

## **Revelation and reason: A brief account of the contributions of some contemporary Muslim scholars**

Nor Jannah Hassan\*

**Abstract:** Secular humanism and atheistic-modernism left Muslims with the legacy of a dichotomous education. The dichotomy persists and today it is compounded by the onslaught of globalisation of post-modern thoughts shaping young minds. The melee of modern and post-modern worldviews has brought about grave environmental, civilisational and humanitarian crises. In response, many scholars have spent their lifetime in attempting to redress the situation, through what is generally considered as efforts of integration. They have conceived of integration as an organic fusion between revelation and reason and forged ahead with various attempts at integration. The article presents a brief survey on the integration efforts carried by 8 contemporary key Muslim figures, with an account of the thoughts of al-Ghazālī as precedence. Based on information gained from existing literature, the study found astute crystallisation and systematisation of integration especially in the works of later contemporary scholars.

**Keywords:** Integration, Islamisation, worldview, al-Ghazālī, *tawhīd*, *Ummah*.

### **Introduction**

Realising the severity of the tragedy inflicting the Muslim *Ummah* in the aftermath of colonisation, Muslims began an earnest search within themselves which brought about the reform and renewal movements – *iṣlāḥ* and *tajdīd* – all over Muslim lands. These movements began calling believers to return to the pristine all-encompassing worldview of *tawhīd* (the holistic way of *al-dīn al-Islāmī*) and finding new ways to revive the vigour of the *Ummah* amidst the dark quandaries left behind by the colonials. The activism was initiated with the lifetime endeavours of such Islamic activists as Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935), Muḥammad Iqbāl (1877-1938), Ḥassan al-Bannā (1906-1949), Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) and Abu'l A'la Mawḍūdi (1903-1979). In the Malay Archipelago

---

\* Nor Jannah Hassan is Assistant Professor, Department of Fundamental and Inter-disciplinary Studies, KIRKHS, IIUM. E-mail: norjannah.hassan@gmail.com

were the likes of Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, known as HAMKA (1908-1981), and Muhammad Natsir (1908 – 1993). They presented Islam's potency and relevance in providing solutions to the tragedy afflicted by Western philosophies, as well as by the *Ummah*'s internal weaknesses. Education, being the architect through which new generations are moulded, has been the focus of the reformers.

Muslim scholars began their efforts to reasserting the *tawhīdic* worldview which has always been holistic and comprehensive (*shumūliyyah*), integrative (*takāmuliyyah*) and well-balanced (*tawāzuniyyah*). The different efforts at (re) integration constitute part and parcel of attempts at reforming (*iṣlāḥ*), renewing (*tajdīd*), and reviving (*iḥyā'*) the *Ummah* from her malaise. This can be seen in the works of many Muslim reformers, including *Imām* Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (1058-1111). Al-Ghazālī's works precede, in lieu of his critiques on the un-Islamic aspects of philosophy, in reviving the true Qur'anic ethics and spirit of knowledge acquisition and for their fundamental significance with the integration thesis. They address the realities of his time, which, in many aspects are not dissimilar to challenges of the contemporary world. To al-Ghazali, since the highest purpose of knowledge is to enable one to get closer to Allah (SWT), the more the self comprehends knowledge, the better it knows God. With better knowledge and awareness of God, the closer one comes to Him and the greater is the happiness of humankind (al-Ghazali, 2013).

To al-Ghazali, the '*aql* (the cognitive faculty of the spiritual heart) is able to discern the light of faith and is the fount of knowledge that comprehends. He relates the former to the primordial covenant ('*ahd*) with Allah and the latter to the uncorrupted human innate nature (*fiṭrah*) (al-Ghazālī, 2013). Therefore, the task of education is to develop the intellect to acquire the capacity to accumulate knowledge through experiences, and ultimately to enable one to conquer and subdue the lower *nafs* for the higher. Thus, the training of the '*aql* comprises the disciplining of the extrinsic and the intrinsic sensory faculties which are apertures to the rest of the faculties of the spiritual heart, namely the *qalb*, the *rūh* and the *nafs*. One will not be able to unveil truth without attending to the heart, purifying it and exercising one's faculties in accordance with Revelation (al-Ghazālī, 2009).

Al-Ghazālī considers knowledge of natural science as an essential prerequisite for understanding the Qur'an. He holds a solid position on the need to integrate revealed sciences ('*ulūm shar'īyyah/ naqliyyah*) and acquired sciences (*ghayr shar'īyyah/ 'ulūm 'aqliyyah*), and on the unity of their source. He proclaims:

the complete meaning of God's words, (Q. *al-Infīṭār*: 9-8), can only be known to him who knows the science of anatomy of human limbs and internal organs, their number, their kinds, their underlying wisdom and their uses (al-Ghazālī, *Jawāhir*, 47-48 in M. Iqbal, n. d.)

Al-Ghazālī propounds the internalisation of both the revealed and the acquired sciences and was fully aware of the difficulties in bringing the two sciences together as one. Nevertheless, he tenaciously insists on striving towards full integration and unity of the two, in a holistic and harmonious amalgamation; whilst keeping at the heart of all endeavours—the purity of the heart (al-Ghazālī, 2009).

