

September 27, 2021

Dear Professor Mumtaz Ali,

We are writing to propose a lasting intellectual and pedagogical partnership between the Islam Actuel Institute and the International Islamic University of Malaysia, specifically the Department of Usûl al-Dîn and Comparative Religion.

Islam Actuel is an institute that aims to make the Qur'an and the Islamic worldview work in the fields of academic study and in daily activities. In this sense, we are in line with the problematic and research program of Islamization of Knowledge.

We wish for our two institutions to benefit mutually by developing Islam as Worldview and universal Wisdom. At the moment, this is what we have to offer:

- Synthesize and translate publications by professors and intellectuals who inspire the IIUM and that we can use in our 5-year training program;
- Select and encourage French and Maghrebi students to come and pursue their studies and research at IIUM.

This is what IIUM and your Department of Usûl al-Dîn and Comparative Religion can bring us :

- The initiation to Islam as a worldview, source of knowledge and universal wisdom (through texts and interventions);
- The initiation to an Islamic Methodology of Research (through texts and interventions);
- Pedagogical advice to help the Islam Actuel Institute to design a 5-year training program, inspired by the approach of Ismail al-Faruqi but lightened, considering the particular French context;
- The organization of a Summer School with approximately thirty French and Maghrebi Muslim students in 2022.

I hope that this proposal finds a favorable response.
I remain at your disposal for any need that might arise.

Sincerely,



Mohamed Oudihat
Director of Islam Actuel Institute (Paris)
10 Rue de l'Industrie
75013 Paris, France

September 27, 2021

Dear Professor Mumtaz Ali,

The Islam Actuel Institute extends its gratitude for your timely interventions during our annual Summer School in August 2021 on the following themes:

1. Critical thinking: An Islamic Perspective
2. Crisis in Knowledge and Education
3. Need for Rethinking Knowledge and Education
4. Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan — 1982 and 1989
5. New Perspective for Education
6. Rethinking Modern Science

We hope that we will be able to renew our collaboration in the near future.

Sincerely,

Mohamed Oudihat
Director of Islam Actuel Institute (Paris)
10 Rue de l'Industrie
75013 Paris, France

CRITICAL THINKING: ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

By

Dr. Muhammad Mumtaz Ali

Professor, Department of Usul al-Din
and Comparative Religion
Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed
Knowledge and Human Sciences
International Islamic University,
Malaysia.

Email: mumtazali@iium.edu.my

**Thank you very much dear brother
Mohamed Oudihat for your invitation for a
few lectures on some important topics such
as knowledge and education.**

**Dear brothers and sisters we would like to
address during our lectures some issues for
the sole purpose of clarity of thought.**

**1. The crisis of modern
knowledge and how the**

secularization has influenced knowledge and provoked the ethical crisis by creating a disconnection between knowledge and values.

2. The crisis of the Muslim mind and in particular the crisis of knowledge
3. Introduction to the problematic of knowledge; views of "integration" and "Islamization"
4. Why can't we just consume existing knowledge in different branches of disciplines especially the social sciences?
5. How modern worldview had structured the way of thinking and living of people?
6. How does *Tahwhîd* restructures our way of thinking and living?

- 7. The Work Plan proposed by al-Faruqi to show the students the work that is in front of them**
- 8. How "IOK" can benefit modern world? Or in what extend "IOK" is a universal proposal?**
- 9. Critical thinking: An Islamic approach**

Before we proceed to address issues before us I would like to share with you all as a reminder some important points:

Preamble

- A. So excel one another in good works. [2: 148]**
- B. Be watchful over the Prayers, and over praying with the utmost excellence...[2: 238]**
- C. They believe in Allah and in the Last Day and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and hasten to excel each other in doing good. These are among the righteous. [3: 114]**
- D. It is Allah Who created death and life that He might try you as to which of you is excellent in deed. [67:2]**

Iqbal on the Culture of the West

The most remarkable phenomenon of modern history, however, is the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving towards the West. There is nothing wrong in this movement, for European culture, on its intellectual side, is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam.

Our only fear is that the dazzling exterior of European culture may arrest our movement and we may fail to reach the true inwardness of that culture.

