

Islamic Intellectual Tradition between Perennial and Discursive Knowledge

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ABSTRACT

There have been several intellectual discourses and frameworks addressing the philosophical, epistemological and methodological issues relating to the sources of knowledge in Islam in the recent past. Islamization of knowledge championed by Al-Farūqī (1921-1986) and Al-Attas (1931-) and subsequently contributed to by many other Muslim thinkers like Abu SulaymĒn (1936-), Al-Al-Wānī (1935-) etc. was a pinnacle of reviving Islamic intellectual tradition in the contemporary Muslim world. The main objective of this paper is to examine the Islamic intellectual tradition which harmonizes between perennial knowledge (‘Ilm naqlī) and discursive knowledge (‘Ilm ‘aqlī). It is noteworthy to say that, the intellectual redirection and reconstruction of knowledge in the light of Islamic weltanschauung in the recent past have been advocated for by Muslim thinkers. In so doing, the paper makes an attempt to elucidate on the Islamization of contemporary knowledge and contextualization of Islamic intellectual tradition in order to make it relevant to the contemporary needs of the Muslims. The paper identifies that the existing gulf or dichotomy between revealed and acquired knowledge is the core inhibiting factor militating against the revival of Islamic intellectualism in the contemporary Muslim world. It further argues that if Islamic intellectual tradition must be contextualized, the integration between perennial knowledge (‘Ilm naqlī) and discursive knowledge (‘Ilm ‘aqlī) is essential. In conclusion, Islamic intellectual tradition does not separate between religious and non-religious knowledge as reflected in the contributions of classical Muslim scholars such as Al-kindī, Al-Khawarizmī, Al-Farābī, Birūnī, Ibn Sīna, Al- GhazzĒlĒ, Al-Shirazī among others. It is thereby recommended that Muslim intellectuals, scholars, researchers and thinkers should take up the challenge of addressing the disintegration between revealed and acquired knowledge especially by harmonizing the aspects together in order to promote development through knowledge to manage self and the knowledge to manage the system as coined by a great Muslim thinker, Sidek Baba as a central focus of contemporary discourse of Islamic intellectual tradition in the era of multifarious challenges.

Introduction

At the onset, Islam was synonymous with knowledge. This indicates that the cardinal pillar that makes Islam thrive was knowledge. The knowledge was embedded in self-survival (*Fard Ayn*) and communal survival (*Fard Kifayah*) as literature expounds.¹ Both aspects of knowledge were entrenched in the Islamic conception of knowledge. It is on this note that an assertion could be made that self-survival (*Fard Ayn*) relates with religious rituals while communal survival (*Fard Kifayah*) relates with acquired knowledge.

Indeed, all branches of religious knowledge are regarded as revealed knowledge while Islam harmonizes between revelation and reason. Revelation of the Glorious Qur'ān, in one hand, embodies all spheres of human endeavours such as intellectual, social, political, economic, business transaction, among others. On the other hand, different passages of Divine Scriptural Book (Qur'ān) such as Q3:190-191 encourage man to ponder or think over natural phenomenon such as heaven, earth, moon, sun, stars so as to appreciate the power of Almighty God. There is a distinctive feature between revelation and reason. It is in this regard that Iqbal posits:

“... Experience shows that truth revealed through pure reason is incapable of bringing that fire of living conviction which personal revelation alone can bring. This is the reason why pure thought has so little influenced men while religion has always elevated individuals and transformed the whole societies”².

The above quotation is explicit to show the superiority of religious revelation over pure reasoning in elevating men. It is against this background that this paper discusses two important approaches to knowledge in Islam. First, perennial knowledge (*‘Ilm naqlī*) relates with revelation. Second, discursive knowledge (*‘Ilm ‘aqlī*) deals with knowledge acquired through reasoning. These two aspects of knowledge form the basis for Islamic intellectual tradition that produced many Muslim intellectuals such as: Ibn Sīna, Khawarizmī, Al-Ghazzālī and many others.

It is not contestable that Islamic intellectual civilization was a model to other civilizations of the world, in the past. The traditional Islamic education system in the tenth and eleventh centuries was

eminent in this respect. The Islamic epistemology ascribes the source of knowledge (*‘Ilm*) to Almighty Allah. Subsequently, internal and external factors were responsible for its decline which weakened dialogue (*munāzarah*), argumentation (*jadāl*) and debate (*mujādalah*) as the key components or strategies of intellectualism and mechanisms for discovering fallacy in thinking as well as arriving at the truth inherent in knowledge. The revival of the triadic mechanisms- dialogue (*munāzarah*), argumentation (*jadāl*) and debate (*mujādalah*) - for unveiling the truth can be rejuvenated in order to harmonize between two divisions of knowledge investigated in this paper. In so doing, Revelation and reason would be integrally united as part of Islamic worldview.

Since the Holy Qur'Ēn is the fundamental source of knowledge in Islam, it is thus important to revisit the pioneering effort of Abū Hanīfah for example, in using analogical deduction (*qiyās*) as a rational way of making the Qur'Ēnic contents practicable to the diverse situations of Muslims³. Less attention is paid in reviving the intellectual legacy of Abū Hanīfah in order to correlate revelation with reason specifically in making the religious intellectual tradition relevant to the challenges of modern time. Secularism and *Kufrutic* global order in all spheres of life hindered the continuity of this heritage⁴. In other words, secular schemes of things which served as a revolt to intellectual prowess and legacy of Islam that flourished between 8th and 14th centuries⁵.

Prominently, various Muslim scholars have criticized the secular projection of all schemes of things in the contemporary world. Notably, Al-Attas has pointed to the profound ideas of the German philosopher from the eighteenth century, Emmanuel Kant in his “*critique of pure reason*” with his irrefutable argument that the metaphysical world is above a mere use of human reasoning ability⁶. Even from the standpoint of a German philosopher, his argument challenges the negligence of western secular approach to divine guidance and spiritual development of man.

