

# ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION: A CASE STUDY OF CIPSI

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## A. THE ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Islamization of knowledge has been understood in different ways due to the differences in concepts and practices by its proponents. Nevertheless, they share the essential belief, that knowledge (especially modern science) needs to be islamized. There are at least 3 schools of thought of the Islamization of knowledge that should be addressed briefly before we talk directly our main topic.

### 1. Schools of Thought of Islamization

#### a. Naquib Alatas: ISTAC

We are not really certain, who is the first to formulate or use the term “Islamization of knowledge.” But it is sure that Prof. Naquib Alatas has his own theory of Islamization of knowledge. For him the Islamization is “the liberation of man from magical, mythological, animistic, national culture tradition opposed to Islam, and then from secular control over his reason and his language. To implement it, Islamization of knowledge should undergo two processes;

1. De-westernization, that is, the isolation of key elements and concepts that make up Western culture and civilization from every branch of present-day knowledge.
2. Islamization: the infusion of Islamic elements and key concepts in every branch of relevant present day knowledge.

This concept of Islamization of knowledge was realized in an academic institution called ISTAC (International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization).

#### b. Isma'il Farouqi: IIT

Isma'il Raji al-Farouqi (d. 1986) also has his own understanding of the Islamization of knowledge. For him, Islamization of knowledge is an effort to redirect knowledge, by providing a new definition, re-organize data, rethink the method of thinking and co-relate the data, and re-evaluate conclusions, Then to re-project the goals in such a way so that these disciplines will enrich the Islamic horizon and give benefits to the Islamic ideals. To implement his ideas, he formulates 12 steps:

- (1) the mastery of modern sciences and its categories,
- (2) the survey of these disciplines,
- (3) the mastery of Islamic science: anthology,
- 4) the mastery of Islamic scientific heritage: analysis,
- (5) determining the specifically Islamic relevance to the scientific disciplines,
- (6) reexamining critically the modern scientific disciplines,

- (7) critically re-evaluating the Islamic heritage,
- (8) the survey on the problems faced by Muslim ummah,
- (9) the survey on the problems faced by mankind,
- (10) Creative analysis and synthesis,
- 11) putting back modern-scientific disciplines into Islamic framework in the form of textbooks and
- 12) the distribution of the Islamized science. To put his ideas and program into actions, Isma'il Farouqi founded the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). as we know it now.

**c. Sayyed Hossen Nasr: Osman Bakar-IAIS (???)**

Another great thinker that contributes to the idea of Islaamization of knowledge is Prof. Sayyed Hossein Nasr. For him he islamization of knowledge can mean “the reassertion of the immutable principles of Islam and their application to methods and fields of knowledge claimed by modern, Western education and learning. But this authentic and contemporary Islamic education will not shun these disciplines, nor would it surrender to the modern theories. Rather, it would conquer these domain and make them its own.

According to him, knowledge cannot be separated from sacred science, since everything known always has a profound religious character, for every type of knowledge is created by God. Prof. Nasr's ideas are spread widely through his works and the works of his devout disciple and close friend, Prof. Osman Bakar of Malaysia. So far as know, there is no specific institution that accommodates or tries to implement Nasr's ideas into real agenda and action. Is it the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) of Malaysia? am not sure.

**2. Types of Islamization of Knowledge in Indonesia**

It is crucial to mention that in Indonesia the idea of Islamization of knowledge is not really understood and duly appreciated, since all Islamic reforms, as described above, are in favor of modern science. Science is needed by modern Muslims as an important condition for making progress and modernization. Science for most of them, science is universal, objective, value free, and even for some “Islamic.” The Islamization of science is not necessary as science is already Islamic. It is against this background that the discourse of Islamization of science, (together with its progress and also problems, resistance and obstacle) be understood.

**a. Integration of Science and Religion (UIN JAKARTA)**

The success of Prof. Harun Nasution's reform has been so great, that we can say the all IAN/UIN come under his influence. Harun was very optimistic about science, He has no problem whatsoever with accepting science, It is beyond his imagination that science, which is universal, neutral, should be Islamized, critically examined, or criticized.

This view is clearly reflected in UIN's view on Islamization of knowledge. The term they used to describe it is the Integration of science and religion. They called their integration as an open and “dialogical” integration, implying the “critical” acceptance of any science, including secular sciences. For them science is basically universal, objective and rational. There is no theological barrier whatsoever to accept the so-called secular science. They don't use the term Islamization of knowledge, as this term, according to the, tends to be exclusive. It is, therefore, contrary to the

inclusive attitude that they want to adopt. This type of Islamization is represented by UIN (State Islamic University) Jakarta.