Al-Ghazālī's impact can be summarised as follows. (i) He re-emphasized theo-centricity, which integrates all matters of human existence and life. (ii) He reconciled the three disparate post-Qur'anic thoughts – *fiqh*, *kalām* and *taṣawwuf* – and re-integrated them into one organic cohesion. (iii) He mastered and sifted through Hellenistic philosophy, discarding the un-Islamic elements – hence cleansing *kalām* from “heresy”. (iv) He redefined the integrative nature of human beings and reinstated the importance of the state of the heart, which determines the value of any action. (v) He realigned the spirit of ethics to be in congruence with the purpose of human creation and of his vocation on earth and beyond. (vi) By classifying knowledge and its acquisition, he restored the rightful and very important position of the intellect, with respect to the absolute ascendancy of Revelation. (vii) He brought to conscious awareness the truth of the finite earthly life and the eternal destiny human is heading; thus giving an overview and spiritual insights into the transcendental nature of the life to come – placing human life into the larger cosmological perspective.

Due to the integrative nature of his ethics and methodology, al-Ghazālī's thoughts on education are of the most comprehensive construction, with clearly defined aims, laid out a path to be followed and means whereby the objectives could be achieved (Nofal, 1993). Al-Ghazālī's fundamental classification of knowledge resonates in the practices and curricula of many contemporary Islamic educational institutions. Yet, in lieu of the soulless “conveyor belt” machination of contemporary education, which has affected Islamic education – what is in need is a Ghazālīan methodology, comprising a balance between training and purification of the heart, disciplining and exercising of the senses and the intellect, and the right fusion between the revealed and the acquired sciences. The equilibrium between purifying the self and exercising one's extrinsic and intrinsic

faculties, engaging both the spiritual and the physical will prepare students towards greater awakening, and inspire a yearning for knowing Allah through His *Āyāt* (Signs). Such a condition compels them into life-long service for Him with the true spirit of servitude (*'ubdiyyah*) and vicegerency (*khilāfah*).

Many contemporary reformers and Islamic activists are engaged in this movement for integration. Some of these scholars, such as Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, Syed Naquib al-Attas and others, are well-known. Yet there are others, whose efforts have not received much attention in the world of academia. The efforts of these scholars are examined, albeit briefly, in the following pages.

### **Badiüzzaman Said Nursi (1877-1963)**

A notable 20<sup>th</sup>-century Turkish *şūfī*-scholar-philosopher, Nursi worked towards the establishment of Medresetü'z-Zehra or al-Zahra University in Eastern Anatolia. The institution was envisioned to unite “the most superior *maktab* by reason, the very best *madrasah* by the heart, and the most sacred *zāwiyah* by conscience”; “where modern science” and “the religious sciences” “would be taught side by side”, “combined and pursued” (Vahide, 2011: 31) with curricula that would include the local culture and *lingua franca*. Addressing the faulty notion of separation and conflict between religion and the sciences, Said Nursi points out in “Muhâkemat”, “Islam is the master and guide of the sciences, and the chief and father of all true knowledge” (Vahide, 2011: 52-53). However, the Turkish ideological and political circumstances at the time prevented Medresetü'z-Zehra from materialising.

Despite the tumults of his time, Nursi was convinced that “the Qur'an and Islamic civilisation would dominate in the near future” (Vahide, 2011: ix). The equilibrium and synergy between Revelation and rightly guided reason is a Qur'anic message that is vehemently emphasized throughout *Risale-i-Nur*. Witnessing and experiencing the turbulence of the period between the brink of the Ottoman Empire and the early decades of Kemali secular modern Turkey, Nursi demonstrated the mind of those addressed in the Qur'an as “*Ūlū al-Albāb*”, i.e. those who engage their physical and spiritual faculties in the proper way, thus are endowed with an astute understanding of *Āyāt Allāh*. His writings promote scientific rationale as an important tool in understanding the Cosmos, the readings of which in turn are guided and sparked by the Qur'an. To Nursi, “the attainment of belief, and the strengthening of one's belief [...] is contingent upon man's ability to read the cosmic texts” (Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture, n. d.: 71) with

assimilation of God's name into conscience and in upholding vicegerency. Using the terminology "conquest of nature" as was the fashion during his time, *Risale-i-Nur* lays down meticulously, in-depth synchronous contemplations on the universe and on the verses of the Qur'an, "blending science and [...] religion in order to address the mentality of modern man" (Vahide, 2011: ix). In this manner, *Risale-i-Nur* enables readers to internalise the attributes of God. In "The Twelfth Word", for instance, Said describes,

Indeed, the wise Qur'an is the most exalted expounder and a most eloquent translator of this universe (a macro-Qur'an) (Nursi, 2005: 146).

Like al-Ghazālī's, Nursi epitomes the integrated tawhīdic message that he delivered throughout his life. In "Münâzarat", he explains,

The religious sciences are the light of the conscience, and the modern sciences are the light of the reason. The truth becomes manifest through the combining of the two. The students' endeavour will take flight on these two wings. When they are separated it gives rise to bigotry in the one, and wiles and scepticism in the other (Nursi, 2005: 53).