A Revision of the Worldview of Islam

Recognition and Acknowledgement of Allah swt

Who is the Absolute Truth and Reality

The Quran: The Book of Knowledge, Guidance and Mercy [7: 52];[21:7];[

Islam: The Worldview + the Way of Life +the Code of Conduct

Islam means submission through the Shariah

Islam is a Program/Scheme of Life and Society

Islam is a Source of Culture and Civilization

Islam is the Source of Development

= Muslimeen, Moumeeneen, Sadeqeen, Siddiqeen, Shuda

Saleheen, Mooqneeneen, Sabeteen, Sabereen, Sameteen, Mushfiqeen, Munfiqeen, Mustaqfreen [isteqfar], Zakreen, Abeeden, Rakeen, Sajideen, Muqniteen, Tayybeen, Khasheen, Khaefeen, Qaneeteen, Khashieen, Sabereen, Hafezeen, etc.

Rejection of Islam : Going against Truth and reality and creating *fitna* and *fasad* , total destruction, chaos, crises

CRITICAL THINKING: ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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THINKING:

1. INTRODUCTION:

Why do we need the Islamic perspective of critical thinking? What is Islamic perspective of critical thinking?

What are the constituent elements of Islamic perspective of critical thinking?

What are the motives of Islamic perspective of critical thinking?

Are the motives of it different from the motives of conventional critical thinking?

2. NEED AND RATIONALE FOR ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF CRITICAL THINKING:

2.1 Different kinds of thinking - all based on speculation:

Good thing, logical thinking, rational thinking, reasoning, scientific reasoning, logical reasoning, scientific thinking, critical thinking, reflective thinking, creative thinking, innovative thinking, design thinking, positive thinking, productive thinking, thinking precisely and systematically, thinking logically and critically, rules of thinking, constructive arguments, structure and parts of arguments. The art of correct thinking may be acquired through learning. The essence of thinking is: **clarity and rationality**

2.2 Conventional critical thinking paradigm:

Materialism which denies spiritualism - the understanding of creation depends on speculation and conjecture

2.3 Epistemological foundation:

Liberalism, Marxism, humanism, pragmatism, relativism, utilitarianism supported by rationalism and empiricism

2.4 The nature of dominant view of critical thinking:

It is liberal, so-called scientific, Marxist and religious

2.5 Philosophers:

Socrates, Kant, Dewy, Bentham etc.

What is reasonable is good;

What is confirmed by experience as
good is good

2.6 Emphasis is on:

Skills, techniques, standards, procedures
and background knowledge

2.7 Skills and techniques:

Clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, Depth, breadth, logic, fairness, completeness, observation, analysis, interpretation, reflection, evaluation, inference, explanation, curiosity, creativity, communication, open-mindedness and identification of situation or problem

2.8 Basic questions:

Basic assumptions are questioned;
existing evidences are evaluated

2.9 Goal:

Rationally or scientifically approved life is considered worth living; society and all things related to life, society and the world are taken in material sense; hence emphasis on material development

**2.10 Criteria of truth and reality:
Human reason and experience**

**3. A CLEAR VISION OF ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF
CRITICAL THINKING IS NEEDED:**

We need to have a clear vision of critical thinking from Islamic perspective: Is it mere an academic activity? Or a mission oriented exercise?

Islamic perspective of critical thinking needs to be understood at different levels. It is not just the art of use of skills and techniques to provide reasonably sound explanations but also to explain what do we mean by rational explanation? What is the method of rational explanation? What is the criterion of rational explanation?

Islamic perspective of critical thinking at the first **fundamental level exposes the role of speculation and establishes the need of knowledge.**

We need at the very outset for our thinking process knowledge **true, authentic and universal [TAUK] about life, society and the world.**

In order to have a **true, authentic and universal worldview we need knowledge.**

At every stage we need knowledge not merely the so-called background knowledge as explained by scholars of conventional critical thinking but the knowledge of true worldview.

*At the **second level** we need to be sure about our ends of life – true, authentic and universal. This in truth and reality constitutes the framework of critical thinking.*

Based on incorrect and unfounded foundation of life and its purpose we cannot erect the building of critical thinking, cannot set its direction and even method.

