

Explanation and analysis of Islamization of science and its implications for education

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Abstract:

In the past few centuries, globe has gone through many changes. The outstanding appearance of these developments is the industrial revolution of 17th century. The modernity as an idea has progressed in the same period of time. The most important feature of modernity is "*humanism*". West is the origin of this modern civilization and the concept of "humanism" has gradually spread over the non-western lands. Islam as one of the non-western civilization with a religious identity should meet this modern civilization. Modernity has encountered Islamic civilization and Moslem thinkers have faced it in different ways. The first organized effort to react the modernity issues in the field of education started in 1977, when Moslems' Education Conference was held in Mecca to search for the main strategies needed for the islamification of human sciences. Although, several years have passed since that event, even those who claimed such an idea are not satisfied with this accomplishment. The reason why this idea and, consequently, its educational concerns were not fulfilled is the problematic aspect of the present study. Regarding this matter, three questions were formed: What are the most important approaches toward islamization of sciences? What are the effects of islamization of sciences on the aims and contents of

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education? What are the main obstacles of the desired fulfillment of islamization of sciences and education? In this article, the study of educational implication of islamization of sciences, and also respond to above questions, is set forth.

Keywords: Islamization of Sciences, Islamic civilization, Western civilization, Islamic Education; Processes of Sciences Islamization

Introduction

The beginning of the increasing changes that the human being is witnessing today goes back to the industrial revolutions of the nineteenth century. According to “Fredrick Myer” in the book “The history of educational thoughts”, there have been clear scientific advancements in the past three centuries; but science is not enough. What we also need is real morality and true spirituality. Only when science is used in the path of improving the human being's existence and only when education, philosophy, and religion are united, will new periods for mankind rise (Myer, 1995).

While providing positive solutions for human (such as rationality & open-mindedness), today, when “modernity” and accordingly modernism are criticized, the fair judges also consider its myriad shortages and not-enough-supplies such as unreasonable and excessive claims. Various non-Western civilizations responded in different ways to modern Western civilization. By necessity, the Islamic civilization, which was considered one of these non-Western civilizations also had to face the most important aspect of modern thought – meaning “modern science” - which had a secular characteristic. Some of the religious thinkers in the world of Islam have had the distinction that in order to modify the critical status of the Islamic civilization, Islamization of this “secular science” should be performed (Al-etas, 1995) and that the education system also is the most important element in the thought for “Islamization of Science”. As a result, the taking place of such thought will have results and influences for the education system. Studying the thought or thoughts for “Islamization of science” and clarifying its implications on the educational goals and content, as well as the possible obstacles for achievement of the above thoughts are subjects, which will be investigated in the present article.

The background on the issue of religious science

In his book “Science and Religious”, Barbur (1990) investigates the historical evolution of the important relationships the scientists have had between their experimental findings about nature and the quality of relationship with the topic of religion. Although this research considers the subjects of science and religion separate, by investigating various viewpoints in the field of relationship between science and religion (be it conflict, combination and dialogue, absolute differentiation) it considers common issues in the attitude method and their goal. In his book “The identity of religious science”, Bagheri (1993) believes that in order to reach an acceptable result in the field of religious science, we would need deep deliberation and thought that is far from prejudice. He believes that for this type of thinking, we should first deliberate on science itself and its essence or characteristics. In his article “holistic-view analysis and the establishment of Islamic education” Modud Rahman (1994) is trying to have an analysis of the components and elements that form Islamic education. He believes that the fact that education is pervasive is just like Islam and its start is not necessarily in school and is not after the ultimate goal of gaining an occupation and is rather a pervasive act. He believes that the structure of the Islamic society is consisted of components of: individual, family, mosque, social groups, and official organizations and believes that all components of the Islamic education system should be based on the pervasive system of religion of Islam (Rahman, 1999).

In his book “Islamization of knowledge: A Methodology”, Emaddodin Khalil (1991) is trying to provide a methodology for his assumption and belief in the Islamization of knowledge. He states that the process of Islamization of knowledge happens in two levels – the theoretical level and the practical level. The theoretical level looks into explaining the fundamental aspects, motives, goals, and steps for the process of identity-establishing to these aspects in all branches of knowledge. The practical level requires an expanded range of material and tools which include all branches of human knowledge, fundamental or applied human sciences. The main goal is that these sciences be reshaped based on Islam's real viewpoint.

Salisu Shihou claims that: No civilization or world-view is capable enough to provide for peace and tranquility compared to Islam civilization and world-view and it is only Moslems who have the ability to solve the challenge of the contemporary human being (Usher, 1998). None of the stated issues in the contemporary period

have been more critical to the world of Islam than the question about modern science. The Moslem thinkers have faced the existence of “Modern Science” in different ways and this on its own has created a large range of Moslems Scientists' attitudes in this field. As well, Al-avani (1991) mentions the confrontation of modern Western civilization – whose main aspect is “science” - with Islamic civilization titled “Thought Invasion”.