### **Muhammad Hamidullah (1908-2002)**

An eminent Hyderabadī scholar of Islamic and International Law, history, Qur'an and *Ḥadīth*, Hamidullah is quintessentially one-of-a-kind fully-integrated contemporary Islamic scholar, who devoted his entire life of "simplicity, humility and patience" (Al Balagh, 2002) to the cause of Islam. His writings in several different languages include subjects such as faith and belief, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), Qur'an and *Ḥadīth*, state, law and constitution, international relations, history, spirituality, woman issues, knowledge and the limitation of the human mind and philosophy.

In *Introduction to Islam*, he concludes his explanations on "The Cultivation of Spiritual Life" with an astute statement.

Man being composed simultaneously of body and soul, of an outer and an inner existence, the harmonious progress and balanced evolution towards perfection require that attention should be paid to both these aspects of man. Mysticism or spiritual culture in Islam envisages the diminution of the Ego and the ever increasing realization of the presence of God. To be absorbed in the will of God does not at all mean immobility; far from that (Hamidullah, 1973: 88).

He continues,

[T]he Qur'an urges man to action and even compete in the search for the Divine pleasure by means of good actions. Not to follow one's evil desires, but to abide by the will of God alone, does not lead to inaction... man must continue his effort, even though failure follows failure... This notion of a dynamic predestination,... urges one to action and resignation to the will of God (Hamidullah, 1973: 88).

In a short note written in 1982, Hamidullah advises against indulging in extensive argumentative discourses that precipitate into actual inaction at the expense of participation in tangible knowledge promotion. According to him, while it is important to challenge and refute the un-Islamic aspects of science, it is of equal import to recognize the work of others throughout the history of scientific developments. He cautions,

This fact implies that one cannot eliminate the non-Muslim part in scientific development without demolishing the very foundation of the knowledge (Hamidullah, 1988: 75-76).

### **Haji Abdul Malik Amrullah (HAMKA, 1908-1981)**

Born in Sumatera, the self-taught, HAMKA was very well-read with high command of the Arabic and Malay languages and was proficient in Eastern and Western philosophies, literature, history, sociology and political studies. He was the editor in chief of *Pedoman Masyarakat* (Social Compass) and an editor of *Panji Masyarakat* (The Banner of Society). He wrote, in the context of modernity, several important books on Islamic doctrine, ethics and spirituality - e.g. *Tasawuf Modern* (*Modern Tasawuf*, 1939), *Falsafah Hidup* (*The Philosophy of Life*, 1940), and on socio-historical accounts of local Islamic movements. On the 'aql, HAMKA explains in *Falsafah Hidup*,

The utmost noble objective of the *akal*, its purest objective, the objective of all struggles in life is *ma'rifat Allah*, knowing God, obediently subservient to His injunctions, curbing the self from committing sins against Him. ...The core of *ma'rifat Allah* is in the self – the internalisation of the self's humility before the Unseen Power, Who regulates and administers the Cosmos – that this self is only one among *makhluk* [beings created] by *Khalik* [The Creator]. ...Seeing the grandeur of the cosmos, the self thus realises that there is a being greater than

itself. This realisation is termed *Fitrah* (HAMKA, 1986: 55-56) (Translation mine).

HAMKA was a leading figure towards Indonesia's independence. His influence in the intended interpretation of the *Pancasila*, the Indonesian national ideology, is profound, which resulted in the first principle being the recognition of the Oneness of God (*Tawhīd*) (Oxford Islamic Studies, n. d.).

HAMKA was greatly involved and was instrumental in the formation of Muhammadiyah and Al Azhar educational foundations, and with the establishment of their schools in 1952 and 1964 respectively (Rujiman & Marjaya, 2011: 13-14). As the chief *imām* of the grand mosque in Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta, later named *Masjid Agung Al Azhar*, his sermons and leadership drew crowds. His well-regarded daily *tafsīr* (exegesis) of the Qur'an at dawn were later compiled and published as *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, the renowned complete translation and commentary of the Qur'an in *Bahasa Indonesia*. His exegesis imparts relevance to the socio-economic and political developments of his time. He defended the use of reason and upheld the principle of *ijtihād* based on *maṣlaḥah* (general welfare). He emphasized the need to reclaim the pure and authentic values of religion as promulgated by the *salaf*. HAMKA was a reformer and tried his best to rid his society of *bid'ah* and superstitions. He laid a solid foundation for the proliferation of Al Azhar's vast integrated education and social outreach networks in Indonesia. Today, the central complex serves as the socio-religio-economic and education hub for South Jakarta and adjoining areas. HAMKA was a renowned figure not only in Indonesia but more so in Malaysia and a well-sought after preacher in the Malay speaking world.

In the conclusion of *Falsafah Hidup*, he reflects,

We transit briefly on the Earth, a tiny planet in the midst of a huge cosmic firmament. It was there that we lived all the while, and to where we are never ever to return. We keep our stance ahead. There awaits – The Judge, All-Just, before Whom nothing hides – all the struggles that we endured, big and small, where we succumbed and where we triumphed. How many a time have we upheld good virtues and how many such times have we subdued evils...

