

BOOK REVIEW

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The History and Philosophy of Islamization of Knowledge: A Preliminary Study of Pioneers' Thought by Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, Malaysia: IIUM Press, 2013, pp. 218 with a 5-page index. ISBN: 978-967-5272-67-7

Ever since the emergence of the concept of Islamization of Knowledge program in the educational atlas of the Muslim world, a comparative analysis of the Western and Islamic systems of education seems to have been a common approach by its protagonists. This is true of late Isma'īl Rajī Al-Faruqī, Abdul-Hamid AbuSulayman, Ta Ha Jabir al-Alwani and a host of other notable scholars in the field. A glossary look at the 218 page of Muhammad Mumtaz Ali's book shows that he adopts the same approach of juxtaposing the two systems of education with a view to exposing their strength and weakness and to establish the adoption of the Islamization program as a remedy to the bifurcated system of education which produces two divergent products, hence poses danger to the *Ummah*.

The book under review contains ten chapters with a distinct lengthy introduction of 33 pages and a long list of bibliography of 10 pages. The introductory aspect of the book addresses the main reason why the author embarked on the book project, namely to clarify certain misunderstandings about the term, concept, perception, principles and work plan of Islamization of knowledge, and to clarify certain claims by the leading scholars of Islamization of knowledge program. This aspect also contains the definitions given to the term by different scholars, the humanity's need for Islamization of knowledge as well as

numerous nomenclatures given the concept of Islamization by different scholars. The author also looks at some landmark achievements that have been made on the program namely the establishment of institutes and international Islamic universities. He further identifies the main contributions of the International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM) to the program with particular reference to the former rector of the University, Mohd Kamal Hassan.

The first chapter of the book sees nationalism, secularism, and modernism as part of the external factors responsible for the decline of the Muslim world. Here, the author observes that the *Ummah* lacks certain things which are responsible for their backwardness. These include lack of mission of Islam, lack of vision of Islamic life, lack of ijthadic and dynamic leadership, lack of creativity and lack of empirical and rational approach. Chapter two of the book addresses the dynamics of development of education in the Muslim world stressing the extent the Muslim world had gone in transmitting knowledge to the rest world as well as the attempts made by some Muslim reformers to integrate the Western type of education and that of the Islamic education. Particular reference is made to the reform of Al-Azhar University made by Muhammad Abduh and the Aligarh Muslim University in India modeled after the view of Syed Ahmad Khan and others. The development of modern education in the West and the various stages of Modern Education in the Muslim world are also explicated. Chapter three of the paper however takes a look at the philosophical foundations of Modern Western Education and Islamic education. Here, the modern Western worldview which is materially inclined is compared to that of Islamic worldview which “does not bisect the unity of man into an irreconcilable duality of spiritual and matter.”

Muhammad Mumtaz Ali classifies the Muslims into the Western-educated Muslim thinkers; the traditionally educated Muslim thinkers and the Western educated Muslim educationists in his critique of

Modern Western education as contained in his chapters four, five and six of the book. In the first category, he identifies Iqbal and Muhammad Asad, while in the second category fall scholars like Sayyid Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb. In the third category, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and Isma'il Raji Al-Faruqi are identified.

In chapter seven, Mumtaz identifies some Muslim organizations and their contributions to the Islamization of knowledge project. Here, he mentions some academic journals like *Islamic Thought* and *Islamic Research Circle Bulletin* which are devoted to issues in Islamic research. With particular reference to *Islamic Thought*, he admits that numerous discourses on Islamic economics in the journal led to the rise and development of the new discipline called Islamic economics. He equally identifies such scholars as Nejatullah Siddiqi and Khurshid Ahmad, a Faisal Laureate, as important figure in this new field. Mumtaz further discusses the contribution of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), a professional academic organization that aimed “to provide an international forum for Islamically-oriented research to Muslim social scientists.” According to him, some founding- fathers of the association include AbdulHamid Abu Sulayman, Anis Ahmad and Mahmud Rashdan.

Chapter eight of the book is captioned: The Islamization of Knowledge Movement and the International Institute of Islamic thought (IIIT). Here, the author goes memory lane to discuss the instance of the First World Conference on Islamic Education held in Makkah in 1977 and the resolutions made there which aimed at Islamizing the modern Western educational process as well as consequent conferences organized thereafter. To him, the establishment of several International Islamic universities is one of the direct consequences of the conferences. A section of this chapter discusses the establishment of the IIIT in 1981 and its activities in organizing international conferences on Islamization of Knowledge in 1982 in Pakistan and its publication of the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* among others.

Chapter nine of the book is titled: Mawdudi's Philosophy of Education: The Dynamics of Change and Leadership. Here, the historical background of the personality is highlighted; his reflections on education and his philosophy of education are also discussed. The last chapter is titled: The Development of Islamic Thought and Civilization: The Case of the Islamization of Knowledge. Here, the author talks about the development of Islamic Thought, stressing the contributions of scholars like Iqbal, and Mawdudi as well as the concept of Islamization of knowledge.

In conclusion, one has no doubt that the book is a must for any scholar of Islamization of knowledge program and anybody who is interested in the program to have. Indeed, the experience of the author in the Islamization of knowledge and his exposure to the program in the Islamization environment of the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, at the International Islamic University Malaysia has assisted him in clarifying some baseless misunderstandings about the program of Islamization. In addition, the International Islamic University, Malaysia has equally proved its worth in the field by producing such a book. The strength of the book lies in its comprehensiveness and richness in bibliography. The inclusion of index at the end of the book is another bonus to it. The book is properly edited that except for p.40 where Muhammad is wrongly spelt Mud:hammad, hardly could one identify any other spelling mistake in the book. That notwithstanding, we strongly believe that the chapterization of the book needs to be adjusted, as some mix-ups are observed. For instance, going by its heading, chapter 7 is expected to deal with Muslim organizations in the 1950s – 1960s, whereas, the author discusses AMSS which came into existence in the 1970s. In addition, Chapter 9 is not appropriately placed, as it interrupts chapters eight and ten which are on Islamization of Knowledge. In the same vein, while chapter nine is exclusively meant for Mawdudi, we strongly believe that his discussion on Mawdudi in chapters five (pp.

91-103) and ten (pp. 176-179) could better be discussed in chapter nine. Too much discussion of Mawdudi in the previous pages might not warrant an exclusive separate chapter as we have it in chapter nine. Finally, the book in its Table of Contents indicates an Appendix titled: *Contemporary Muslim Response to the Challenge of Knowledge: Separating the Grain from the Chaff – A Commentary*. This however is not included in the book and this makes the expected above 227 pages of the book unattainable. Upon all, the book is a good piece on whoever wants to have information about Islamization of knowledge program and some personalities behind the operation and success of the program.