However, it does not mean that reason will serve as torch-light for divine guidance, but the divine

¹Ahmad, T. S. and Atotileto, A.S. (2017). *Towards Educational Integration for Socio-Economic Development of Ilorin Emirate-Nigeria in the Socio-Economic Development of Ilorin Emirate since the 20th Century*. Centre for Ilorin Studies: University of Ilorin, Nigeria

²Iqbal M. (1934). *The reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

³Muhammad A. Z., (2001). *The Four Imams: Their Lives, Works and Their Schools of Thought*. (London: Dar Al Taqwa), p. 87.

⁴Ahmad, T.S. & Busari, K.A., (2011). *Reclaiming the Islamic heritage in Africa: An Assessment of Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio's Reform Activity in Nigeria-in the 19th Century*. Proceedings of the international Conference on Islam in Africa: Intellectual trends, historical sources and research methods. Organized by Institute of Islamic Thought: IIUM between 19-21 July, pp.1-19.

⁵Atiqul Haque, M., (1990). *Muslim heroes of the World*. TA-HA publishers, London. pp.12-13

⁶Al-Attas, S. M. N., (1993). *Islam and Secularism*, International Institute of Islamic Thought (ISTAC, Kuala-Lumpur Malaysia, p.20.

revelation should be regarded as the peak of knowledge utilizing reasoning ability to convey the truth of the sacred messages⁷. This integrative approach between revelation and reason marks the source of Islamic intellectual tradition of the classical Islamic civilization⁸. It is needless to say that, the classical Islamic civilization was intellectually and holistically ceremonial perhaps because both perennial knowledge and discursive knowledge were emphasized in promoting the values and virtues of religion (*dīn*)⁹.

Today, there are multifarious challenges facing the *Ummah*. These challenges do not escape the minds of Muslim intellectuals in giving the trends and highlighting essential factors contributing to the challenges. One of the key issues identified was the dichotomy between revealed knowledge (*‘ilm naqlī*) and philosophic knowledge *‘ilm ‘aqlī*¹⁰. The project of Islamization of knowledge championed by Al-Attas¹¹, the late al-Farūqī¹², Seyyed Hossein Nasr¹³, Osman Bakar¹⁴, Abū Sulaymān¹⁵, Jabir al-Alwānī, to mention but a few, who have used the historical lens of classical Islamic civilization in investigating the contributions of Muslim scholars to intellectual legacy. Most of these scholars are not satisfied with the situation of Muslims today. It is essentially important to glance through the educational background of the above mentioned scholars.

⁷Mohd, H. S. (2001). *Contemporary Muslim Intellectuals and their responses to modern science and technology*, in (Editors, Mumtaz Ahmad and Mustansir Mir), *Some studies in contemporary Islam*, volume 3 Number 2, Fall, p.9, published by Centre of Islamic studies, Youngstown State University.

⁸Mahar, A. H. (1990). *Educational philosophy of the Holy Qur’an*. p. 29. Published by Seraj Munir, Lahore: Pakistan.

⁹Ahmad, T.S., (2011). *Discussion method versus students’ competencies in collaborative learning: The role of Halaqah-Study circle- in developing learners’ personality traits and critical thinking skills*, pp.47-57, LAP Lambert Academic publishing: Germany

¹⁰Nur, A. (1958). *Glories of Islam*, Pp.72-89. Printed Published at Ferozsons Lahore: Pakistan.

¹¹Wan Mohd Nor, W. D. (1998). *The educational philosophy and practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas: An Exposition of the original concept of Islamization*, pp.1-14. International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia.

¹²Hashim, R. and Imron R., (2006). A Comparative Analysis of the conceptions of al-Attas and al-Faruqi, in *Islamization of human sciences edited by Mohd Yusof Hussain*, 2006. Research centre, international Islamic University Malaysia pp.101-12

¹³Prefatory note written by Giorgio De Santillana on Sayyed Hossein Nasir’s book entitled: *Science and civilization in Islam*

¹⁴Osman Bakar, (2006). *Classification of knowledge in Islam*, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia.

¹⁵Abdul Rashid M. (2006). *Approaches to Islamization of knowledge: A Review*, in *Islamization of human sciences edited by Mohd Yusof Hussain*. Research Centre, International Islamic University Malaysia, pp.49-50.

First, al- Farūqī, his full name is Ismā‘īl Rajī al- Farūqī who was born in Yaffa in Palestine in 1921. He studied Philosophy in American University in Beirut. His commitment to knowledge had enable him earned two masters from Indiana and Harvard within the period of three years. Subsequently in 1952, he was awarded a PhD in philosophy at Indiana University¹⁶.

Second, Seyyid Hossein Nasr, he is a contemporary Islamic scholar and professor of philosophy of sciences specializes in the history of science. He is an Iranian by birth. He studied in Europe specifically he studied physics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Subsequently he studied geology and geophysics at Harvard University. It was precisely in 1958 that he received his PhD in the history of science. He has today contributed immensely to the perennial philosophy and history of science¹⁷.

Third, Osman Bakar is from Malaysia in South-East Asia. He is an Emeritus Professor of philosophy of science. He has published various scholarly works on Islamic thought and civilization and his work on classification of knowledge in Islam remains a fabulous work on Islamic thought¹⁸.

Fourth, Al-Attas, his full name is Syed Muhammad Naquib bin Ali bin Abdullah bin Muhsin al-Attas was born in Bogor, Java in 1931. He was one of the pioneers of Islamization of knowledge and widely known professor of Islamic thought and civilization¹⁹.

Fifth, Abū Sulaymān, he was born in Makkah in 1936. He played an active role in the establishment of International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). He has contributed enormously to the academic and administrative progress of the project of Islamization of contemporary knowledge²⁰.

Sixth, Jabir al- Alwānī, he was born in Iran in 1935. His formative education was purely classical Islamic background. He subsequently received his degree in Sharī‘ah at al al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. He was like many other scholars that played significant role in the establishment of International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) and his thought has been

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷Seyyid Hossein Nasr, 1987 *Science and civilization in Islam*, pp.41-58. Published by Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge: UK.