So it is with living, birth, struggles, and death at the end... Now write and probe in retrospection, is darkness in front of us or is it light? (HAMKA, 1994: 340-341) (Translation mine).

### **Muhammad Natsir (1908-1993)**

A native of Sumatera, Natsir is a devout Muslim scholar-educator-politician-activist. Like his contemporary HAMKA, he endeavoured to define the *Pancasila* from the framework of the Qur'an. With proficiencies in Malay, Arabic and several European languages, he was well-read and a prolific Islamic scholar. Through his speeches and writings, he spoke of the unity and integral nature of Islam and nationhood, of democracy and modernism, of human rights and against racism. He “was a thinker in the field of Islam and politics”, and “an intellectual” driven by his “deep concerns on *da'wah* and development of the *Ummah*” (Hanifa, September 4<sup>th</sup> 2013). In a speech delivered in 1934, Natsir argued for resolve, determination, *tawakkul*, independence of thought, courage and obedience to Allah as qualities wanting in the education of the *Ummah* at the time (Natsir, 1961). While deliberating on *tawhīd* “as the foundation of education” he reasons,

Knowing God, the “*tauhid*” of God, believing and submitting to God, must be the foundation of every education that we provide to the generation that we groom – if we as educators or as parents really love our young, with whom Allah has entrusted us. Leaving aside this foundation equates to committing a negligence so great – the danger of which is no less than a perfidious betrayal of our children ... (Natsir, 1961: 116) (Translation mine).

In an attempt to jolt his people suffocated and weakened under the Dutch colonials, his piece on “*Islam dan Kebudayaan*” published in the June 1936 issue of *Pedoman Masyarakat* reads

After the Muslims established their position as a people bound with *one* conviction and *one* worldview, with which they attained a definite rank in the eyes of the world at the time—whence once they were at the receiving end of continuous attacks and blows from left and right, day and night being on the defensive—[they] raised themselves to a station of sovereignty, being heard and given heed, a supremacy and greatness reckoned by the powers in Africa, Asia and Europe. It was the moment that they established “*kebudajaan*” [a civilisational culture], whose fruits are inherited by the Europeans of our time (Natsir, 1961: 4-5).

In this article, Natsir itemises the factors that had planted the civilisational culture of Islam: the *'aql*, its engagement in exploring and studying nature and its phenomena, the obligation of knowledge acquisition, the prohibition of blind-

faith, ascertaining the truth of matters and to venture out of one's locale in bridging social gaps through acculturation (Natsir, 1961). In a later work entitled *Fiqhud-Da'wah* first published in 1969, Natsir points out to the synergy between intellection and remembrance of Allah, and in enjoining good and forbidding evil as vital and important requisites in the life of a Muslim and society (Natsir, 1980). To him, political power is merely a means for enjoining good and forbidding evil. He considered inviting political leaders towards accepting and implementing Islam in their lives as serving the most effective examples of society and the best strategy in *da'wah* (Luth, 1999).

### **Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman Ansari (1914-1974)**

With his slogan "Return to the Qur'an, and return to Muhammad" (Ansari, 1973: iii), Fazl-ur-Rahman, a professor at University of Karachi, is known as the "upholder of Dynamic Orthodoxy, as opposed to Conservatism and Modernism" (Ulema Uddin, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008). *The Qur'anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society*, elucidates distinctively his beautiful message of integration. His explanation on integration includes "structural logic, principle..., scope and ideals of guidance", "moral philosophy", "comprehensive moral code", the "individual", "welfare society", "culture" and "civilisation" (Ansari, 1973: x). He suggests practical execution of the "moral code" in the form of duties spanning the spectrum of *rahmatan li al-'alamīn*.

He explains that the "Qur'anic Guidance" is a system "thoroughly grounded in the Logic of Knowledge" where different domains "emerge inter-related in a logical sequence that manifests itself..., starting [with] Metaphysics" which forms the "roots" of the "tree of knowledge" (Ansari, 1973: 165). The principle of integration, according to him, is "to transform the life of this world with all its dimensions into a life of the 'Worship of God' by channelizing it into a 'System of Obedience to God'..." (Ansari, 1973: 167). He argues,

There can be no two opinions about the fact that it is the *principle of integration* that ensures power, health and life, while non-integration brings about the very opposite... land[ing] themselves in dualism, leaving all the practical affairs of mankind to human ingenuity. In that compartmentalisation, spiritual considerations recede into the background, or stay merely ritualistically, and religion becomes imbecile in respect of the practical affairs of human life. As a consequence, the representatives of religion either become the tools of the secular exploiting forces—as has happened in a very large measure in human

history, or have to engage themselves in a never-ending conflict with them (Ansari, 1973: 167-169).