Along with these two, we also need true, authentic and universal vision and mission of life and society.

At the final stage with Islamic perspective of critical thinking we plan **to have a good, healthy and prosperous society.**

4.SOME BASIC CRITICAL STATEMENTS OF THE QURAN:

EXAMPLE 1

There are some [peoples] who say: ‘We believe in Allah and in the Last day’, while in fact they do not believe. They are trying to deceive Allah and those who believe, but they do not realize that in truth they are only deceiving themselves [2: 8-9].

Whenever they are told: ‘Do not spread mischief on earth’, they say: ‘Why! We indeed are the ones who set things right.’ They are [indeed] the mischief makers, but they do not realize [perceive] it. ‘Believe as others believe’, they answer: ‘Shall we believe as the fools have believed?’. Indeed it is they who are the fools, but they are not aware of it [2: 11-13].

And when they are told: “Follow what Allah has revealed,” they say: “No, we shall follow what we found our forefathers adhering to.” What! Even if their forefathers were devoid of understanding and right guidance? [2: 171]

When they are told: “Follow what Allah has revealed,” they say: “We will rather follow that which we have found our forefathers following.” [Will they follow that] even though Satan might invite them to the chastisement of the Blazing Fire? [31: 21]

They are deaf, they are dumb, they are blind; they will never return [to the right way] [2: 18].

And certainly We have created for Hell many of the *jinn* and mankind; they have hearts with which they fail to understand; and they have eyes with which they fail to see; and they have ears with which they fail to hear. They are like cattle – indeed, even more astray. Such are utterly heedless. [7: 179]

EXAMPLE 2

Do you attribute to Allah something about which you have no knowledge [2: 80].

People of the Book! Why do you dispute with us about Abraham even though the Torah and the Gospel were

not revealed until after his time? Do you not understand? Behold, you are those who have severely disputed concerning matters of which you have knowledge; why are you now disputing concerning matters that you know nothing about? Allah knows it whereas you do not know [3: 65-66].

Many indeed say misleading things without knowledge, driven merely by their desires [6:119].

Who, then, would be more unjust than he who fabricates a lie against Allah that he may lead people astray without knowledge? Surely Allah never guides such a wrong-doing folk. [6: 144]

And when such people commit an indecent act they say: “We found our fathers doing that, and Allah has enjoined it on us.” Say: “Surely Allah never enjoins any indecency. Do you say things regarding Allah that you do not know?” [7: 28]

O people! Eat of the lawful and pure things in the earth and follow not in the footsteps of Satan. For surely he is your open enemy; he only commands you to do evil and commit acts of indecency and to ascribe to Allah the things concerning which you have no knowledge [that He really is their source] [2: 168-169].

Do you ascribe to Allah something of which you have no knowledge? Tell them, [O Muhammad]: “Indeed those who invent lies against Allah will never [be successful] prosper. They may enjoy the life of this world, but in the end they must return to Us, and

then We shall cause them to taste severe chastisement for their disbelieving.” [10: 68-70]

Praise be to Allah Who has revealed to His servant the Book devoid of all crookedness; precisely a Straight Book, meant to warn of a stern punishment from Allah, and to proclaim, to those who believe and work righteous deeds, the tiding that theirs shall be a good reward wherein they shall abide for ever; and also to warn those who say: “Allah has taken to Himself a son,” a thing about which they have no knowledge, neither they nor their ancestors. Dreadful is the word that comes out of their mouths. What they utter is merely a lie. [18: 1-5]

And among people are those that wrangle [argue] about Allah without knowledge, without any true guidance, and without any scripture to enlighten them. They wrangle [dispute] arrogantly, intent on leading people astray from the Way of Allah. Such shall suffer disgrace in this world and We shall cause them to taste the chastisement of burning [in the Next]. That is the outcome of what your own hands have wrought [produced], for Allah never wrongs His creatures. [22: 11-12]

There are some human beings who purchase an enchanting diversion in order to lead people away from the way of Allah without having any knowledge who hold the call to the Way of Allah to ridicule. A humiliating chastisement awaits them. [31: 6]