Approaches of Islamization of Sciences

It seems that the classifying of “Islamization of sciences” should be prepared and provided in a comprehensive way in order to reflect “religious science” in a clear way. Four main approaches can be mentioned with this regard: a- inferential approach, b- traditionalistic approach, c- epistemologic approach, d- change of pre-assumptions approach.

The fundamental of inferential approach is that the Quranic text as the holy word includes and has already mentioned all sciences and expeditions that today's modern science has reached or is reaching through its researches in a general way. Intellectuals in the Islamic countries started efforts for matching Quranic verses with experimental-sciences and authored books under various titles. Seyyed Jamal and his students (such as Mohamed Abdeh) in Egypt, Seyyed Ahmad Khaan in India, Mohali Bazragarn, Pak-Nejad, and... in Iran, and Norousi in Turkey.

Traditionalistic approach reflects another one of the existing attitudes toward the issue of science in the world that has been offered and distributed by some scientists. One of the representatives of such attitude are Rene Gaenon, Feretof Shoan, and Seyyed Hassan Nasr (1991, 2001). These thinkers believe the modern science that has appeared in the West and eventually distributed to other parts of the world to be science that has found distance from its authenticity and roots and has gained a completely materialistic taste and has defined its identity and goal in a way that has no relation with holistic transcendent and meta-individual issues. There is no solution to the problems and difficulties that the contemporary human faces except for returning to the traditional scientific frameworks and foundations.

About the third approach, perhaps it can be said that the approach which talks of paradigm change and replacement of

Islamic values in science also talks of “Islamization of knowledge. The conference which took place in 1977 in city of Mecca also ponders on this change in paradigm and existing challenges in Moslem's education. Emad-Od-Dinn Khalil (1991) also believes that the Islamization process of knowledge happens in two stages of theory and practice which is placed in the mentioned above field.

The supporters of the approach to change the pre-assumptions, believe that the values the person has consciously or unconsciously accepted and carries, effect the entire scientific research process. This attitude has been reflected in the works of philosophers in “after positivism” such as Kohen and Firaband and others. The suggestion for renovating science and establishing “religious science”, which has been reflected in works by scientists such as Bagheri and Golshani shows understanding of the modern science philosophy. In their opinion the history of science is showing that a portion of the pre-assumptions and metaphysical fundamentals have an important role in bringing up a set of theories – sciences that have been constructed and developed in the West contain the culture and history of that specific land and has its own special pre-assumptions. Now if we are able to develop pre-assumptions that are raised from “religion” in the process of scientific research, we have developed “religious science” (Bagheri, 1993, Golshani, 2000).

Table1. compares the various “Islamization of Sciences” approaches.

Approaches of Islamization of Sciences	The main concepts of the approaches
Inferentialistic Approach	Text of Quran as the holy word includes all sciences and expeditions that today's modern science has reached. As a result Quran is looked at as an encyclopedia
Traditionalistic Approach	Placing the findings of the modern science in the frame of traditional science. Making the traditional sciences such as medicine and farming and ... live once more; Knowledge has hierarchical structure
Approach of Change in Paradigm	Change in the current paradigm of philosophy of science with the help of Islamic ideas; Establishing epistemology system and methodological based on monotheism; refinement of modern sciences

Approach of Changing the Pre-Assumption	Religious understandings are considered the pre-assumptions of scientific research; The process of Islamic science Creation is exactly as that of contemporary science.
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As mentioned before different sorts of criticisms about modernity and modern thought can be categorized into two main categories. The first type is consisted of those criticisms that have grown in the ground of Western civilization, which is the cradle for modern thought and science. And the second type is the series of criticisms that have come to existence in non-Western civilizations as places which have been influenced by the current of modern thought. Each of these two sets of thinking, which of course follow criticism methods with different goals, includes implications for the education system.

The standards of investigating the idea of Islamic education

The requirement for “Islamic science” to become a reality and accordingly “Islamic education” to take place is that the three main aspects, which include religion, science, and education be together and have versatility.

1. With regards to science, it should be said that as a type of human knowledge, scientific knowledge should have a specific boundary and standard. There standards can be named for evaluating a scientific theory. Its agreement with the observations, internal relationship between its concepts, and comprehensiveness. (Barbour, 1990).

2. With regards to religion, what we mean is the levels and dimensions of religion. The great religions in the world have usually appeared in three stages: One stage includes the practices and rites. The second stage is related to an internal layer and ideas and beliefs. The third stage is a central nucleolus, which includes the religious experiences caused by the presence of human-being in front of the central divinity (God) (Shabestari, 1990).

With regards to education, two aspects can be considered. The first is the meaning of education. If the most important education concept is supposedly “change”, do all changes necessarily have an educational aspect to them? (Winch, 1999). The concept of education involves four components of explanation, standard, internal movement, and criticism. Through these standards concept of education is differed from “what is thought to be education but really isn't” Pseudo-education which has three characteristics of habit, inculcation, and enforcement (Bagheri, 1990).

The second aspect is the subject-matter. In order for us to make relationship between what we are teach to the student (what they need to learn) and what the aim of the above teaching (the learning of the subject) is, we need to organize and systematize the teaching and the learning and call this organization and system the subject-matter, Human-being requires to have some information about his surrounding things and it is necessary that this knowledge and information have a structured shape and organization. Table 2 shows the implications each of the approaches have for the goals and educational content.

Table 2. The implications of each of the approaches for the goals and educational content

Approaches for Islamization Sciences	Orientation for designing of Goal	Orientation for designing of the Content
Inferential Approach	Raising students who have a mind like an encyclopedia toward religion and considering the “text” think of themselves as needless of scientific activity.	Exporting samples of “scientific miracles” in by Quran. Showing this fact in the text and content that Quran includes all knowledge at all times.
Traditionalistic Approach	Establishing science based on “traditional” concepts.	Making the traditional sciences such as faming, metaphysic, medicine, etc. live.

	Placing modern sciences in the traditional sciences framework.	Preparing lesson majors inspired by traditional sciences subjects and context.
	Raising students who are believes in the post-natural (metaphysic) concepts of traditional sciences.	
Approach of Change in Paradigm	The change in contemporary science based on monotheistic worldview	Selecting the best of the two modern and traditional systems.
	Establishing Islamic research- methodology for research in the fields of scientific activity.	Preparing subject-matter with the same modern topics and with Islamic refining attitude.
	The joining of the two systems of modern and traditional education	
Approach of Change in Pre-Assumption	Religious understandings are considered the pre-assumptions of scientific activities. Raising students that are familiar with both scientific activity and gathering the pre-assumptions from religion.	Since this approach is currently stated only as a theory, there has been no approach with this content developed for education.

The impact of Islamization of Sciences on Education

With respect to the approaches that have been identified about the Islamization of sciences, the goal has not been to emphasize on the inner and holy aspect of religion in achieving the structuring of Islamization of sciences – just as some of the claimers of some of the approaches have mentioned. It seems that among the mentioned approaches, only approach has the apprehension to make live the holy and inner aspect of religion. This approach is the traditionalistic approach inferential approach seems to worry more about keeping the appearance of religion. The epistemologic approaches for change in paradigm consider the subject of change in the social life of the “Islamic nation” while considering the issue

of “scientific”. The approach of change in paradigm strictly creates a “competitive model” and by establishing “religious science” does not consider making live the holy presence of science and religion.

Each of the approaches of Islamization of Sciences (inferential, traditionalistic, and epistemologic) are involved with a bunch of criticisms. These criticisms can be elaborated under three separate headings: a) Criticisms that have a “epistemology” aspect. b) Criticisms that have a “religious” orientation. c) Criticisms that have an “educational” orientation.

Conclusion

With respect to the previous discussions, it can be concluded that from the very beginning of Moslem thinkers facing the modern Western thought, there has always been differences in the various ranges of thinking, although they have always agreed on one point. That point is, that all Moslem thinkers feel the necessity for change in the existing frames and on the other hand have put faith in keeping their beliefs. In the midst of this dualistic condition, there has sometimes been a condition of disproportionate thoughts (Ruznanin, 2002).

What seems to have caused the human-being trouble in today's world is not “science”, but rather is scientism. What is seen in the contemporary world and accordingly in the education systems is the lack of true spirituality, which has caused numerous social crisis. (Stenberg, 1995). This of course is an issue that has also been in attention by the Western culture critics themselves, such that Huston Smith points out that “Cultural critics register damages that the modern secular world assumptions force us to accept “Disillusioned World” (Max Webber), “Empty Land” (T. S. Elliot), “sub-human” (Herbert Markuzeh) and others are the products of their criticisms about the lack of spiritualism in the modern Western civilization.

By taking advantage of its deep spiritual resources that are hidden in its internal layers, today, better than any other time in the past, can great cultures such as Islam communicate with human beings thirsty for meaning (Abu-Soleyman, 1999). The heart and the mind of students today should not be blocked by the creators of

the education systems whose main purpose is dogmatic scientism. Rather, it is necessary to provide the possibilities to continually gain for him.

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