Stressing the integrative nature of humans and their vocation, Fazl-ur-Rahman further expounds,

Man's highest merit—nay, his basic function—is the worship of the One True God, Allah (al-Qur'an, 51: 56). This worship is to be undertaken by him, however, not merely as a creature among creatures but as the Vicegerent of God—as a fully—integrated being committed to a cosmic mission. Namely, he has to realise the principle of integration at its highest, because God's Personality enshrines the Perfect Ideal of Integration, and he is His vicegerent. As such, his *worship* should be *dynamic, consequential and comprehensive* in its nature; which means that it should not be confined only to the act of *Prayer* but also to: (1) the development of his personality in all dimensions; (2) the establishment of a godly society in which human beings can live a full and integrated life in love, justice and wisdom; and (3) the unravelling of the mysteries of Nature for establishing his status of Vicegerency and for comprehending the majesty and the glory of God. It is in this perspective that the Holy Qur'an makes the pursuit of physical science,—indeed, of all knowledge, and the active struggle for the spiritual and moral emancipation of humanity, and the establishment of social, economic and political justice, *acts of worship* (Ansari, 1973: 170-171).

The modern civilisation, which to him is “a continuation of Arabic-Islamic civilisation” but stripped of the “theo-centricity, integralism and comprehensiveness” of Islam, is reduced to “purely sensate civilisation”. Fully aware of the obstacles of hatred “nurtured assiduously for centuries” in the West, his optimism for the “goodness of human nature”, “the yearnings of the human soul for Truth and Beauty and Justice” speaks of his conviction for the necessity of adopting the Islamic philosophy of civilisation for restoring the balanced accommodation of all the values and thereby reverting to the original Islamic civilisation from which it sprang up (Ansari, 1973: 317).

### **Syed Ali Ashraf (1925-1998)**

Born and studied in Dhaka, Ashraf was a professor of education at University of Cambridge and founder and Vice-Chancellor of Darul Ihsan University,

Bangladesh. He was instrumental in the organisation of the five World Conferences on Muslim Education (Makkah 1977, Islamabad 1980, Dhaka 1981, Jakarta 1982 and Cairo 1987). He states,

Education is the best means of creating a new generation of young men and women who will not lose touch with their own tradition but who will not at the same time become intellectually retarded or educationally backward or unaware of developments in any branch of human knowledge. Unfortunately, such a system of education is not yet prevalent in any Muslim society...

The creation of a third system embracing an integrated system of education is necessary but integration is not an easy process (Ashraf & Hussain, 1979: 16-17).

According to S. A. Mabud, Ashraf made an original and considerable contribution to the regeneration of Islamic education drawn from the Islamic worldview, laid the foundations of the movement of the Islamization of education throughout the world, and left a global impact on various aspects of the Islamic philosophy of education (Mabud, n. d.).

As a specialist in Islamic education, curriculum design and pedagogy, and Islamic culture and its relationship with the West, Ashraf was key in pushing forth the publication of a series of monographs on Islamic education, including *New Horizons in Muslim Education* and *The Concept of an Islamic University* (1985). He was also the founder editor of the journal *Muslim Education Quarterly* (1990) and wrote *Islam* as part of a series on *World Religions* (1991) for the British secondary schools. He stresses,

The philosophy of the Islamic past must be studied in order to see how Muslim philosophers tried to Islamise Greek philosophy, how far they succeeded and how far they failed and why. What was the problem which compelled Ghazali to write... *Tahafut al Falasifa?* (Ashraf, 1990: 2).

Ashraf made a significant contribution to “faith-based” and “value-based” education (Mabud, n. d.), especially in Britain through his collaboration with Cambridge University (A. S. Ahmed, August 13<sup>th</sup>1998). In comparing the secular-modernist and humanist approaches to education with that of Islam, he notes,

Islam has thus established a goal which is uniquely integrative, balanced and comprehensive.... [T]hey must acquire the wisdom which will transform them into... wise custodians of the earth. Education is that

process which helps us to acquire this wisdom.... [It] “provides a supreme ideal and a stable norm for educationists to aim at when they plan an educational system and work out its methodology. It saves the human subject from drifting. Islam presents a universal and rationally acceptable norm” (Cambridge Muslim College Papers No. 2, n. d.).

#### ‘AbdulḤamīd AbūSulaymān (1936 -)

AbūSulaymān was a force behind the group of concerned Muslim intellectuals convening for the First International Conference on Islamization of Knowledge in Switzerland in 1977. It was then realised, that “the first step toward a genuine solution of the crisis of Islamic thought is the *Islamization of Knowledge*; i.e., the critical examination of modern disciplines in light of the vision of Islam and the recasting of them under the categories consistent with that vision” (AbūSulaymān, 1989: 13). This was the beginning of a series of important International Conferences of Islamization of Knowledge, which he was very much instrumental for. AbūSulaymān’s concerns and activism have always anchored on the *Ummah*. He writes:

[A]ided by personal experience and my studies in both the classical disciplines of Islam and in the modern knowledge, I constantly pondered the crisis of the *Ummah*, searched for its causes, and sought answers and solutions. ... To me, the problems of the *Ummah* demand understanding, study, and analysis. ... Day and night I pondered the *Ummah’s* history, event by event, in quest of deeper understanding. I sought only the truth and the remedy (AbūSulaymān, 1993: xiii-xiv).

