concluded that Sardar's primary focus is to reform the education of Muslim societies from Islamization to the integration of knowledge. The Islamization project's primary concern was to address the malaise of the *Ummah*, but it has lost its relevance in the modern world. However, it has left a legacy of concern for the *Ummah* and raised caution about the purpose of knowledge produced in the West. According to Sardar, reforming the knowledge and education system requires a new paradigm based on the Qur'anic worldview and *Tawhidic* epistemology under the integration of knowledge projects. This new paradigm will not only be based on the legacy and values of Islam but also benefit all humanity.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Knowledge integration is theoretically, historically, and practically used in Islamic civilisation, as evidenced by the discussion above. This framework is practised not only in Muslim civilisation but also in early civilisations. There is no separation between religious and modern knowledge and teaching in those times. Instead, it is proven that since the development and colonisation of Western civilisation, they have been dividing knowledge and education into different disciplines for their benefit, disintegrating knowledge and education in the name of modern education. Modern secular knowledge and education have turned people away from the use of religion, and education has been used only for the welfare of the world. That idea has become ingrained in society to date. That is why the purpose of acquiring knowledge and education has been erased and forgotten. Secular modern knowledge and education have not only harmed the Muslims but have deprived the whole of humankind of the true purpose of knowledge and education, which has resulted in today's turbulent and conflicting world. As a remedy, Sardar emphasised integrated knowledge to enlighten humankind of knowledge and genuine learning. Through integrated knowledge and education, a person will develop intellectually, socially, culturally, and spiritually and enjoy the taste of real learning. This is possible by integrating human knowledge and revealed knowledge. To this end, Muslim scholars have worked on integrated knowledge and Islamization of knowledge for decades.

Although Sardar is critical of the Islamization of knowledge, he did not elaborate in support of his views. He criticised the method of

*ijtihad* under the Islamization of knowledge. He contended that one should gain knowledge through establishing a university and inventing new forms of knowledge. Aside from this critique, he did not elaborate on their use in Islamic history and why it is not possible to implement the concept of Islamization at present. It has been observed that Sardar focuses more on integrating knowledge rather than the word Islamization of knowledge and thinks it is imperative in the present context. Based on the discussion, it can be said that Western civilisation corrupted the knowledge and education system. The primary purpose of integration of knowledge is to integrate acquired knowledge and reveal knowledge. It is necessary to consider the benefit of, or even the possibility of, simply integrating bias and corrupted Western Knowledge and Education. This paper has observed, as Sardar agrees, the need for a new paradigm for the Reform of knowledge and education, which should be free from the influence of the Western paradigm and make every discipline of knowledge appropriately integrated.

It seems that Sardar is more focused on formulating a new paradigm free from the Western paradigm, which will help liberate knowledge and the education system from secularism and through which a student will make himself intellectually, socially, spiritually, and technologically proficient. It has been pointed out that Sardar has competently used holistic and universal approaches in the discussion of the Integration of Knowledge through the concept of unity in diversity. These methods have had a substantial impact on the advancement of Islamic civilisation. They are still practised in the life of Muslims, but due to the secular knowledge and education system, they are not used in the field of knowledge among today's Muslims.

The Qur'an and Hadith are the main criteria for determining the justification of anything in Islam. In implementing his approach to integrating knowledge, Sardar emphasises his logic and the contemporary issues of the world rather than relying solely on the Qur'an and Hadith. It can be concluded that it is necessary to adopt Sardar's new paradigm and apply the integration of knowledge, as it is impossible to Islamize knowledge and education under the Western paradigm by freeing it from Western influence. Evidence of this is that many scholars have tried to revive Islamic knowledge and education under a Western worldview since the fall of Islamic civilisation but

without success. Efforts to Islamize knowledge and education have been going on since 1970 under the latest Islamization of Knowledge project, but it is necessary to evaluate its success or lack thereof. Many say this project has failed. It is necessary to review how well the students of Islamic universities worldwide are mentally prepared for the Islamization of knowledge and how much has been implemented. Distinctive paradigms and discipline are needed to show Islam's knowledge and its education system's originality. As a result, not only will Islamic knowledge and the value of the education system be increased, but it will also attract non-Muslims to Islam, arguably benefiting humanity. There is a need for more research on Sardar's approach to integrating knowledge to understand its usability for humanity's knowledge and education, particularly for the Muslim *Ummah*.

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