CREATIVE THINKING
in Islam:
Concepts and Issues

Jamal Ahmed Badi
CREATIVE THINKING IN ISLAM:
CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

JAMAL AHMED BADI
First Edition, 2017

© The International Institute of Islamic Thought
(East and Southeast Asia Office)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without any prior written permission of the publisher.

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

CREATIVE THINKING in ISLAM: CONCEPTS and ISSUES /
Edited by JAMAL AHMED BADI
ISBN 978-967-14480-8-3
153.42

The views and opinions expressed in this book are those of the author and not necessarily those of the publisher. The publisher is not responsible for the accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

The International Institute of Islamic Thought
East and South East Asia Office
2-93 Jalan Prima SG 3, Prima Sri Gombak,
68300 Batu Caves, Selangor Darul Ehsan
Malaysia
Email: iiiteastasia@gmail.com

Typesetting and cover design by Suria Suri

Printed in Malaysia
CONTENTS

PREFACE x

Chapter 1  TAFAKKUR FROM ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE 001
  → Introduction 002
  → Definition of Tafakkur 002
  → Qur’ānic Usage of the Concept of Tafakkur 003
  → The Status of Tafakkur in Islam 004
  → Purposes of Tafakkur in Islam 007
  → Islam Encourages Thinking 009
  → Tafakkur: A Leading Factor in Ijtihād 019
  → Chapter Summary 021

Chapter 2  REVITALISING MUSLIM CREATIVITY 023
  → Introduction 024
  → Meaning of Creativity and Critique of Western 025
    Concepts of Creativity
    Muslim Misconception of Creativity, Innovation and Critical
    Thinking
  → The Creative Power of God and Creativity in 031
    Understanding the Existence of Creator
  → Manifestations of the Divine Creativity in the Holy Book 033
    & the Interpretations of Scholars
  → Manifestations of the Divine Creativity in the Universe 036
    Manifestations of the Divine Creativity in Human Beings 039
  → Divine Creativity and Meditation in Implementing 040
    Prophet Muhammad’s Creative Ideas
  → Implication of Divine Creativity and Prophetic 042
    Creativity on the Teaching and Learning of Islamic Revealed
    Knowledge
  → Chapter Summary 045
Chapter 3  QU'R'āNIC TERMINOLOGIES ON 'THINKING' AND THEIR POSITIVE IMPACTS ON HUMAN LIFE

- Introduction
- The Qur'ān and Thinking
- The Role and Contributions of the Qur'ān to Intellectual Development
- Classification of the Qur'ānic Terminology Concerning 'Thinking'
- Relationship between Qur'ānic Terms Related to Thinking
- Positive Impact of Qur'ānic Terms for Thinking on Human life
- Chapter Summary

Chapter 4  THINKING STYLES IN THE QU'R'ĀN

→ Introduction
→ Inquisitive Thinking (Use of Questions)
→ Objective Thinking (Use of Proofs and Evidence)
→ Positive Thinking (Use of Hope and Trust)
→ Hypothetical Thinking (Use of Hypotheses)
→ Rational Thinking (Use of Reason and Logic)
→ Reflective/Contemplative Thinking (Use of Contemplation and Rumination)
→ Visual Thinking (Use of Epithets)
→ Metaphorical Thinking (Use of Metaphors: Parables and Allegories)
→ Analogical Thinking (Use of Similes)
→ Emotional Thinking (Use of Affect: Touching, Heart-warming Diction)
→ Perceptual Thinking (Use of Perception)
→ Conceptual Thinking (Use of Conceptual Expansion and Combination)
→ Intuitive Thinking (Use of Gut Feeling)
→ Scientific Thinking (Use of Precision)
→ Wishful Thinking (Use of Wishes and Make-believe)
→ Chapter Summary
Chapter 5  **BARRIERS HINDERING TAFAKKUR**  113

→ Introduction  
114
→ An Overview of Tafakkur  
114
→ Barriers or Impediments to Tafakkur  
116
   i. Ignorance and Not Being Aware of the Truth (Jahālī)  
   116
   ii. Turning Away from the Truth (Al-l’rad)  
   118
   iii. Blind Following and Intolerance (Taqlid & Ta’ṣṣub)  
   118
   iv. Lusts and Desires (Hawa)  
   120
   v. Arrogance (Takabbūr)  
   122
   vi. Hypocrisy (Nīfaq)  
   122
   vii. Reliance on Conjecture  
   124
   viii. Conscious Rejection or Denial of the Truth, After Being Convinced of It (Juḥud)  
   124
   ix. The Role of Satan in Influencing Human Perception  
   126
   x. Envy and Jealousy  
   129

→ Chapter Summary

Chapter 6  **AL-*IJTIHĀD AND ITS ROLE IN INITIATING CREATIVITY**  133

→ Introduction  
134
→ The Literal Meaning of Al-Ijtihād  
135
→ The Technical Meaning of Al-Ijtihād  
136
→ Relating Al-Ijtihād to the Dimension of Worship  
143
→ The Relationship between Al-Ijtihād and Opinion (Al-Ra’ī)  
144
→ Ijtihād of Prophets and Messengers Preceding Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon them all)
   o Verse of Sūrat al-Anbiyā’  
   146
   o Verse Related to the Story of Mūsā and Hārūn  
   148
   o Verses Related to Israel Making the Lawful Unlawful  
   152
→ The Ijtihād of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)  
155
→ Ijtihād during the Time of the Companions  
158
→ The Mujtahid and His Role in Creativity  
163
→ General Rules of Creative Ijtihād in Islam  
163
Chapter 7. **EFFICIENT LEADERSHIP: A SYSTEMIC MODEL OF PROPHETIC THINKING**

- Introduction
- Leadership Theories
- Prophet Muhammad as a Leader
- Role of History in Reinvigoration of Thinking
- Hijrah (Migration) from Makkah to Madinah
- Battle Field of Badr
- Battle of Uhud
- Prophetic Systemic Leadership Thinking on Migration and Battle Fields
- The Treaty of Hudaibiyyah
- Thinking Leadership: The Prophetic Model
  - Decisiveness and Responsibilities
  - Honesty and Trustworthiness
  - Patience and Forbearance
- Chapter Summary

Chapter 8. ** PATTERNS OF CREATIVE THINKING IN THE WRITINGS OF AL-RASHID**

- Introduction
- The Importance of Creativity
- The Mechanisms of Regulating Creative Thinking According to Al-Rashid
- Al-Rashid and His Special Theory Regarding Art
- The Patterns of Creativity in Al-Rashid’s Writings
- Objectives of life dynamics
- Transforming the Project into Something Practical and Applicable
Chapter 9. THE ROLE OF MUSLIM LEADERS IN PROMOTING AL-IBDĀ’ (CREATIVITY) IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

→ The Concept of Creativity 226
→ The Islamic View of Creativity 226
→ Muslim Leaders’ Attention to Innovation and Their Role in Promoting It in Their Communities 228
→ The Prophet’s (peace be upon him) Creative Approach to Establishing Rapport with the Community 229
→ The Prophet’s (peace be upon him) Military Genius 230
→ The Prophet and Politics 231
→ The Prophet and Management 232
→ Selected Instances of Creativity by the Rightly Guided Caliphs 233
→ The Salaf Created an Appropriate Environment for Creativity 245

Chapter 10 WESTERN PERSPECTIVE ON CREATIVITY 251

→ Introduction 252
→ Historical Overview 252
→ Definitions of Creativity 255
→ Factors in Creativity 257
→ Approaches to Studying Creativity 260
→ Evaluation of Research Work on Creativity 262
→ Emergence of Lateral Thinking 269
→ General Observations 276
CREATIVE THINKING IN ISLAM: CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

PREFACE

My first textbook "Creative Thinking: An Islamic Perspective" was an outcome of a research requested by Tan Sri Prof. Dr. Mohammad Kamal Hassan former Rector IIUM in 2003. It was granted by RMC, IIUM and published by IIUM Press in 2004. The textbook’s second edition was published by IIUM Press in 2005 with eight reprints. The most recent edition was in 2014.

In 2012, KIRKHS requested that the textbook should be improved based on the reviewers’ comments. Since the focus of the book was on creativity, it was vital to discard the last four chapters on critical thinking and maintain and improve the first four chapters. Some important issues discussed in the first book needed to be expanded, namely thinking terminologies and barriers to thinking from a Quranic perspective. Additional topics related to the topic also needed to be explored. Such topics included revitalising Muslim creativity, a prophetic model of thinking, the role of Muslim leaders in fostering creativity and a modern Muslim scholar’s contribution to the area of creativity. This brings the new textbook into ten chapters. It was a series of small research projects that were incorporated into a bigger project sponsored by both KIRKS and IIIT 2014-2016.

Prof. Ibrahim Zein, the former Dean of KIRKHS who was one of the reviewers, suggested that the title of the new book be: "Creative Thinking and Islam". This was agreed by both IIUM officials and Dato’ Prof. Dr. Abdulhamid AbuSulayman from IIIT.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my deepest appreciation to all who helped in bringing this project to reality including KIRKHS and all IIUM authorities, IIIT, colleagues and research assistants.

Special thanks go to Dr. Shafiq Flynn for thoroughly reviewing and professionally editing the textbook.

Prof. Dr. Jamal Ahmed Badi
Kuala Lumpur 23/10/2017
Introduction

Tafakkur (thinking)\(^1\) forms part of the Qur'anic view of human beings. As Allah's vicegerent on earth, mankind is charged with the noble task and grand undertaking to engage the world in virtue and propriety. Several Qur'anic verses highlight this mission and the role of the faculties endowed by the Omnipotent Creator. Of these, the faculty of Tafakkur or thinking becomes one of the most important features that not only distinguishes man from beast but also qualifies him to accomplish a pivotal role as a civilisation builder and mission conveyor. With this ability, he is absolutely confident to be held accountable for the trusts to which heavens, earth and mountains have earlier confessed their incapability. In other words, thinking forms the core of what makes human being a distinctive creature; without which he will be incapacitated to accomplish the great missions ahead of him.

This chapter explores the socio-linguistic dimensions of the concept of Tafakkur by analysing the Qur'anic usage of Tafakkur and its social implications.

Definition of Tafakkur

Tafakkur is the Arabic term for thinking. The prominent early Muslim linguist, al-Fayruzabadi,\(^2\) regarded al-fikr (thought) as an act of reflection and its plural is afkar. He regards Fikr and Tafakkur as synonyms.\(^3\) Although Ibn Manzur, another famous linguist, uses the same definition, he states that Tafakkur is the noun of Tafikr. He quotes al-Juhar who defines Tafakkur as pondering and contemplating.\(^4\) Tafikr or “thought” is an abstract notion where Tafikr or tafakkur “thinking” is deliberate and systematic reflective discourse. For this reason, the Qur'an refers to it in multiple words.

---

\(^1\) The Arabic term, Taffakkur has some English equivalents such as thinking, contemplation and reflection. But the word “thinking” is chosen as its equivalent throughout this book.

\(^2\) al-Fayruzabadi (1329 – 1414), who was formally known as Abu Tahir Maggie al-Din Muhammad Ibn Yaqub Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim al-Shirazi al-Fayruzabadi was a Persian Muslim scholar of Arabic Lexicography who compiled a widely used Arabic dictionary called al-Kamus.