Indeed, this *Ummatic* vision and mission have been the crux and the passion that animate him. His activism pulsates through the International Institute of Islamic Thought, the International Islamic University Malaysia and beats down to earth in the Child Development Foundation, USA. AbūSulaymān argues,

humanity – in its present destructive animalistic situation – has never been in a greater need of this [Qur’anic and Prophetic] guidance as it does today. This places on the *Ummah’s* shoulder a responsibility that is greater than mere self-reforming and re-representing the message of Islam. This greater responsibility is that of reforming human civilisation and rescuing human races from the fangs of the jungle law...

Indeed, (the) lack of clarity of the *Ummah’s* vision and its educated elites’ being dazzled by and imitating the West ... is regarded as one of

the greatest obstructions to the *Ummah's* resurgence and the greatest hindrance to its reform movement (AbūSulaymān, 2002).

He considers IIUM as an “Islamization of Knowledge Experiment” that “appeal to the conscience of reform-minded scholars and action oriented thinkers and revive hopes in many hearts” (Arabi, 2009: 56). As IIUM’s longest-serving Rector (1988-1999), AbūSulaymān’s role in the development of the university was distinctive. According to this action-oriented visionary scholar,

[I]f after centuries of deviation and wandering, the Muslim world wishes to set the reform agenda on the right track, its priorities have to be reflected in an educational reform plan. It must put quality before quantity, content before facilities, and curricula before instruments. However, each of these items must be given its due place in both function and purpose, without any conflict or failure (Arabi, 2009: 43).

If we compare the scholarly, scientific and educational studies conducted by advanced nations and their thinkers and educators... we will unearth one of the secrets underlying the *Ummah's* backwardness. After all, its civilisational aspirations have been lacking to the extent that Muslim children are neglected, and so is the literature needed to raise and educate them. In addition, the training of the *Ummah's* intellectual and professional workforces ... too, is neglected. This is due to the lack of concern in the higher education establishment for an effective Islamic culture ... failure to play a role in revitalizing learning and knowledge and in training leaders and professional workforces to meet the *Ummah's* needs. They must remove the distortions ... (Arabi, 2009: 59).

Abū Sulaymān is among the pioneers of and a vehement energy behind in the Islamization of Human Knowledge movement.

#### **M. Kamal Hassan (1942 -)**

Born in Kelantan, Malaysia, Kamal is an internationally well-respected, recognised and sought after scholar of Islamic, Eastern and Western thoughts, spirituality, worldviews, civilisation and ethics, Islamic education, integration and Islamicisation. He was professionally and academically associated with a long list of local and international universities, institutions and organisations. Kamal’s activism in Islamicisation and integration of Islamic worldview in education, management, administration and various other aspects of society have been

distinct since the 70s, He participated in the First World Conference on Muslim Education in Makkah (1977). Kamal successfully engaged the Prime Minister's Department of the government of Malaysia to participate in a campaign for raising public awareness towards educating the masses in the proper understanding of the Qur'an and its worldview. He asserts,

The lack of sensitivity to the "non-economic" needs of our societies cannot, I submit, be further tolerated without the long term interests of national development in Muslim societies. While there are valid reasons to be sensitive to the development of affluence and economic wellbeing, there are equally valid reasons to take cognizance of any "impoverishment" in the non-material aspects of collective and individual lives (Kamal, 1978: 5).

Astute in his politically non-partisan stance, he finds obligation in contributing his scholarly ideas, consultations and activism to numerous organisations, including in support of beneficial efforts by political entities. The establishment of IIUM was based on the initial concept paper that he prepared and approved by the Prime Minister of Malaysia. Shortly after, he was appointed as the *Shaikh al-Kulliyah* of the Centre for Fundamental Knowledge, IIUM (1983-1990), then as the Deputy Rector (Academic) (1990-1996) and later as the Rector (1999-2006). Part of his tasks includes chairing a research unit on Islamicisation and assisting younger academics in Islamicising their practises and disciplines. Kamal is one of IIUM's foremost ideological pioneers. He places two Qur'anic verses – "*Read, in the Name of thy Lord*" (al-Qur'an, 96: 1) and "*Of all His servants, only such as are endowed with knowledge stand [truly] in awe of God*" (al-Qur'an, 35: 28) at the centre of the philosophical foundation of the university and throughout his years of teaching and service.

In an address, Kamal succinctly brings attention to the huge challenge facing Islamicisation:

[P]olitical science, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and the branches of physical sciences, etc. still have not demonstrated their fruits as practical applications in their respective realities. The Islamicisation of Contemporary Human Knowledge is akin to the process of constructing the pillars and infrastructures of a holistic and *Tawhīdic* civilisation. If the pillars are not applied, or are refused by the constructor of the building because they have yet to be "branded", or tested in strength, this

pure an noble effort is left at being a sheer academic endeavour (Kamal, 2011) (Translation mine).

He believes in engaging as many people as it is possible in upholding the *Ummatic* agenda that is Islamicisation. His ideas, systemisation and strategisation are key in the formulation of the comprehensive *IIUM Policies and Guidelines on Islamisation* (2013). Kamal is adept at bringing Islamic discourses up to the fore in international academia through systemising and institutionalising integration, Islamicisation, and “relavantisiation” of Islamic revealed knowledge in contemporary sciences. He points to the need for scientific studies to “demonstrate the efficaciousness and sufficiency of the explanatory power of Islamic concepts and categories in dealing human social reality and phenomena” (FWCII, 2013: 14).