**b. Dewesternization (INSIST & UNISULA)**

Another type of the Islamization of knowledge is called “De-westernization and de-secularization. The “De-westernization” is obviously taken by its proponents from Prof. Naquib Alatas' ideas. For them, Islamization of knowledge should begin with “de-westernization” in the sense of the isolation of key elements and concepts that make up Western culture and civilization, from every branch of present-day knowledge.”

In their Journal, “Islamia,” they present their severe critics on the Western sciences, as being secular. For them, science is never neutral or value-free. It is always ideologically charged. After this, they infuse the Islamic elements/values and key concepts in every branch of relevant present day knowledge, that they call Islamization. For them it is very important to build a correct world-view, that will illuminate all agenda of the Islamization and its implementation into practice. In Indonesia this type of Islamization is represented by two institutions: 1) in the form of a research institution, i.e. INSIST (Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought and Civilization) Jakarta, and (2) in the form of a formal education institution: UNISULA (Universitas Sultan Agung) Semarang.

**c. “Ayatisasi”: Islamic Justification of Modern Science (UIN Malang, IPB and MoRA)**

The most popular form of Islamization of knowledge is, however, the so-called “Ayatisasi Ilmu” or Islamic justification of modern science. They firmly believe that modern science fully accords with Islamic doctrines. What we should do, according to them, is not so much to criticize it, but to support or justify it by quoting certain relevant Qur'anic verses or hadiths. By doing this they want to show that Islam, far from being anti-science, is actually for science. Many books have been written with these approaches in many fields, such as biology, mathematics, physics, etc., and many institutions have adopted this type of Islamization of knowledge, including UIN Malang, IPB, ITB and even the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA).

**d. Scientification of Islam (Kuntowjyo)**

There are some other concepts of Islamization of knowledge, although not really popular and there is no institution to develop its their concepts. One of this is the so-called Scientification of Islam (Mengilmukan Islam). According to its proponent, Prof. Kuntowjyo, the term Islamization of knowledge is “reactive,” and thus apologetic, while “Scientification of Islam” is “proactive” implying the acceptance of other party's achievement.” For him, it is the intention of the subject that should be Islamized, not the science itself. Scientification of Islam, involving the objectification. It calls for turning normative postulate of religion into a scientific theory. Religious norms, as human experience, should be constructed as science.

**B. NEW RESPONSE**

**1. Islamization of Knowledge (Redefined): Epistemological Integration**

Until this point, we can say that in Indonesia, there has been no serious investigation and attempt to Islamize knowledge (or modern science) in the real sense of the word, except by two thinkers, Hidayat Nataatmadja and Mulyadhi Kartanegara.

Hdayat Nataatmadja was a rare genius who committed wholly to his ideas and has written a number of very important works related to the Islamization of science. However, his works suffer from serious obscurities and controversy, so only few who understand his ideas, and obiously no institution so far i knew, has ever been founded to support his ideas.

Prof. Mulyadhi Kartanegara has made attempts in many of his works to deal seriously and redefine the concept of Islamization of knowledge in his own way. There are several points to be addressed:

- The word Islam in Islamization should not be taken literal meaning. It simply means that scientific theory or discovery that is produced cannot contradict the essential principles or doctrines of Islam.
- Islamization of knowled should be taken into epistemological level, not simply justification.
- Islamization of knowledge is necessary, since many scientific theories blatantly contradict the Islamic prinnciples.
- This Islamization is made possible by the fact that science can never be totally objective.
- Islamization of knowledge is just one form of the so-called naturalization of knowledge: the attempt by Muslims to adapt foreign science into its own paradigm of world-view.
- ]Islamization of knowledge can take form of integration, that includes the integration of reality, the integration of religious and natural sciences, the integrations of scientific objects, sources, and methods.

Mulyadhi's ideas has been implemented into two academic institutions: CIPSI (Center for Islamic-philosophical Studies and Information) and CIE (center for Islamic Episte4mmology).

## **1. The implementation of Islamization of knowledge: Research Center: CIPSI**

According to Mulyadhi, the Islamization of knowledge cannot in any way effective on in the level of discourse. Therefore, he founded CIPSI to bring his ideas into reality.

- The most ambitious agenda of CIPSI is to build Indonesian civilization. How we do that? First, by building up a new scientific tradition; and then, by setting up the Third Renaissance--after Arab dan Europa—as the gate of the new civilization.
- To build a new Islamic scientific tradition, first we have to understand well what kind of scientific model that we want to follow and then how to build it.
- The scientific Model we want to follow is Islamic scientific model, and for that purpose, Professor Mulyadhi Kartanegara has composed a book, entitled “*Re-actualization of Islamic Scientific Tradition*, and other supporting works, such as *the Introduction to the Islamic Epistemology* and *the Integration of Knowledge*.
- CIPSI wants to build a new scientific tradition more suitable to Islamic tenets, based on Islamic heritage. How we do it? Following after the scientific tradition of the great Muslim scholars and their patrons, CIPSI has tried to:

- (1) collect as many as possible Islamic scientific works, in its widest sense of the word, as raw materials and source of information needed for building the dreamt scientific tradition.
- (2) translate as many as possible the carefully selected great works of outstanding Muslim scholars from various disciplines, so that the information about them and their works can be easily accessed by as many people as possible.
- (3) to do researches on their works, by means of sorting the existing materials into certain scientific disciplines, than translate them into Indonesian and if possible into English, so that they will become the source of information or references for composing the text books in this country from the elementary schools to the higher education, such colleges and university.

To achieve this goal, CIPSI has conducted several steps:

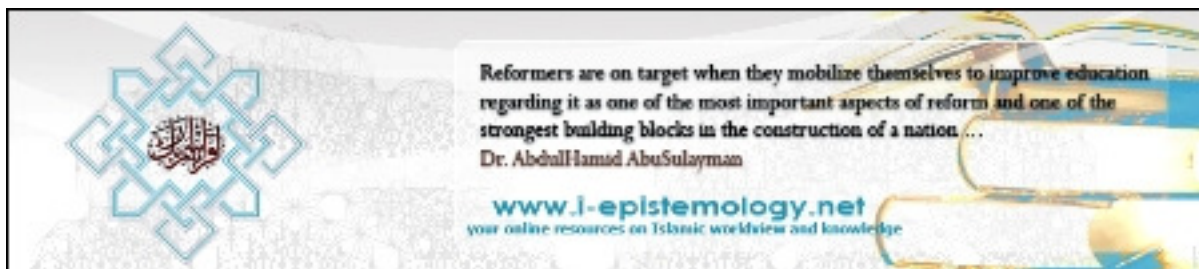
## COLLECTION

- collecting as many as possible Islamic great works (from classic to modern) especially in the fields of philosophy, science, theology and mysticism.
- The collection of the Islamic scientific works runs in accordance with our ambition to make CIPSI the greatest center of information in this country of the scientific-philosophical works, especially in the fields of philosophy, theology, mysticism, and sciences.
- This collection is based on the database that we have made, which include the list of philosophers' or scientists' names, their biographies and their works (please see our database book).
- The collection is done by searching the wanted works in this country or abroad by purchasing, or when it is difficult to obtain the original, by copying them.
- Up to this moment, CIPSI has collected around 544 titles, or around 2067 copies (last year 168 titles/402 copies), that have been labeled and catalogued. Ideally, every month we should collect around 30 titles. Unfortunately, very often experienced a financial problem, so that we cannot run it as we have planned.

## TRANSLATION

- Translating the masterpieces of great Muslim scholars, such as *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Shafa'* and *al-Syifa'*; into bahasa Indonesia, as to provide Muslims in Indonesia and southeast Asia, who cannot read Arabic, with original works of great Muslim scholars. Translation is the most essential condition for any renaissance. It is an effective means for science to be able to create the original works.
- We have conducted this translation of the works of great Muslim philosophers and scientists, hoping that these works will become references, source of information and inspiration for Indonesian students and scholars.
- So far we have completed the translation of the whole *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* into 8 volumes (around 4000 pages)
- Now we are in the process of translating of Ibn Sina's *al-Shifa'* (The Healing) the greatest Islamic scientific encyclopedia. So far we have translated around 3,300 pages out of 6330 pages (more than a half of it). The process has been running well so far.
- The next works that we have planed to translate are, first, the *Asfar* of Mulla Sadra (d. 1641) and the *Futuh* of Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240).
- SORTING:

- sorting some important works in specific area, as to provide readings for certain discipline such as psychology and physics from original Islamic works from classical period to the modern one. This has been followed by the sorting of other materials in different disciplines, such as botany (8 works), zoology (8 works), physics (6 works), and meteorology (6 works). Of course, these will be immediately followed to other disciplines such as arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, music and metaphysics. With all these we really hope that we will have systematic readings in at least 30 scientific disciplines, which will surely facilitate any researcher in these fields.
- Apart from these, we are now conducting a specific research and writing in Islamic Psychology, followed by studies on ethics, and Islamic cosmology. The writing on various scientific disciplines will be continued so long as we can do it.
- collaborating with other institutions in introducing Islamic materials into the textbooks that are used in high schools or universities.



<http://www.i-epistemology.net/mulyadhi-kartanegara.html>