¹⁸Osman Bakar, *Classification of knowledge in Islam*, 2006. Published by International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (INSTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia.

¹⁹Wan Mohd Nor, W. D., (1998). *The educational philosophy and practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas: An Exposition of the original concept of Islamization*, pp.1-14. International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia)

²⁰ Ibid

lucidly manifested in his contribution to Islamization of knowledge²¹.

The Muslim thinkers especially Abū Sulaymān have insisted that the gulf between perennial knowledge and discursive knowledge must be bridged. They have therefore emphatically proposed frameworks, philosophical and epistemological bases for the reconstruction of Islamic civilization among the contemporary Muslims with specific attention on the integration between revealed and acquired knowledge²².

Furthermore, Al- Alwānī, with an exemption of other Muslim scholars mentioned earlier, asserted that social science or discursive knowledge could be Islamized, but religious sciences or perennial knowledge could not be Islamized, but rather should be contextualized²³. It is in the light of the argument of Al- Alwānī that this paper makes an attempt to extensively look at various historical trends of the integration between perennial knowledge and philosophical knowledge, and then tries to justify the need to Islamize social science as well as to contextualize Islamic knowledge by instilling Islamic worldview into the body of knowledge in the contemporary Muslim world.

This paper focuses on the approaches to knowledge, the historical lens of Islamic intellectual tradition, contributions of scholars to Islamic intellectual tradition, Islamization of knowledge, as well as the contextualization of Islamic intellectual tradition. Conclusion and recommendations are made. Generally, the whole discourse in this paper will be helpful to scholars and students of higher institutions of learning in the Islamic world, in directing their whole thoughts towards the revival of Islamic intellectual tradition and practically make it relevant to the challenges facing the Muslims in different parts of the world.

Approaches to Knowledge in Islam

The Islamic epistemological overview of knowledge, considers Allah as the Supreme Source of all knowledge. The extent of this has been reflected from Divine declaration where Allah says: "If it were Our will, we could take away that which we have sent thee by inspiration: Then wouldst thou find

none to plead thy affair in that matter as against us" (Q17:86)²⁴.

The afore-quoted verse shows that, the Cause of all causes, the Unmovable Mover of the universe, Allah (S.A.W.) could erase or format from human's mind what has been taught to him. This is one of encompassing evidences that the past Muslim scholars who were critical and conscious of what knowledge is, strongly upheld the stand view that, the key or opener of knowledge is in the hand of the Supreme God. In spite the fact that, revealed knowledge is considered superior, Islam is not antagonistic to acquired or human experiential knowledge. It is on this basis that, Islam identifies two important approaches to knowledge namely: perennial knowledge and philosophic knowledge. Ahmad and Atotileto (2017) explicate that:

"Islam recognizes two divisions of knowledge-revealed knowledge and non-revealed knowledge. Revealed knowledge was acquired through divine revelation while non-revealed knowledge acquired through reasoning and real life experience. Explicitly, the contribution of Imam Al-Ghazzālī (1058-1111 CE) to the discourse of knowledge and its divisions could not be underestimated²⁵" (p.274).

The above quotation is lucidly relevant to the central thesis of this paper. Nonetheless, harmonization between the two divisions of knowledge is paramount. In addition, many other scholars were also conscious of the two divisions of knowledge. Of such scholar is Sidek Baba (2013) who contends that:

"In Islamic tradition, there are two types of knowledge which have proven to be able to make man achieve excellence in their lives, and build famous empire and civilization. The first type of knowledge is the knowledge to manage self (*Ulūm naqliyyah*), and secondly, the knowledge to manage the system (*Ulūm 'Aqliyyah*). Allah has created human beings with the capacity to rationalize with reason and to feel with emotions²⁶" (P.31).

²¹Jabir al-Alwānī, T. (1995). *The Islamization of Knowledge: Yesterday and Today* (Herndon: Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought).

²²Conference Book, 1977. *First World Conference on Muslim Education*. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: King AbdulAzeez University

²³Jabir al-Alwānī, T. (1995). *The Islamization of Knowledge: Yesterday and Today* (Herndon: Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought).

²⁴Abdullah Y. A. (1989). *The meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (Q17:86). New edition with revised translation, commentary and newly comprehensive index. Published by Amana Publications, Maryland: USA.

²⁵Ahmad, T. S. and Atotileto, A.S. (2017). *Towards Educational Integration for Socio-Economic Development of Ilorin Emirate-Nigeria in the Socio-Economic Development of Ilorin Emirate since the 20th Century*. Centre for Ilorin Studies: University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

²⁶Sidek Baba (2013). *Integration and Collaboration in Education and Learning*. Yayasan Ilmuwan, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia.

Based on the above assertion, it is important to say that, knowledge to manage self (*Ulūm naqliyyah*) is regarded as perennial knowledge while knowledge to manage the system (*Ulūm 'Aqliyyah*) is considered as philosophical knowledge. Nevertheless, the greatest challenge to the contemporary Muslims is to integrate between the two identified divisions of knowledge as mentioned above. Nonetheless, in order to revive these two divisions of knowledge, it was observed by Ziauddin thus:

“The Oxygen that can breathe fresh life into stagnant Muslim societies is an unconditional, fully-fledged, contemporary revival of *Ilm*, the pursuit, the generation; the processing, the retrieval, the dissemination, the analysis and the criticism of knowledge must become the prime focus and permanent goal of all Muslim individuals and societies. Once again, Islam must become, and be clearly seen to be, synonymous with knowledge”²⁷ (P.3).

To actualize the above-stated position i.e. revival of contemporary knowledge, the synthesis between perennial knowledge and discursive or philosophic knowledge is significantly required as literature expounds²⁸. However, in an attempt to bring the two approaches of knowledge together, it should not be taken as mere intellectual enterprise whereby it will involve the generality of Muslims. It must involve highly qualified Muslim intellectuals who will comprehensively design the frameworks and trends upon which the generality of Muslims will follow in seeking for the knowledge.

