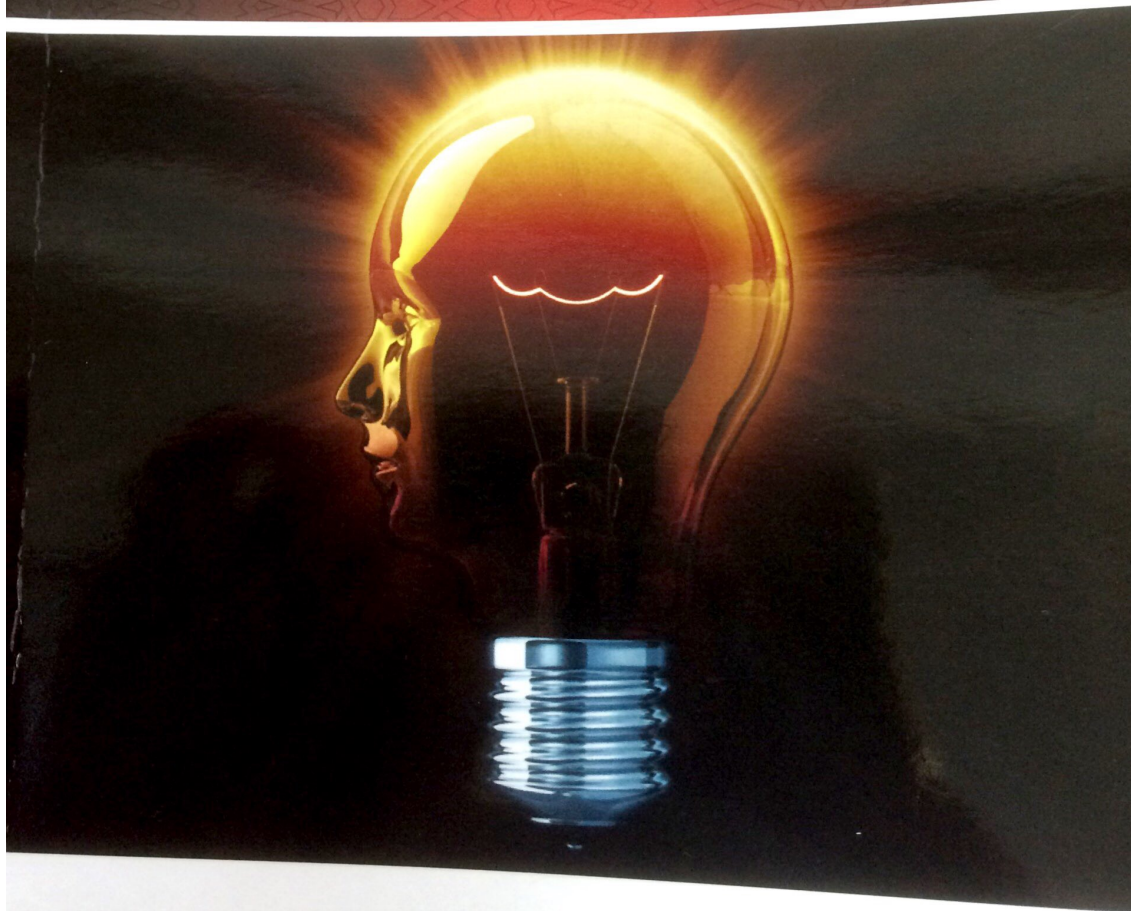


CREATIVE THINKING
in Islam:
Concepts *and* Issues



Jamal Ahmed Badi

CREATIVE THINKING IN ISLAM: CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

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**International Institute of Islamic Thought
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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 IIUM 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 IIUM.

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, IIUM, colleagues and research assistants.

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

Prof. Dr. Jamal Ahmed Badi

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Introduction

Tafakkur (thinking)¹ forms part of the *Qur'ānic* 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'ānic* 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'ānic* usage of *Tafakkur* and its social implications.

Definition of *Tafakkur*

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

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

² al-Fayrūzabādī (1329 – 1414), who was formally known as Abu Tahir Majid al-Din Muhammad Ibn Ya'qub Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim al-Shirizi al-Fayrūzabādī was a Persian Muslim scholar of Arabic Lexicography who compiled a widely used Arabic dictionary called *al-Qāmūs*.