Have you not seen that Allah has subjected to your service all that is in the heavens and on the earth and

has abundantly bestowed upon you all His bounties, both visible and invisible? Yet some people dispute regarding Allah without having any knowledge or guidance or any illuminating Book. [31: 20]

On the Day of resurrection Allah will judge among them regarding what they had differed. And then We set you, [O Prophet], on a clear high road [give you the Shariah] in [regarding] the matters of life [and society]. So follow that and do not follow the desires of those who do not know [have knowledge or the Shariah]. [45: 17-18]

They say: “There is no life other than our present worldly life: herein we live and we die, and it is only [the passage of] time that destroys us. Yet the fact is that they know nothing about this and are only conjecturing. [45: 24]

...those who contend regarding Allah’s Signs without any evidence that might have come to them...[40: 35]

Behold, it is one of their fabrications that they say: “Allah has begotten.” They are liars! Did He choose daughters rather than sons? What is the matter with you that you make such strange judgments? Will you then not take heed? Do you have any clear authority for such claims? Bring your Book, if you are truthful. [37: 149-157]

Does he has any knowledge of the world beyond the ken of sense-perception, and therefore, clearly sees [the Truth]? [53: 33]

EXAMPLE 3

**...No one can inform you of the truth save the All-Aware.
[35: 14]**

**Say: "None in the heavens and on the earth has
knowledge of the Unseen save Allah. [27: 65]**

**Did you ever consider the case of him who took his
desires as his god, and then Allah caused him to go
astray despite knowledge, and sealed his hearing
and his heart, and cast a veil over his sight? Who,
after Allah, can direct him to the Right way? Will
you not take heed? [45: 23]**

...true knowledge has come to you. [3: 61]

**There has now come to you a Light from Allah, and a
Clear Book [16] through which Allah shows to all
who seek to please Him the paths leading to safety.
He brings them out, by His Leave, from darkness to
Light and directs them on to the Straight Way. [5:
15-16]**

4. THE CHALLENGE OF THE QURAN

**If you are in any doubt whether it is We Who
have revealed this book to Our servant, then
produce just a *surah* like it, and call all your
supporters and seek in it the support of all
others save Allah. Accomplish this if you are
truthful. But if you fail to do this – and you
will most certainly fail – then have fear of the
Fire whose fuel are people and stones and**

which has been prepared for those who deny the Truth [2: 23-24].

5. THE HISTORY OF SCHOLARSHIP:

If we can understand the true nature of metaphysical realities then there is no need of the Prophets [pbut] and guidance. Moreover historical people like Adam, Idris (Enoch), Nuh (Noah), Hud (Heber), Salih (Methusaleh), Lut (Lot), Ibrahim (Abraham), Ismail (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Yaqub (Jacob), Yusuf (Joseph), Shu'aib (Jethro), Ayyub (Job), Dhulkifl (Ezekiel), Musa (Moses), Harun (Aaron), Dawud (David), Sulayman (Solomon), Ilias (Elias), Alyasa (Elisha), Yunus (Jonah), Zakariya (Zachariah), Yahya (John the Baptist), Isa (Jesus) and Muhammad [pbut] to whom God introduced in the Quran as the Prophets [pbut] would become falsifiers who claimed that they have special source of knowledge about the metaphysical realities of this world.

6. CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF CRITICAL THINKING:

It is grounded in Knowledge - [TAUK]

It is knowledge based and people-oriented

It focuses always on well-being of people

It is conceptual, epistemological and methodological unlike dominant model of critical thinking which emphasizes on skills and techniques

It is a purposeful and direction-oriented

It is guided and governed by the true vision and mission of life and society

It address the ever emerging complex problems that arise and affect the whole world

It is comprehensive, balanced and holistic

Its foundation is ethical [rational], spiritual, moral, legal and consequential

7. THE PREREQUISITES OF ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF CRITICAL THINKING:

As prerequisites one needs to understand and commit him or herself to the following points:

- 1. Confidence in and commitment to Islam as the worldview and the way of life, source of values, code of conduct and rules of society**
- 2. Relevant and universal**
- 3. Source of change and development**
- 4. Source of cultural and civilizational comprehensive and sustainable development**
- 5. The Quran as the book of knowledge [TAUK]**
- 6. The Quran as the source and history of scholarship**

7. A true and correct understanding of the current phenomena of the world

8. ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF CRITICAL THINKING: SOME MORE CHARACTERISTICS:

It is explanatory, practical, and normative and value oriented

It focuses on the truth and reality of life, society and the world

It is concerned with human experience and historical evidences

Its focus is on life and society

It plans to introduce change – intellectual and personal through educational process

It seeks to create a better world by addressing current issues such as Covid-19, women safety, environmental crisis, educational policies, Hindutva and Islamophobia, hate speech, communal environment, injustice, nature of economic growth, technological advancement, educational upliftment of marginalized members of societies, poverty, unemployment, cleanliness and health issues

It develops through critical understanding a proper system and structure to help people to develop a good society.

Its methodology is ijihad to make changes to the ideas and theories

It concentrates on historical and current context taking into consideration the empirical realities

It emphasizes on comprehensive, balanced and holistic development of individual and society

It always takes into consideration thought, action and planning leading to the right thought, right action and right planning

It is not sectarian and peripheral.

9. MODELS OF ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF CRITICAL THINKING

ONE can see this model of Islamic perspective of critical thing in the writings and actions of Said Nursi, Mohd Asad, Muhammad Iqbal, Ali Shariati, Imam Kuhmaini, Sayyid Qutub, Sayyid Mawdudi, Hassan al Banna, Sayyed Hosein Nasr, Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi, Ismail Faruqi, Syed Muhammad Naquib al- Attas, Yousul al-Qardawi, Said Ramazan, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, Kamal Hassan and many more who were critical to both the modern philosophical that and also the Muslim traditional thought.

10. DEFINITIONS OF ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF CRITICAL THINKING:

Fawzia Gilani-Williams argues “Islamic critical theory can be defined as recognizing, critiquing and providing normative action on any matter that oppresses the individual or the society socially, economically, scientifically, politically, psychologically or through any other medium, idea, or field”. She further asserts: I argue that Islamic critical theory can

critique every aspect of life and present a solution that is in harmony with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah and can lead to emancipation, transformation and a better life.

She continues and contends that, “This means that it must ‘provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable goals for social transformation’. The ‘better life’ is achieved when the individual is emancipated from the oppression of unkind words, and physical assault”.

For another scholar “it is important for Muslims to rediscover and promote their own framework of critical thinking as an alternative at least for the Muslim and to encounter the contemporary Western idea of critical thinking which has put aside all spiritual- metaphysical dimensions from its view, methods and theories. This would be an effort to contribute to the process of de- westernization of knowledge as well as to re-introduce critical thinking within the Islamic worldview”.

For me the Islamic perspective of critical thinking may be defined as an intellectual activity based on true and authentic world view, realistic way of life and universal values and morals that helps evaluate, analyze, conceptualize, and develop an accurate framework of life, society and their development in line with the correct understanding of the issues of vision and mission of life and society vigorously applying sound arguments taking into consideration historical and empirical evidences, as well as skills and techniques; to evaluate statements, policies, or programs; help replace the existing unfounded notion of epistemology, methodology and critical thinking; and explain the

importance and significance of truth and reality, and all other things of this world.

11. THE METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF CRITICAL THINKING:

- 1. The principle of knowledge**
- 2. The principle of the Islamic worldview**
- 3. The principle of creativity, innovation and excellence**
- 4. The missiological principle of admonition and warning**
- 5. The principle of education through Islamization of knowledge**
- 6. The principle of collectivity**
- 7. The principle of legitimate leadership and good governance**

12. GOALS OF ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF CRITICAL THINKING:

To emancipate and transform those who are oppressed and marginalized from individual to society through education and action

Change and development by introducing the

Right worldview

Right way of life

Right purpose of life

Right place of individuals – male and female

Right system of education

Right development of students

Right development of society, nation and country

This is the way that the Islamic perspective of critical thinking can be comprehended which stands to contribute towards the development of humanity.

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