Kamal’s message is firmly rooted in the fundamentals of *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamā’ah* as defined by classical Islamic scholars, yet exudes with wisdom that takes into account different circumstances into the equation – making it most agreeable in contemporary scenarios the world-over. He has been IIUM’s ideological forebear and visionary father, translating ideals into practice in his personality, demeanour, lessons, administration and leadership. According to his students and colleagues, he is a contemporary walking version of al-Ghazālī’s *Ihyā’*.

## Conclusion

The decades and centuries of Western colonisation of the *Ummah* and disunity among Muslim communities have caused stubbornly long-lasting and resilient dualism in the Muslim minds, which are still very much under the spell of Western colonisation and dominance. In general, secular individualism, materialism, nationalism and of late, liberalism and pluralism crystallised; as a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the Qur’anic worldview and the cohesive unity of Islamic fellowship (*ukhuwwah Islāmiyyah*) evaporate away. The Qur’an is largely confined to the compartment of “Islamic studies” whilst conventional education races to feed the insatiable wants of a secularised world largely dictated by the ideology of capitalism and liberalism. These precipitate further into a vicious schism within the Muslim persona, creating disjointed fragments within his body, spirit, self, mind and heart (*jasad, rūḥ, nafs, ‘aql* and *qalb*). There have been many notable reformers and activists in the history of the

*Ummah*. Contemporary efforts at (re)-integration, in general, are continued reactions against the dualism and post-modern agnostic worldviews and tendencies. Yet the practise of “integration” has neither been well defined nor has it been easy. Nevertheless, significant efforts have been put forward by a number of key individuals towards integration. A thorough study on each, especially on the latter ones, is needed to avail the necessary guidelines in the pursuit towards holistic, valid, relevant and effective integration and Islamicisation efforts.

## References

- AbūSulaymān (Ed.). (1989). *Islamization of Knowledge, Series No. 1: General Principles and Work Plan*, Herndon, Virginia.
- AbūSulaymān. (September 5<sup>th</sup> 2002). “Man between the Two Laws: A Qur’anic Perspective in Understanding Self and Understanding the Other”, Retrieved on August 20<sup>th</sup> 2013 from [https://i-epistemology.net/v1/attachments/056\\_111%20-%20A%20Qur%E2%80%99anic%20Perspective%20in%20Understanding%20Self%20and%20Understanding%20the%20Other.pdf](https://i-epistemology.net/v1/attachments/056_111%20-%20A%20Qur%E2%80%99anic%20Perspective%20in%20Understanding%20Self%20and%20Understanding%20the%20Other.pdf).
- AbūSulaymān. A. H. (1993). *Islamic Methodology No. 1: Crisis in the Muslim Mind*, Herndon, Virginia: IIIT.
- AbūSulaymān. A. H. (2009). In Idid, S. A. (Ed.). (2009). *IIUM at 25: The Path Travelled & The Way Forward*, Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press.
- Ahmed, A. S. (August 13<sup>th</sup> 1998). “Obituary: Professor Syed Ali Ashraf”, In Independent. Retrieved on October 20<sup>th</sup> 2017 from <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/obituary-professor-syed-ali-ashraf-1171311.html>.
- Al Fārūqī, I. R & L. L. (1986). *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, New York & London: Macmillan.
- Al Fārūqī, I. R. (1982). *Al Tawhīd : Its Implications for Thought and Life*. Herndon, Virginia: IIIT.
- Al-Ghazali. (1963). *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* (Kamali, S. A. Trans.), Lahore: Pakistan Philosophical Congress.
- Al-Ghazali. (2009). *Wonders of the Heart* (Skellie, W. J. Trans.), Petaling Jaya: Islamic Book Trust.
- Al-Ghazzālī. (2013). *The Book of Knowledge, Kitab al-‘Ilm of Al-Ghazzālī’s Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*. (Faris, N. A. Trans.), Kuala Lumpur: Dar al-Wahy Publications.
- Ansari, M. F. R. (1973). *The Qur’anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society*, Karachi: Islamic Centre.