This is in line with the assumption of Imām Mālik (93/179-712-795) whose position was that the *Qur'ān*, *Sunnah*, *fatwā* of *Sahābah*, *Ijtihād* alongside with analogical deduction (*qiyās*) and public interest (*Masālih al-Mursal*) are essential mechanisms of fundamental principle of the Islamic intellectual tradition²⁹. However, he strongly believes that there are two approaches to knowledge namely: knowledge for public dissemination and knowledge for scholarly enterprise. Indeed, what Imām Mālik referred to as scholarly enterprise must serve as a drive for public accessibility to religious intellectual discourse. It is in the light of this that the historicity of Islamic intellectual tradition of the classical era will be rejuvenated in the contemporary time.

²⁷Ziauddin S. (1991). *Introduction: A preface to al-Ghazali in Ziauddin Sardar (editor) How We know: Ilm and the Revival of Knowledge*, p.3 London: England

²⁸Osman Bakar, (2006). *Classification of knowledge in Islam*. International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (INSTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia

²⁹Muhammad A. Z. (2001). *The Four Imams: Their Lives, Works and Their Schools of Thought*. (London: Dar Al Taqwa), p. 87.

Historical View-Lens of Islamic Intellectual Tradition

The vital importance of knowledge in Islam has been reflected from the fact that wherever Islam reaches, its knowledge is not being isolated. In other words, the imperativeness of seeking for knowledge has been reflected as the core aspect of Islam at the onset of Islam itself. This imperativeness was consequently emphatically shown in the first five verses (Q96: 1-15) descended unto the Prophet (S.A.W.)³⁰. This could be irrefutably traced to the prophetic era when the residence of a prominent compatriot of the Prophet (S.A.W.), *Al-Arqam bin Abi al-Arqam* was chosen as a study circle (*Halaqah*) in carrying out teaching and learning of Islamic education³¹.

The residence of *Al-Arqam bin Abi al-Arqam* was not only taken as centre of learning, the role of *masjid* also corroborated the residence of the mentioned compatriot in Madinah. It has further been explored that a *masjid* during the reign of Prophet Muhammad did not serve as an exclusive place of worship but served as a multi-purpose facility, specifically, as a centre of learning and agent of socialization among the *Ummah*³². The significance of the *masjid* as an educational centre has been elucidated that the study circle (*Halaqah*) is nothing but a kind of professorial position for a facilitator where knowledge is imparted from the facilitator to the student and/or among the learners.

At the initial stage of Islam, the core aspect of the curriculum was the emphasis on the teaching and learning of the *Qur'ān*. Inferably, the learning of the *Qur'ān* was mainly to attain piety. The essence of attaining piety was mainly to become a good servant of Allah.

The four rightly guided Caliphs and the first four Caliphs of the *Umayyad* era stressed on the elementary educational system based on the recommendation of the Prophet (S.A.W.). The Umayyad Caliphs established similar educational systems in various provinces like Makkah, Madinah,

³⁰ Abdullah Y.A. (1989). *The meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (Q17:86). New edition with revised translation, commentary and newly comprehensive index. Amana Publications, Mayland: USA.

³¹ZarnĒjĒ, B. (2003). *Instruction of the students: The method of learning*, (3rd edn.) New York: McGraw-Hill.

³²Shalaby, A. (1954). *History of Muslim Education*. Beirut: Dar Kashaf. See also, Ogunbado, A. F. (2016). Historical Development of Muslim Education in Yoruba land, Southwest Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*. Volume 4. Issue 8 (July 2016). P.16 also Ogunbado, A. F. (2018). Muslim Education in Oyo Alaafin: Challenges and Developments Analysis. *Journal of Islam in Asia*. (IIUM Journal) Vol.15, No.1. .Pp. 248-270.

Damascus, Yemen, Alexandria, Cairo, Baghdad, Basrah, Neshapur, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Kufa etc.³³

At the initial stage, the central focus of Islamic education was on theological learning, and later on, higher institutions of learning were established which focused on the teaching and learning of advanced theological studies. The great example of such theological learning was set up by al-Ma'mūn in Baghdad in the year 830³⁴.

It was the preliminary ground of the establishment of the places of learning that subsequently led to what was later known as *madrasah*. It is impossible to comprehensively discuss the historical trend of *madrasah* without specially pinpointing to the emergence of *al-Nizhāmiyah madrasah* constructed by *Nizām al-Mulk* in Baghdad in 1065 and properly inaugurated in 1067, whereby various genius of the era participated in the intellectual discourse and reconstruction of knowledge³⁵.

This institution of learning was widely known for the teaching of both religious and non-religious sciences. More precisely, it was asserted that at the onset of *al-Nizhāmiyah madrasah*, it focused much on the revealed knowledge, specifically Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*). It was not focusing only on theological studies but subsequently, discursive or philosophic knowledge was introduced³⁶. Similarly, attention was also given to pure sciences. For instance, there was a popular observatory for the study of astronomy. The profundity of intellectual excellence with an emphasis on the intellectual learning rather than academic learning could be regarded as an exemplary and brilliant characteristic of *al-Nizhāmiyah madrasah*³⁷.

The distinctive features of intellectual learning are a synthesis of ideas, evaluation of ideas, critical and creative thinking skills [17] as contrary to academic learning which is much more focused on the information gathering. This means inferably that, dialogue (*munāzarah*), dialectics (*jadāl*) and debate (*mujādalāh*) were the key components of intellectualism and mechanisms for arriving at the truth and comprehending knowledge from its true perspective as literature explicates³⁸.

This is in line with the assertion that intellectual enhancement is a distinctive feature of *al-Nizhāmiyah madrasah* that contributed to what Kazmi regarded as "culture of learning" which calls for revival of critical thinking among the Muslims³⁹. Though, the culture of learning cannot be attained without reviving the culture of libraries in order to foster knowledge. For example, in Baghdad alone there were up to one hundred public libraries and in Cordova there were up to seventy libraries⁴⁰.

Likewise, in tenth century Persia, during the reign of Nuh bn Nasr, which was recorded that Ibn Sīna used to visit and described the library as being fantastic⁴¹. Also, in Egypt, there was a library ascribed to Fatimid al-Hakim which possessed almost forty rooms completely filled with books in various disciplines related to perennial and discursive knowledge. This integrally contributed to its reputation and its being a universally recognized centre of knowledge. There were eminent Muslim scholars, who served as the intellectual backbone of *al-Nizhāmiyah madrasah*. Of such scholars are: Abu Hamid al-Ghazzālī, al-Imam al-Haramayn, al-Juwaynī and Abu Is'haq al-Shirazī, to mention but a few.

More precisely, Imam al-Ghazzālī (1058-1111) lectured at *al-Nizhāmiyah madrasah* for four years where he was much concerned that education must be much more than memorization⁴², henceforth it could be inferred that it is intellectual discourse that Al-Ghazzālī proposed. This is in line with contention of Al-Zarnūjī asserted that spending one hour in dialogical conversation and intellectual discussion is more meritorious than engaging one month in the memorization of a particular text⁴³.

There were several contentions that *al-Nizhāmiyah madrasah* served as a role model for the establishment of European universities. Nonetheless, these contentions did not review the subsequent colleges which emerged in various Muslim cities whereby those colleges out rightly imitated *al-Nizhāmiyah madrasah*. There were thirty colleges similar to that of Baghdad in Alexandria, six in Mawsil, one at least in Neshapur, Lahore, Ispahan, and Samarkand etc.⁴⁴

³³Atiqul Haque, M., (1990). *Muslim heroes of the World*. TA-HA publishers, London. pp.12-13.

³⁴Nur A. (1958). *Glories of Islam*, pp.72-89. at Ferozsons Lahore: Pakistan.

³⁵Atiqul Haque, M., (1990). *Muslim heroes of the World*. TA-HA publishers, London. pp.12-13.

³⁶Haidar, Bammate (1991). *Muslim contribution to Civilization*. American Trust Publications, Brentwood, Maryland: USA. pp.19-62

³⁷Nur A. (1958). *Glories of Islam*, At Ferozsons Lahore: Pakistan, pp.72-89.

³⁸Hashim, R., (2007). Intellectualism in higher Islamic traditional studies: Implications for the Curriculum. *The American Journal of Islamic Social Science*, 24:3.

³⁹Kazmi, Y., (2000). The Role of Critical Thinking in Islam. *Hamdard Islamicus*, Vol. XXIII, No., *Quarterly Journal of Studies and Research in Islam*. Published by al-Hikmah at Madinah al-Hikmah.

⁴⁰Mohd Sharif Khan, (1986). *Islamic education*. Hahsish publishing house, New Delhi: India. P.85.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ahmad, T.S., 2011 *Discussion method versus students' competencies in collaborative learning: The role of Halaqah-Study circle- in developing learners' personality traits and critical thinking skills*, pp.47-57, LAP Lambert Academic publishing: Germany.

⁴³ZarnĒjĒ, 2003. *Instruction of the students: The method of learning*, (3rd edn.) New York: McGraw-Hill.

⁴⁴Nur Ahmad, (1958). *Glories of Islam*, At Ferozsons Lahore: Pakistan. Pp.72-8

In furtherance, the establishment of various colleges and seminaries was reviewed, whereby to be specific, only Cordova had many colleges and various subjects were taught such as: Literature, philosophy, history, and science. Based on this, it could be seen that the subjects taught in various colleges in Cordova were similar to the perennial and discursive knowledge which occupied the core of curriculum of *al-Nizhāmiyyah madrasah* in Baghdad as an integral part of intellectual tradition in Islam⁴⁵.

It is not deniable that the foundation of Cordova University was under the leadership of al-Hakam II al-Mustansir (961-976). This important citadel of learning attracted students from various parts of the world such as Europe, Asia and Africa⁴⁶. There were prominent professors in this university such as historian, Ibn al-Qutiyyah and the philologist, Abū 'Alī al-Qalī⁴⁷. Despite of the enormous contributions of al-Hakam II to higher institutions of learning, there was no neglect in the aspect of elementary education. It was argued that the level of literacy was so high, for instance in Andalusia, to the extent that almost every individual could read and write⁴⁸.

As an extension of intellectual brilliance of prominent scholars, it was on record that in the eleventh century the *masjid* in Cairo attracted more than five thousand students whose priority was to acquire knowledge in the *Halaqah* organized by Ulamā' being part of Islamic scholasticisms and intellectual tradition. Hence, the contributions of Muslim scholars to Islamic intellectual tradition could not be underrated.

Contribution of Classical Scholars to Islamic Intellectual Tradition

It is widely agreed by Muslims and non-Muslims that the contributions of Muslim scholars to intellectual tradition in the classical Islamic civilization could neither be underrated nor exaggerated. However, it is unfortunate that this trend of this intellectual profundity of past has become a mere repetition of historical account of medieval Islamic civilization in the present⁴⁹.

The projection and secret of their success was undertaken from the fact that there was integration between revealed knowledge and philosophic knowledge which greatly contributed to intellectual

civilization⁵⁰. In other words, rationality and reason are used to reach the peak in all disciplines such as *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, mathematics, philosophy, logic, mathematics and other disciplines⁵¹.

It is important to specifically look at some scholars' contributions to these disciplines as an attempt to awaken the contemporary Muslims. In actualizing this objective for example, it has been reviewed that there existed a "new wisdom school of Persia" which was mainly to utilize rationalism as a mechanism for Muslims to connect to the real world situation rather than by mere theosophical conception⁵². In the light of a similar example, it is hugely and curiously needed to meticulously look at some scholars' contributions to Islamic intellectual tradition.

Reviewing the scholars' contribution to Islamic intellectual tradition will be helpful to the higher institutions of learning in the contemporary Muslim world specifically the emerging Islamic Universities like International Islamic University Malaysia, Islamic University of India, Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan, Islamic University Uganda, Islamic University Niger, Al-Hikmah University Nigeria, to mention but a few.

Some of the scholars who immensely contributed to classical intellectual civilization were: Jābir bin Hayyān (103/721-200/815) who contributed to Islamic alchemy whereby about one hundred and seventy works were ascribed to him; Abū Yūsuf Yaqūb ibn 'Ishaq Al-kindī (185/801-260/873) was regarded as the first recognized Muslim philosopher-scientist; Muhammad Ibn Mūsā al-Khwarazmī (d. 249/863) was a notable Muslim scholar who contributed to various subjects like mathematics, geography and astronomy etc. His excellence in scholarship had earned him recognition by Khalīfah Al-Ma'mūn when al-Khwarazmī was appointed as the head of centre of learning established by al-Ma'mūn⁵³.

Onwards, Mastering of different languages are techniques of retaining intellectual competence among Muslim scholars. Al-Farābī (Second Teacher) for example, had played a vibrant role through his mastery of almost eight to nine languages. Also, the personality of great Birūnī (973-1048 AD) who profoundly mastered various fields like: literature, poetry, geography, science, history, astronomy, science, etc. could be exemplary to many students of

⁴⁵Ibrahim O. (2001). *Intellectual traditions in Islam*, ed. Farhad Daftary, I.B. Tauris publishers, London-New York. xvii plus

⁴⁶Nur A. (1958). *Glories of Islam*, At Ferozsons Lahore: Pakistan. pp.72-89.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Atiqul Haque, M., (1990). *Muslim heroes of the World*. TA-HA publishers, London. Pp.12-13.

⁵⁰ Haidar, Bammate, (1991). *Muslim contribution to Civilization*. American Trust Publications, Brentwood, Maryland: USA. pp.19-62.

⁵¹Seyyed Hossein, N., (1996). *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persian*. Edited by Mehdi Amin Razavi. (Richmond, Survey: Curzon Press). Pp. xv, 375.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³Atiqul Haque, M., (1990). *Muslim heroes of the World*. TA-HA publishers, London. pp. 12-13.

Islamic education towards activating their passion and curiosity for learning⁵⁴

Likewise, the contribution of Ibn Sīna (980-1037) to philosophy, science and medicine could not be over exaggerated. This had been seen from his works such as: *Kitab Shifa* (18 volumes), *an-Najah* (10 volumes), *al-Hikma* (10 volumes) and *Qanūn at-Tibb*⁵⁵. Another scholar whose effort could not be shunned is Ibn Rushd (1126-1198). He was from a scholarly family who studied Qur'ān, Hadīth, Fiqh, philosophy, logic, history etc. His knowledge of Hebrew and Greek assisted him just like al-Kindī in carrying out his scholarship activities⁵⁶. Various intellectual efforts have been made to revive the intellectual heritage of the past among the contemporary scholars however, there are different perspectives in this regard.

Contemporary Perspectives on Islamic Intellectualism

In an attempt to underscore Islamic science or intellectualism, it has been vividly submitted that it should be based on *tauhidic* paradigm. Particular reference should be made to the assertion that, the process and development of intellectual discourse should reflect the submissiveness to the supremacy of Allah. Spiritual and metaphysical thoughts should be considered as mechanisms of arriving at the reality as literature posits⁵⁷.

Al-Ghazzālī has interestingly pinpointed to the different dimensions of knowledge namely: instinct, understanding, experience and reflection, and wisdom. First, the man's instinct enables him to grasp theoretical and axiomatic knowledge which differentiates him from the animal kingdom. Second, then knowledge requires understanding which is a prior ability to comprehend and interpret the scripture of Allah, for example. Third, experience and reflection are important key components that make man become knowledgeable. Fourth, wisdom is the peak of intellectual profundity. It is the wisdom that Syed Hussein Nasir referred to as perennial philosophy which is distinctively different from western secular philosophy⁵⁸.

In other words, the comprehensive overview of Islamic intellectual tradition has been critically reviewed by a contemporary Muslim scholar, Sayed Hussein Nasir who has argued that the peak of an

Islamic intellectual tradition is *Hikmah* which was termed as "Perennial philosophy"⁵⁹. He extensively argues that *Īkma* or perennial philosophy is not synonymous with western secular usage of philosophy. He has extensively argued that the usage of perennial philosophy covers intuition (*'Irfan*), intellection (*ma'rifah*) and gnosis (*dhawq*), philosophy (*falsafah*), synthesized reason (*Istidlal*) and Illumination (*Ishraq*)⁶⁰.

However, the process through which Islamic intellectual tradition could be enhanced was not mentioned in the discourse of Sayyed Hossein Nasir on perennial knowledge (*Hikmah*). What was specifically mentioned are some key words such as: theosophical and Gnostic, logical and rational elements. Hashim, has profoundly mentioned that conversational dialogue (*munazarah*), debate (*jadal*) and dialectics (*mujadalah*) are the key components and mechanisms of promoting the Islamic intellectual tradition in the past⁶¹.

It is necessary to underscore important issues relating to the intellectual tradition of the past especially in relation to the stances of Muslim scholars. For instance, Sayed Hossein Nasir and Sardar have made efforts to relate the Islamic knowledge of the present through the lens of the past with specific emphasis on science and Islam and have proposed for Islamic sciences⁶². Contrarily, Pervez Hoodhboy has without repudiating religion, rejected the term "Islamic science" because he strongly upholds that science is universal and value free⁶³. However, Al-Attas has argued that there is nothing like value-free in the pursuance of modern science when it serves the interest of a particular class of people⁶⁴.

The stance of Pervez Hoodhboy indirectly renounces the ascription of Muslims' contributions to modern sciences because many scholars have composed many works and concluded to incorporate Islamic values into the scientific experiments and findings; rather than mere and hidden secular portrayal and systematic declaration of science as a universal

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Hashim, R., 2007. Intellectualism in higher Islamic traditional studies: Implications for the Curriculum. *The American Journal of Islamic Social Science*, 24:3.

⁶² Ziauddin S. (1991). *Introduction: A preface to al-Ghazali in Ziauddin Sardar (editor) How We know: Ilm and the Revival of Knowledge*, p.3 London: England.

⁶³ Mohd, H. S. (2001). *Contemporary Muslim Intellectuals and their responses to modern science and technology*, in (Editors, Mumtaz Ahmad and Mustansir Mir), *Some studies in contemporary Islam*, volume 3 Number 2, Fall, p.9, Centre of Islamic studies, Youngstown State University.

⁶⁴ Al-Attas, S. M. N (1993). *Islam and Secularism*, International Institute of Islamic Thought (ISTAC, Kuala-Lumpur Malaysia, p.20.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Mahar, Abdul Haq, (1990). *Educational philosophy of the Holy Qur'an*. p.29. Published by Seraj Munir, Lahore: Pakistan

⁵⁸ Seyyed Hossein, N. (1996). *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persian*. Edited by Mehdi Amin Razavi. (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press). Pp. xv, 375.

discipline⁶⁵. The stance of Al-Attas has clearly repudiated the stance of Pervez Hoodbhoy and paved the way for the profound stand of Sayed Hossein and Sardar regarding the usage of the term "Islamic science"⁶⁶. This is importantly essential as a result of the fact that all aspects of knowledge must lead to submissiveness to Allah as the architect of the universe⁶⁷.

Islamization of Human Knowledge

The significance of intellectual redirection and reconstruction of knowledge is to emancipate the educational system from Secularization which has become the focus of many Muslim intellectuals and thinkers in the past few decades. The First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Makkah in 1977⁶⁸ played a giant role in this regard and thereafter, the project of Islamization of knowledge was championed by many prominent Muslim scholars. For example, Al-Attas has extensively argued for the reason to Islamize knowledge. The simple reason was that, all discourses in relation to nature and the physical world have been totally separated from the divine and supremacy of God⁶⁹.

Onwards, the concern of Islamization of human knowledge is much more on social sciences as compared to religious sciences specifically in the age of globalization. This has been in line with the assertion that one of the fundamental challenges confronting the Muslim scholars in the age of globalization is their inability to grasp the fact that both intellectual and technological terms marked the new criteria of concrete term of development.

Nonetheless, the objective of Islamization of human knowledge is focusing on the total development in all schemes of life and it is mainly for seeking goodness in this world and the hereafter⁷⁰. The challenges Islamization in the era of globalization has made experts in the field of Islamization such as Adebayo

advocates for the curriculum reform⁷¹. Thus, rigorous engagement of Muslim thinkers is to ensure that knowledge is made as a direction to link man with his Creator. This is the main idea behind the Islamization of contemporary knowledge.

There are various arguments to the proper way of carrying out the project of Islamization of knowledge among the contemporary Muslims. The hierarchical structure of knowledge, specifically the integrative techniques of both perennial and discursive knowledge as it was identified by Osman Bakar could be the answer to the differences of opinions of Muslim scholars such as: Al-Farābī, Al-Ghazzālī, Qutub al-dīn al-Shirāzī, etc. regarding the need to Islamize the contemporary knowledge in the light of holistic approach to both perennial and philosophic knowledge.

It is not disputable that the trend of knowledge today has removed the Supreme God from the schemes of things. This is the reason for the advocacy of the Islamization. The religious sciences based on *tawhidic* paradigm are made as a yardstick in proposing the work plan and methodologies of Islamization of knowledge in contributing to various developments in the contemporary Muslim world. Al-Farūqī has comprehensively proposed a theoretical framework on the feasibility and actualization of Islamization of knowledge and social sciences.

Onwards, Mouten AbdulRashid has concluded from his findings that the ultimate concern of Islamization is to eliminate the existing dichotomy of social sciences and traditional Islamic system⁷². It is therefore important to underscore a particular usage in relation to Islamization of knowledge. It is appropriate to use the term Islamization for social sciences or non-religious sciences, but Al-Alwānī advocates for the contextualization of Islamic intellectual tradition, making Islamic intellectual tradition relevant to the diverse situations of contemporary Muslims. Then, contextualization of Islamic intellectual tradition is examined.

Contextualization of Islamic Intellectual Tradition

Interestingly, the religious scholars raised some vital issues as to the stance of Islamic knowledge. either to

⁶⁵Pervez Hoodbhoy, 1992. *Islam and Science: Religious Orthodoxy and the Battle for Rationality* (Kuala Lumpur: S. Abdul Majeed & Co.), p. 109.

⁶⁶Mohd, H. S. (2001). *Contemporary Muslim Intellectuals and their responses to modern science and technology*, in (Editors, Mumtaz Ahmad and Mustansir Mir), *Some studies in contemporary Islam*, volume 3 Number 2, Fall, p.9, published by Centre of Islamic studies, Youngstown State University.

⁶⁷Mahar, A. H. (1990). *Educational philosophy of the Holy Qur'an*. Seraj Munir, Lahore: Pakistan. p.29.

⁶⁸Conference Book, 1977. *First World Conference on Muslim Education*. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: King AbdulAzeez University

⁶⁹Al-Attas, S.M.N. (1993). *Islam and Secularism*, International Institute of Islamic Thought (ISTAC, Kuala-Lumpur Malaysia, p.20.

⁷⁰Mohd Sharif Khan, (1986). *Islamic education*. Hahsish publishing house, New Delhi: India. P.85.

⁷¹Adebayo, R.I., 2009. *Islamization in the age of globalization: The imparative for Curriculum Reform for Islamic Education in Nigeria*. A paper presented and the World Conference on Muslim Education held in Sha Alam, Selangor: Malaysia.

⁷²AbdulRashid M. (2006). *Approaches to Islamization of knowledge: A Review, in Islamization of human sciences edited by Mohd Yusof Hussain*. Published by Research centre, international Islamic University Malaysia, pp.49-50.

still relate Islamization of knowledge to it or to consider it as Islamized knowledge. It was extensively argued by Mouten AbdulRashid that Al-Alwānī lamented that religious sciences contemporarily have not been contextualized to serve the goal of establishing the best community (*Khayra Ummah*)⁷³.

Al-Alwānī henceforth proposes a model for re-activation of *Qur'ānic* meaning and contextualizing it to be relevant to the contemporary Muslim world. The apparent justification for the contextualization (*al-Siyaqiyyah*) of religious education is the irrefutable contradictions between revealed knowledge (*'Ilm naqlī*) and acquired knowledge (*'Ilm 'aqlī*) among the contemporary Muslims.

Furtherance, the researchers of the Islamization of knowledge concluded that since religious sciences (*'Ilm naqlī*) are Islamized knowledge, hence, contextualization (*al-Siyaqiyyah*) of Islamized knowledge must be the most appropriate term to be used while Islamization of knowledge should be used for non-religious sciences (*'Ilm 'aqlī*).

By contextualization (*al-Siyaqiyyah*), it means an attempt to make religious sciences (*'Ilm naqlī*) relevant to the diverse situation of Muslims. In order to vividly comprehend the overview of contextualization (*al-Siyaqiyyah*) of religious sciences (*'Ilm 'aqlī*) in relation to the concept of Islamization of knowledge, Ibrahim (2006) has rightly pinpointed to the stance of al-Farūqī thus:

“To Islamize, is to recast knowledge as Islam relates to it... i.e. to redefine and reorder the data, to rethink the reasoning and relating of the data, to reevaluate the conclusion, to reproject the goals-and to do so in such a way as to make the discipline enrich the vision and serve the the cause of Islam⁷⁴”.

Based on the above submission, revamping knowledge (*Ilm*) in line with the vision of Islam is the main target of Islamization of knowledge. Al-Farūqī provided some basic principles underlining the Islamic worldview or *welstanchunng*, the below are the principles: *The unity of Allah (wahdaniyyatullah, the unity of creation (wahdaniyyatu al-khalq), the unity of truth (wahdaniyyatu al-Haqq) and the unity of knowledge (wahdaniyyah al-Ilm), the unity of life (wahdaniyyatu al-hayat) and the unity of humanity(wahdaniyyatu al-Makhluq)*⁷⁵.

⁷³Jabir al-Alwānī, T. (1995). *The Islamization of Knowledge: Yesterday and Today* (Herndon: Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought).

⁷⁴AbdulRashid M. (2006). *Approaches to Islamization of knowledge: A Review, in Islamization of human sciences edited by Mohd Yusof Hussain*. Research Centre, International Islamic University Malaysia, pp.49-50.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Hence, the above could be regarded as a road map for identifying statements of the problem in research efforts relating to the Islamization of human sciences and contextualization (*al-Siyaqiyyah*) of religious sciences. As a result of the fore mentioned assertion, In the recent past, several studies such as Hashim and Imron (2006) have closely examined the conceptions of al-Farūqī and al-Attas on education mainly to reevaluate different conclusions drawn from the secular system which is purposely to make various disciplines project the cause and vision of Islam. This is the process of fostering education from the perspective of religion. This is the reason why Sidek Baba (2013) contends that:

“Most modern existing curriculums of the sciences of Qur'ān, Hadīth, Fiqh etc. have become highly compartmentalised. The integrated approach should be applied so that the curriculum becomes holistic and gives due regard not only to spiritual matters but also temporal ones. The study of science should be integrated with religion⁷⁶” (p.22).

The above has shown that, in order to contextualize Islamic intellectualism among the contemporary Muslims, the gap between two divisions of knowledge (i.e. revealed and acquired knowledge) must be bridged. In bridging this, it could only be achieved by reviewing the existing curriculum to reflect the Islamic contribution to human civilization. Thereby, astronomy, mathematics, physics, chemistry, natural sciences, medicine, philosophy, literature, geography, history, political sciences, sociology, architecture and plastic art, etc. must be integrated in the context of the traditional *madrasah* system as well as in contemporary Islamic institutions of higher leaning in the Muslim world.

Conclusion

The length and breadth of this paper has pinpointed out on the inseparability of revelation and reasoning as the backbone of Islamic intellectual tradition. In other words, the elucidation in this paper is not in isolation from discussing extensively on the integration between revealed knowledge (*'Ilm naqlī*) and acquired knowledge (*'Ilm 'aqlī*) which serves as a real approach to knowledge in Islam. The explicit elaboration of scholars on the epistemological and philosophical *weltanschauung* of the Islamization of pure and human sciences based on the stances of Sayed Hussein Nasir, Osman Bakar, al-Attas, Abu Sulayman and contextualization of religious sciences based on the view of Al-Alwānī will be richly

⁷⁶ Sidek Baba (2013). *Integration and Collaboration in Education and Learning*. Yayasan Ilmuwan, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia

instrumental in conveying and disseminating Islamic intellectual tradition unto the entire human being. It is thereby imperative for the contemporary Muslim scholars to creatively review, alienate and unveil the contributions of Muslim scholars during the classical Islamic civilization in order to revamp and regain the lost glory of Islamic intellectual tradition. In so doing, it will awake the minds of contemporary Muslims to the culture of learning in attaining the ultimate goal of which man is created for, especially to serve as the best of ummah ever sent to the entire world. It is thereby recommended that the dichotomy of knowledge or dualism of educational system as found in many Muslim countries today should be addressed as many contemporary Muslim scholars and thinkers have advocated for which forms the central idea of this paper.

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