- Ashraf, S. A. & Hussain, S. S. (1979). *Crisis in Muslim Education*, Jeddah: Hodder & Stoughton, King Abdulaziz University.
- Ashraf, S. A. (1985). *New Horizons in Muslim Education*, London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Ashraf, S. A. (1990). "The Islamic Frame of Reference: The Intellectual Dimension", Editorial in *Muslim Quarterly*, 7(1) and 7(2).
- Ashraf, S. A. (1991). *Islam: World Religion Series*. Cheltenham, England: Stanley Thornes.
- Ashraf, S. A. (n. d.). "The Aims of Education". In Cambridge Muslim College Papers No. 2, Retrieved on January 10<sup>th</sup> 2017 from <https://cambridgemuslimcollege.org/download-papers/CMCPapers2-Education.pdf>.
- Hamidullah, M. (1973). *Introduction to Islam*, Centre Cultural Islamique Paris, Series No. 1/a. Lahore, Pakistan: Syed Muhammad Ashraf.
- Hamidullah, M. (1988). *Islam: Source and Purpose of Knowledge, Islamization Series No. 5*. Herndon, Virginia: IIIT.
- HAMKA. (1940, 1986). *Falsafah Hidup*, Jakarta: PT Pustaka Panjimas.
- Hanifa, A. (September 4<sup>th</sup> 2013). "Mohammad Natsir: Sang Pembaru Dunia Islam". In *Khazanah*, Retrieved on October 16<sup>th</sup> 2017 from <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/khazanah/13/09/04/ms1053-mohammad-natsir-sang-pembaru-dunia-islam>.
- Iqbal, M. (n. d.). "Ghazālian Synthesis", In *Major Voices in Islam and Science*. Centre for Islam and Science. Retrieved on November 11<sup>th</sup> 2009 from <https://www.cisca.org/voices/g/Ghazali-Muzaffar-Iqbal.pdf>.
- Luth, T. (1999). *M. Natsir, Dakwah dan Pemikirannya*, Jakarta: Perpustakaan Nasional.
- Hassan, M. Kamal. (1978). *Islamic Education and Its Significance for National Development*, Kuala Lumpur: Bahagian Agama, Jabatan Perdana Menteri.
- Hassan, M. Kamal. (1980). *Nilai-nilai Universal Islam tentang Kesejahteraan Masyarakat*, Kuala Lumpur: Bahagian Agama, Jabatan Perdana Menteri.
- Hassan, M. Kamal. (2010). "A Return to the Qur'anic Paradigm of Development and Integrated Knowledge: The *Ulu al-Albab* Model", *Intellectual Discourse*, Vol. 18, No. 2: 183-210.
- Hassan, M. Kamal. (2011). "Pendidikan yang Membentuk Syakhsiah Bangsa dan Proses Islamisasi", Paper presented in Kongress Pendidikan Islam Kebangsaan, Organised by Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia at Dynasty Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, 4<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

- Mabud, S. A. (n. d.). "Professor Syed Ali Ashraf: Obituary", *Journal of Islamic Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 10, No. 4, Retrieved on January 10<sup>th</sup> 2017 from [https://www.cisca.org/voices/a/ali\\_ashraf.htm](https://www.cisca.org/voices/a/ali_ashraf.htm).
- Natsir, M. (1961). "Ideologi Didikan Islam", *Capita Selecta*, Jilid 1. Jakarta: Sumup Bandung, Retrieved on June 26<sup>th</sup> 2015 from <https://serbasejarah.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/capita-selecta-m-natsir-jilid-i1.pdf>.
- Natsir, M. (1980). "*Fiqhud-Da'wah*", Singapura: Pustaka Nasional Pte. Ltd.
- No author (2013). *IUM Policies and Guidelines on Islamisation*, Kuala Lumpur: CENTRIS, IUM.
- No author. (August 25<sup>th</sup> 2013). "Communiqué of the 1<sup>st</sup> World Congress on Integration and Islamicisation of Acquired Human Knowledge (FWCII-2013)", Organized by IUM at Prince Hotel and Residence, Kuala Lumpur, 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> August 2013, Retrieved on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 from <https://www.iium.edu.my/sites/default/files/FWCII%202013%20COMMUNIQUE.pdf>
- No author. (n. d.). "HAMKA", *Oxford Islamic Studies*, Retrieved on October 12<sup>th</sup> 2017 from <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e795>.
- No author. (n. d.). *On the Life and Thought of Bediuzzaman Nursi*, Istanbul: The Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture.
- No author. (21 Dec. 2002). "Dr. Hamidullah", In *Al Balagh*, Retrieved on September 10<sup>th</sup> 2014 from [https://www.albalagh.net/general/dr\\_hamidullah.shtml](https://www.albalagh.net/general/dr_hamidullah.shtml).
- Nofal, N. (1993). "Al-Ghazali (A. D. 1058-1111; A. H. 450-505)", *Thinkers on Education, in Prospects: The Quarterly Review of Comparative Education*, Vol. 23, No. ¾, Paris: UNESCO, International Bureau of Education.
- Nursi, B. S. (2005). *The Risale-i Nur Collection: The Words, The Reconstruction of Islamic Belief and Thought* (Akarsu, H. Trans.), New Jersey: The Light, Inc.
- Rujiman & Marjaya, Y. (2011). *40 Tahun SMP Islam Al-Azhar 1 Mendidik Umat Membangun Bangsa*, Jakarta: Yayasan Pesantren Islam Al Azhar, Kebayoran Baru.
- Ulema Uddin. (3 September, 2008). "Dr. Muhammad Fazlur Rahman Ansari (R. A.)". In *Caribbean Muslims: News, History, Religion & Culture*, Retrieved on August 26<sup>th</sup> 2014 from <http://www.caribbeanmuslims.com/articles/161/2/Dr-Muhammad-Fazlur-Rahman-Ansari-RA/Page2.html>.
- Vahide, S. (2011). *Bediuzzaman Nursi: Author of the Risale-i Nur*, Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust.