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Education Reform

From Islamization of Knowledge to Integration of Knowledge

AT THE 1744 Treaty of Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, between the Government of Virginia and the Six Nations, the Commissioners from Virginia, motivated to improve the conditions of the indigenous people, expressed their wish to establish a Fund for Educating Indians youth at Williamburg College. If the Six Nations would send down half a dozen of their young lads at our college, the Government spokesman said: "we would provide for them and ensure that they are educated in the ways of the modern world." The Indian spokesman thought for a moment, and then replied:

> We know that you highly esteem the kind of learning taught in those Colleges, and the maintenance of our young men, while with you, would be very expensive to you. We are convinced, therefore, that you mean to do us good by your proposal; and we thank you heartily. But you, who are wise, must know that different nations have different conceptions of things; and you will therefore not take it amiss, if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same as yours. We have had some experience of it. Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the Colleges of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your sciences, but, when they came back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods, unable to bear either cold or hunger, knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, or kill an enemy, spoke our language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, nor counsellors. They were totally good for nothing. We are however not the less obliged by your kind offer, though we decline accepting it. And to show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them.

Different nations have different conceptions of things; and, we can add, after Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*. It is through education that a nation, a society, or a civilisation, consciously passes on the accumulated skills, knowledge and wisdom of the past to future generations. Education not only preserves the cultural identity and historical legacy of a society but ensures its survival as a distinct entity. It furnishes a worldview within which the society seeks to solve its problems, delineates it social

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relations and economic activity, makes sense of itself, pushes the frontiers of knowledge, and continues as a living entity. The Indians realised that the education offered by the Government of Virginia did not equip their young with the skills and knowledge they needed to survive; worse, it threatened the very existence of their culture and society.

A society without its own sophisticated education system, designed to preserve and transmit the values and cultural traits that ensure its survival, will either be colonised or lose the distinct elements of its worldview. Both the individual and society suffer from the absence of appropriate educational institutions. The individual is denied the social instrument through which a positive sense of religious values and cultural identity can be developed. The society is deprived of its human capital with the result that almost all spheres – from values and skills to governance, law, commerce, finance, industry and cultural production – go into irreparable decline. Thus, education is not simply a process through which knowledge is imparted; it is also, in the shape of higher education, the mechanism through which knowledge is actually generated. Even if Muslim societies have values to share, without a thriving education system, as Abdelwahab El-Affendi notes, it "does not have much knowledge to share." This is 'the crisis' that has confronted Muslim societies since the seventeenth century onwards when 'almost all the knowledge Muslims possessed became worthless overnight in terms of worldly value.' But it was not simply worldly knowledge that evaporated from Muslim societies. The decline of great Muslim educational institutions, described so aptly by George Makdisi in *The Rise of Colleges*, also eroded the appreciation of Muslim heritage and legacy, and led to the erosion of Muslim norms and values, and perversion of religious knowledge.

But the 'Six Nations' anecdote also points towards a predicament. As El-Affendi points out, "while the Indians were right about the inappropriateness of the new knowledge to their societies at the time," and thus shunned the new knowledge, "this choice did nothing to preserve their cultures or save them from colonialism and subjugation." We are thus faced with a fundamental paradox: "to what extent can the capacity to absorb knowledge within an existing cultural paradigm assume a certain level of knowledge acquisition to start with?" The Indians, like the Muslims who followed a similar path later on, did not help themselves by remaining ignorant; "the resulting power differential drove the former to extinction and the latter to subjugation." Therefore we need to balance the other side of the equation: "we need to admit that our spiritual values cannot survive without the power to protect our societies from subjugation," hence some appreciation and excellence in contemporary knowledge is essential.

The function of this paper is to synthesise our extensive deliberations on reform of higher education in the Muslim world; and to present a more coherent picture of our arguments and positions. I have used various papers presented at meetings (including those by Abdelwahab El-Affendi, Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, Anwar Ibrahim, Abdulkader Tayob, and Abdulaziz Sachedina), commentaries on papers, our correspondence on e-mail, and supplementary conversations as my raw material. Of course, the synthesis is infused with my own arguments, critique and perspective, as one would expect. Finally, I have tried to integrate various recommendations and suggestions into an overall framework that moves the project forward in a contemporary and meaningful way.

I begin by retracing some relevant history.

Revisiting Histories

Our concerns and criticism about knowledge and education are not too far removed from those that led Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) to embark on the 'Islamization of Knowledge' project. Much like the Six Nations, al-Faruqi and his colleagues understood that the modern education system, transferred and imposed wholesale from the West complete with its basic assumptions and dogmatic conceptions, was corrosive to the value system of Muslim societies. The products of this system were alienated from their own societies, were often poor counterparts of their western contemporaries, and seldom contributed to the positive development of their own countries. Westernised universities in Muslim countries tend to exemplify middle-class western culture, and the norms and values that go with it. The education they provide either overlooks or undermines the spiritual development of the individual as well as emphasise the material aspect of education at all levels. Even if the graduates of modern educational institutions displayed a sense of independent inquiry and intellectual curiosity, which was rarely the case, they patently lacked, to use the words of Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, the Qur'anic notion of "consciousness and knowledge" – "that is the discernment of truth, which, at its highest level, is knowledge of God."

Given all the criticism that the 'Islamization of Knowledge' project has received, including my own, what need is there to revisit it? It is important to have a sense of history. No attempt at reform can take place in total vacuum. We always build on previous projects through critiquing them and move forward by learning from their successes and failures. Moreover, no attempt at reform is totally devoid of merit even though it may have been discredited by later criticism based on hindsight.

Indeed, the 'Islamization of Knowledge' project was itself a product of criticism of early attempts at tackling 'the malaise of the ummah' – even though it was not explicitly stated. In his initial paper that started our discussions, El-Affendi pointed out that:

> by the end of the nineteenth century, perceptive minds like Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Kayr al-Din al-Tunisi began to notice the barren nature of the new school system set up in Istanbul and Cairo… Afghani noted the failure of the new schools, sixty years after the first were established, to produce any self-sustaining system of autonomous knowledge production. His prognosis at the time was that it was because those schools did not teach philosophy. There was a sense in which he was right, since teaching fragments of knowledge and technical expertise without an over-arching framework and vision of the world is not likely to produce knowledge in any meaningful sense of the world. He himself gave an example of the fundamental 'philosophical' transformation the Quran brought about in the Arab frame of mind as the galvanising and decisive factor which brought the Islamic civilisation into existence. Although he did not say this, but the implication was that in Europe, the radical philosophical transformation, in this case the Enlightenment, was the decisive factor in creating the new framework of knowledge production and acquisition.

In his comments on El-Affendi, Anwar Ibrahim quotes Muhammad Iqbal: "knowledge itself, without the requisite virtues such as humility, generosity, the love of truth and justice, will be 'but cold as death', like 'Satan's progeny…but if it blends with love, it joins the ranks of high celestial spirits.'" Al-Faruqi and his fellow travellers, including AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, Taha Jabir Alalwani, Mona Abdul-Fadl and others were

building on the works of Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Kayr al-Din al-Tunisi, Muhammad Iqbal, Malik Bennabi, Muhammad Asad, Ali Shariati and numerous others one can mention.

The most obvious thing that jumps out of the pages of *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (hitherto referred to as *Work Plan*) is its pain and anger. There is an all too evident acute agony at the plight of the Muslims: "the centuries of decline have caused illiteracy, ignorance and superstition to spread among Muslims" and "these evils have caused the average Muslim to withdraw into the bliss of blind faith, to lean toward literalism and dogmatism;" every Muslim state is "divided against itself;" and the core cause of this malaise is "the intellectual and methodological decline of the ummah." Faruqi's criticism is largely directed towards the West. He felt that the latter's imposition of a "secular system of education" undermined the foundations of faith and culture in Muslim societies.

If the diagnosis was correct in 1982, when the project was initially launched and *Work Plan* first published (the second edition published in 1989), it is even more pertinent today. The *Work Plan* described "the malaise of thought and methodology," and the state of education in Muslim societies, as a "crisis." The 2003 *Arab Human Development Report: Building a Knowledge Society*, talked of a "knowledge deficit" that was "deeply rooted" and "grave." Now Ibrahim sees "a host of issues that cumulatively give the distinct picture of the state of education in Muslim countries" as "catastrophic." The language itself suggests that we are on a sharp decline.

Another aspect of the *Work Plan* that can be read between the lines is its concern for meaning. The discussion about the ossification of "traditional methodology," the issues of *ijtihad* that were restricted "to those who saw no need of it" and were convinced that all was "absolutely adequate" and "the problem of the Muslim world was merely one of human reluctance to realise the value of Islam" is essentially about meaning. The basic argument here is that *fiqh* and its methodology as well as Islam itself has been drained of meaning, resulting largely in Muslim societies lack purpose and a sense of direction. Without meaning, there can be no purpose in the lives of Muslims; and without purpose the western or traditionally educated Muslim, can neither be an agent who adopts some ends, nor become the means to an end. Muslims could thus hardly be expected to devote themselves to the achievement of something. Again, this insight is not explicitly stated but has to be teased out from the text.

However, there is something that is explicitly stated: "first principles of Islamic methodology." I would suggest that it is not so much an overt methodology but the basic axioms of the worldview of Islam. Starting from the Unity of Allah, "the first principle of Islam and of everything Islamic," the *Work Plan* systematically leads us to the unity of creation (cosmic order, and the interconnection of everything), the unity of knowledge, unity of life (human existence is an *amanah* from God, and human beings are trustees, or *khalifah*, of the abode of our terrestrial journey), unity of humanity, and finally the complementary nature of revelation and reason. Collectively, these axioms offer us an excellent framework both for the pursuit of knowledge and for the reform of Muslim education.

Just how relevant and contemporary is this framework can be judged by the wide-ranging criticism in the academic literature on the fragmentary nature of knowledge and the reductive mode of education in the institutions of higher learning. The 'first principles' also answer a question frequently raised by Henzell-Thomas: "don't we need

to get beyond the attachment to competing paradigms and models (which are usually inherently dichotomous and adversarial) and realise that the way forward is a new mode of consciousness which is integrative and inclusive?" Henzell-Thomas suggests that this is in fact the message of the Qur'an as well as a great deal of contemporary thought, for example in philosophy and futures studies, which emphasises the "integral" approach to knowledge production and education. He cites the work of the philosopher Jean Gebser who argues that humanity is at the stage of transition from the "Mental" to the "Integral" structure of consciousness. Gebser described "the deficient form of the 'Mental' structure as the value-free ontology of rational materialism," but upheld that "this moribund structure could not be renewed through a return to 'values'; rather, a transition was needed to an 'Integral' mode of consciousness which was not fixated on dualistically opposed categories, one-sided perspectives, fixed frames, and the like." In futures studies, there is a distinct methodology called 'integral futures' that explicitly seeks to integrate a different perspective as well as the Self and the Other. The 'first principles' provide just such an integral framework which emphasises 'unity in multiplicity.'

So the *Work Plan* does offer us something concrete to build upon. Far from reinventing the wheel, the 'first principles,' the quest for meaning, and the diagnosis of the 'crisis,' which has turned into a 'catastrophe,' facing Muslim societies should be our starting point for any future endeavour.

Problems arise when the *Work Plan* attempts to answer the question posed by Afghani, and reframed by El-Affendi: "why aren't our institutions generating original knowledge?" The answer provided by the *Work Plan*, to put it briefly, is that western knowledge does not provide Muslim society with real meaning; for it to be meaningful to the ummah knowledge has to be 'Islamised.' 'Islamization' is posited as an anti-thesis to 'westernisation' and 'modernisation'; and 'Islamization of knowledge' is presented as a process that "reflects the objectives, norms and ultimate purpose of revelation." The *Work Plan* proposes that we start by mastering contemporary disciplines of social sciences and the legacy of Islam and – essentially – infuse the two. Muslim scholars must, it states, integrate the new (western) "knowledge into the corpus of the Islamic legacy by eliminating, amending, reinterpreting, and adapting its component as the worldview of Islam and its values dictate. The exact relevance to the philosophy of Islam and the method and objective of each discipline needs to be determined. A new way in which the reformed discipline can serve the ideals of Islam must be determined and a new trail must be blazed." This is where the basic misconception occurs: there is a lack of awareness about how knowledge is produced in contemporary society, how disciplines have evolved and the functions they perform, and about the relationship between knowledge and worldview. The *Work Plan* also assumes that new knowledge will be created simply by creating new institutions devoted to Islamization as a linear process. But as El-Affendi points out the problem is circular in nature: "to produce new knowledge we need new institutions, but institutions cannot be produced without new forms of knowledge." Moreover, despite its emphasis on integration of knowledge, the 'Islamization' agenda, as Henzell-Thomas suggests, "actually perpetuate unhelpful and obstructive aspects of the secular/religious dichotomy." And, Henzell-Thomas asks further, "how is 'Islamization' to be guarded from the negative connotations attached not only to the term itself but also to the perceived spectre of 'Islamification'" – the spectre that is haunting the Muslim world today?

The issues of the legacy of Islam raised by the *Work Plan* are also pertinent and relevant to our discussions. It is our historical legacy that provides us with a sense of continuity

and identity – where we are going, and want to go, depends to some extent on where we are coming from. To have any inkling of our future, we need to have some understanding of our past. Our view of history shapes how we see the present and envisage a future – as demonstrated by this project – and thus it dictates what answers we produce for our current and future problems. As Henzell-Thomas notes, "the intellectual history of Islam grappled with some fundamental issues on knowledge, ethics, self and society. I see these debates as resources for critical reflection in Islamic educational reform." Our legacy has deep roots in liberal arts, liberalism and humanism that we need to re-examine. However, the *Work Plans* presents '*the* legacy' as a singular entity, something which could be processed, classified and mastered once and for all – not as pluralistic histories that we read, re-read, interpret and reinterpret and constantly revisit. This notion reflects Henzell-Thomas' frustration, articulated with reference to Malik Bennabi who "attributed what he called 'civilizational bankruptcy' (particularly within Muslim societies) to the dearth of new ideas, and the concomitant tendency to keep on harking back to the achievements of the 'golden age of Islamic civilisation' built by their forefathers instead of examining how the values and principles which gave rise to such a civilisation can be renewed, re-interpreted and applied in the contemporary world." One must also note the tendency amongst certain traditional and conservative Muslims to see Islamic history, particularly the formative phase of Islam, as offering neat and complete solutions to all our ills ('the ulama have solved all our problems, brother'). Our historical legacy 'consists of contradictions and radical alternatives,' and deserves to be appreciated as 'a record of thinking about human experience' in a particular time and context.

How we need to engage with history, and how it demonstrates relevance to our current problems, is well illustrated by Abdulkadar Toyab. Through a critical engagement with Rumi, Tayob shows that his thought provides us with acute insights into identity and explorations of self and Other – a problem not just for Muslim societies but for all societies. As Toyab tells us, "identity and authenticity are critical issues in modern societies, endlessly debated in philosophy, the humanities and the social sciences. I have identified it as a problem in modern educational reform programmes and discourses of Muslims in the last hundred years." Of course, Rumi does not provide us with all the answers but his works do provide "a radically new perspective from modernist and postmodernist readings of identity" – and indicate the general direction of travel we need to undertake.

Our future direction of travel thus involves basing our analysis both on the first principle of the *Work Plan*, the creative use of our intellectual history, and a much more advanced understanding of how knowledge is produced, maintained and used in contemporary society.

The Fabric of Knowledge

Knowledge and worldview are intimately related. Knowledge is never produced in a vacuum; it is always embedded within the axioms and assumptions of the culture and worldview within which it is produced. The structure of 'modern knowledge,' and its divisions into various disciplines, is a direct product of the western worldview. Physical and social reality is not neatly laid out in a pattern exemplified by disciplinary structure of western knowledge system. The idea that reality is compartmentalised as 'physics' and 'chemistry,' 'sociology' and 'anthropology,' 'religion' and 'politics,' 'law' and 'ethics' is not based on some objective and universal axiom; rather, it is a construction

designed according to how a particular culture sees 'reality' and how it seeks to understand, manage, control and subjugate all that is 'out there.' Each academic discipline has emerged within a particular cultural context; and each has its own specific history that defines its contours. Modern disciplines, as we know and understand them, began when such fields of study as geography, sociology, anthropology and history became professions. Geography acquired prominence during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the European 'age of discovery' when the rapid expansion of colonial powers in Asia and Africa and the need for collection of revenues made it necessary to survey the land. The desire to manage and control the natives Europe conquered gave rise to anthropology. While the function of anthropology was to study the exotic Others with the aim of proving the inalienable superiority of Europe, the objective of sociology was to inquire into the lifestyles of the underclass, the Other within Europe. The function of History, which in its modern reincarnation emerged at about the same time as the nation state, was to put all the pieces together and demonstrate that the History of Europe was in fact Universal History – histories of all other cultures and civilisations were mere tributaries that naturally flowed into the great river of European achievements. Other disciplines, such as Orientalism, psychology, political science and economics, emerged after the Enlightenment, each embedded in its materialistic worldview. All these disciplines developed within this intellectual heritage, and evolved to solve the particular physical, material, mental and intellectual problems of this tradition. Whatever the discipline, the overall narrative was the same: to perpetuate the worldview of the West. This narrative still informs all disciplines. Just because these academic disciplines are accepted and practised throughout the world, and universities everywhere structure their departments according to them, does not mean that they are universally valid or that we are duty bound to work within and perpetuate them. As I have written elsewhere, "burgers and Coke are eaten and drank throughout the world but one would hardly classify them as a universally embraced and acceptable food: what the presence of burgers and Coke in every city and town in the world demonstrates is not their universality but the power and dominance of the culture that has produced them. Disciplines too are like burgers and Coke: they are made neither in heaven nor do they exist out there in some 'reality' but are socially constructed and develop and grow within specific worldviews and cultural milieu." As such, disciplines do not have autonomous existence of their own but have meaning largely in the worldview of their origins and evolution. It is hardly surprising then, as the *Work Plan* rightly postulated, the modern disciplines have little meaning for Muslim cultures.

There are three other aspects of academic disciplines that we need to appreciate. First, disciplines not only represent a presumed structure of knowledge, they also *discipline* – that is, they punish and correct. They perform, writes Indian historian Vinay Lal, "the work of disciplining recalcitrant elements of society, endorsing and justifying inequality, creating new forms of oppression, and stifling dissent. The academic disciplines have so disciplined the world – one has only to think of the extraordinary legitimacy granted to 'economic science' and the role of economists as the pundits of our times, whose very word, when dispensed through such conduits of the imperial financial architecture as the World Bank and the IMF, is law to beleaguered developing countries – that any intellectual, social, cultural, or economic intervention outside the framework of modern knowledge appears to be regressive, a species of indigenism, the mark of obdurate primitives, and certainly futile."

Second, they colonise the future. The time dimension of the West is not limited to the past and the present: the West is also the future. The West was not just in history; it is

remade in the present and reconstructed in the future by academic disciplines. As disciplines developed and are internalised more and more by other cultures, perpetuated by universities everywhere, they become an integral part of the global consciousness. As such, much of the immediate and near future has already been colonised by the western worldview. When the *Work Plan* was first produced, the colonisation of the future was known as 'westernisation.' Now it goes under the rubric of 'globalisation.' It may be naïve to equate the former with the latter, but the end product is the same: the process that is transforming the world into the proverbial 'global village,' rapidly shrinking distances, compressing space and time, is also shaping the world in the image of a single culture and civilisation.

Third, academic disciplines provide the West with its ultimate power: the power to define. The real power of the West, its worldview with all its axioms and assumptions, is not located in its economic muscle (which is still considerable), its military prowess (no other power on the planet can challenge the military might of the US), and technological ability (which has escalated considerably with the emergence of the Internet). Rather, it resides in its power to define. The West defines what is, for example, freedom, progress, civilisation and civil behaviour; democracy and human rights; law, tradition and community; reason, mathematics and science; who is a dictator or a terrorist or a moderate person; what is real and what it means to be human. Academic disciplines provide learned, scholarly and rational legitimacy to the defining concepts. The non-western cultures and civilisations have simply to accept these definitions or be disciplined by disciplines and be defined out of existence! Something that is clearly happening to Islam and Muslim societies – this is the real catastrophe.

These three aspects of academic disciplines relate to power; and without addressing and dissecting the issues of power we are not going to make any real progress of reform – however we imagine or plan it. Given this power framework of modern knowledge and its disciplinary structure, which operate like a sophisticated, hydraulic vice, one can legitimately question the recommendation to "establish centres of excellence in a variety of fields, prioritising the social sciences" as El-Affendi suggests. Even though we may emphasise 'excellence' we will end up in the very fields that undermine and marginalise Muslim cultures. What exactly is this 'excellence' anyway? As Henzell-Thomas playfully suggests "we can talk about a professional hit man, but would it not be rather strange to say that Mario is an *excellent* hit man, unless we were members of the Mafia"; excellence is not simply about personal mastery of a domain of activity or skill or effectiveness in accomplishing a task but includes excellence of human character, and that has a moral and ultimately a spiritual dimension. There is evidence from the world of sport that amateurs often have much better ethical values than professionals, probably because their objective is not typically to 'win at all costs.' Even a 'centre of excellence,' focussed on existing disciplines of social sciences, is still a transplant if it is located in the Muslim world; and if it is situated in a western institution it simply preserves the dominance of the West. Either way, it contributes to what Henzell-Thomas describes as a sense of cultural "homelessness" of Muslim societies.

Thus the problem we face in thinking about the reform of higher education in Muslim societies is not simply that "the secular academic model is not ideologically neutral" and "perpetrates the materialist-consumerist worldview," as suggested by Henzell-Thomas – a realization that echoes the *Work Plan*. The problem is that values and assumptions of the "secular academic model" actually constitute the paradigm – they *are* the paradigm, as well as the actual building blocks of the disciplines. So one cannot eject the ideological and cultural bias of the 'the secular academic model' if one works

within them, within the paradigm. Even if you are a dissenter, or wish to approach the subject from a radically different perspective, the paradigm knows how to discipline and domesticate you. For without these ideological assumptions and cultural values there will be no academic disciplines.

A couple of examples to illustrate this somewhat dense argument would be useful. Consider the nineteenth century discipline of eugenics. It was rightly condemned by right minded and well-meaning academics and thoroughly disgraced. But it did not disappear; it re-emerged as 'development,' which deployed exactly the same evolutionist assumptions and framework to categorise non-western nations, societies and cultures: under-developed, developing, 'emerging' (as though from the proverbial slime), developed, or highly developed. Indeed, development has been no less insidious in its effect on non-western people than eugenics. Think of anthropology, which ashamed of its role as the handmaiden to the colonial enterprise, tried desperately to reinvent itself as 'reflexive anthropology,' 'postmodern anthropology,' 'radical anthropology' – indeed, there are journals totally devoted to 'rethinking anthropology.' Yet, the axioms and assumptions of the discipline remain intact and despite all the promises to be responsive and responsible to the people it studies, anthropology is hardly a humane discipline. The recent record of anthropologists working amongst the Amazon tribes – where blood has been stolen and sold to corporations for DNA research, viruses have been introduced to test immunity, and tribes have been encouraged to be violent for the benefit of the cameras – amply demonstrates that all the colonial assumptions and cultural prejudices of the discipline are alive and well. Many of the anthropologists today work for corporations, where they help develop culturally sensitive products that could be sold to 'emerging markets.'

The task of reforming education in Muslim societies is thus much more profound than we have hitherto imagined. It has two basic components: to deconstruct the definitional power of the modern knowledge system – complete with its disciplines, institutions, and processes – and its western worldview; and to produce alternative paradigms of knowledge formation, that take into account the histories, legacies and traditions of Islam and offer a more humane and value based appreciation of what constitutes learning and its advancement.

The need for new paradigms is not simply a Muslim concern. Indeed, a growing number of scholars, West and East, are now questioning the dominant paradigms – and hence the defining power of the West – and calling for more humane paradigms that consider the diversity and plurality of our societies and take the needs of the environment and planet as a whole into consideration. Changes in the contemporary context, and the accelerating pace of new technologies and innovations that are transforming the world have given urgency to these demands.

The Contemporary Context

Reform, by its very nature, is a future-oriented exercise. But it begins in the present; without appreciating the context within which we live and operate meaningful reform is not possible. The world has changed drastically since the days the original *Work Plan* was produced. It has become more globalised and more interconnected. The old paradigm of America leading the world is being undermined as power shifts to China, India and Brazil, and a re-emergent Russia (known as BRIC countries). Serious cracks are beginning to emerge in academic disciplines themselves, for centuries a bastion

of stability. The capitalist economic system is not working; or working just for one percent of the world populations who are accumulating the bulk of its wealth at the expense of increasing inequality. Economic theory is under attack from within and without academia. A plethora of recent books have attempted to dethrone it, not least Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* which shows that inequality is intrinsic in economic progress. Development theory lies in tatters. In the age of google maps, Geography is not what it used to be. In fact, no one studies 'geography' any more – they study cities, spatial cognition, urban landscapes, tourism, environment, anything and everything under the rubric of geography. Epistemologically, the Enlightenment idea of Modernity, as it is now widely recognised, has failed. The failure of modernity is attributed to a single Western paradigm which dictated its view of change without regard to other cultures. Modernity, and its associated concepts of progress, efficiency, and development, transformed vast swathes of our planet into disaster zones – of which climate change is the most evident example. The 'modern man' is deeply implicated in changing the planet itself: human behaviour and its impact on Earth's atmosphere has become so significant as to constitute a new geological epoch – leading to the concept of the Anthropocene, a new geological epoch measured from the time when human activities began to have a global impact on the Earth's ecosystem. The notion of postmodernism, a reaction against the destructive impact of modernity, has also run its course. Its emphasis on absolute relativism has led to the fragmentation of the world, increasing strife and discord. While rejecting all Grand Narrative, it presented liberal secularism as a Grand Theory of Salvation; and turned out to be a new form of imperialism. Postmodernity has arrived at a globalized levelling of differences which threatens the extinction of culture altogether in terminal post-culture; and has generated an acute crisis of identity that is a major source of so much conflict in today's world. The theory and process of globalisation which sees globalisation as a one-way street where the flow of ideas is essentially from West to the rest, where Western culture, political institutions and 'free market' are seen as a panacea which has to be imposed, willingly or unwilling, on the rest of the world, is nothing short of disastrous. Even the concept of multiculturalism, rooted in modernity and postmodernity, has become hollow and vacuous and drained of any notion of power. It has turned difference into a fetish. Basically, all these narratives – modernity, postmodernity, globalisation, multiculturalism – privilege liberalism, secularism and hence the domination of western culture and western ways of being and doing. This is why China and India appear to be more western than the West itself. The old paradigms, it is being increasingly argued, have really passed their 'sell by' dates!

So the crisis, in all its social, cultural and intellectual dimensions, we face is not limited to Muslim societies. The West is also in a state of acute crisis. Indeed, the crisis is global in nature. It is a product of a number of developments over the last few decades. The rate of change, for example, has accelerated rapidly. The processing power of computers has continued to double every two years – as predicted by Moore's law. A smart phone now has more computing power than all the computers used to put a man on the moon. It took 36 years to map the genome of a fly, 13 years to map the human genome, and now you can have your gnome mapped within a day. The noted futurist Jim Dator has pointed out we are facing a 'tsunami of change.' As the world becomes more and more globalised, we become more and more interconnected. Indeed, the whole world is a network criss-crossed by networks of individuals, groups, communities, institutions, corporations, nations, constantly connected to each other by Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, e-mails, e-lists, internet newsgroups, mobile phones, text, video conferencing, and blogs. Global television channels broadcast 24-hour news. When things are networked they tend to become more complex. Most of the problems

we face are global in nature, connected to a web of networks, entrenched in an environment of accelerating change, and are thus highly complex. There is nothing simple about 'fixing the economy' or solving problems of energy shortage, or fighting pandemics (as the Ebola epidemic demonstrates) or doing something about poverty and illiteracy, or changing social, educational or cultural institutions. Complex issues are generally described as 'wicked problems' – that is, to solve one problem one has to solve a plethora of other interconnected problems in relation to each other. A complex system has many positions that are logically inconsistent; problems that require conflicting ideas to understand let alone solve; and numerous groups with irreconcilable views. Contradictions thus become the norm.

It is natural for a networked complex system, full of contradictions and experiencing rapid change, to generate positive feedback and accelerate towards the edge of chaos. We are thus constantly on the verge of crisis and catastrophes ranging from 'market failure,' turbulent political change, social unrest, pandemics, mass migration of refugees, 'the crisis of European higher education' to irreversible climate change, mass extinction of species and even the crisis in the 'standard model' of physics!

Elsewhere, I have described the current turbulent and changing times – where the accent is on complexity, contradictions and chaos (the 3Cs) – as 'postnormal times.' The function of the theory is to emphasise that normal paradigms that have so far guided the West and the rest are collapsing. Here, it should suffice to state that it includes the conventional notions of the production of knowledge, the disciplinary structures, and the institutions and processes that sustain and promote it. For any reform to be meaningful, we have to shape paradigms that are 'post' – that is go above and beyond existing 'normal' paradigms.

A complex, interconnected world requires an integrated, unified perspective on knowledge and education – one of the 'first principles' of the *Work Plan*: 'the unity of knowledge.' But the current paradigm intrinsically divides knowledge into smaller and smaller isolated segments: science is separated from social sciences, social sciences are isolated from humanities, humanities are detached from arts; and each discipline within this artificial division is kept in air-tight compartments, jealously guarding its power and territory. Each discipline may thus produce greater refinement but is unable to tackle complex problems, interconnected to a host of other problems in a network. Garry Jacob, CEO of the World Academy of Art and Science (an international organisation of 500 intellectuals, of which, it has to be said in the interest of full disclosure, I am a Fellow), describes the current system of knowledge production and higher education as "akin to driving 1914 Model T Fords down modern superhighways." "Modern secular, scientific education," he writes, "has increasingly restricted the conscious transmission of values to mental, organizational and work values, leading the transmission of core human values to informal social learning. The effort to be purely objective has stripped education of its most valuable essence." Thus, today we have "arrived at a critical juncture where perpetuation and extension of the existing paradigm in education and other fields are grossly inadequate to meet the needs of humanity"; and "there is a pressing need to move beyond existing concepts and models to conceive and implement a system capable of tapping the rich human potential that remains largely underdeveloped and neglected in the existing system."

The social sciences in the 'existing system' are one of the main culprits in the current paradigm. In social sciences, notes another study by the World Academy of Art and Science, which has spent decades researching the problems of knowledge production:

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consistency and unification between and across disciplines are a rare exception. The theories governing each discipline exist in airtight compartments, each in its own separate world of principles and phenomena. It is almost as if the political, social, economic and psychological human being were different species, each with its own unique characteristics, rather than multiple roles and fields of expression common to all human beings. With few exceptions, each of the social sciences seeks to understand and describe a particular dimension of social reality with minimum reference to the action or interaction with other dimensions. Micro economic theories assume a set of specific conditions rarely found in the real world and regard all variations as intrusive externalities rather than natural and inevitable facts of the interrelationship between the economic, political, social and psychological dimensions of reality. This tendency reaches its acme in the neoliberal concept of free or unregulated markets, based on the premise that law and regulation are external factors interfering with the normal equilibrium-seeking movement between supply and demand. In reality, few markets – other than the black variety and the underworld – could exist at all in the absence of the legal and regulatory framework that defines and protect property rights and contractual relationships. Moreover, economics ignores the large non-monetarized part of human activity, all that we people do without exchange of money, the vital core of our existence without which no society or culture could survive and function, which represented around 80% of value added at the time of Adam Smith. Division and fragmentation of reality are the governing rules and modus operandi in the social sciences. Disciplinary and conceptual boundaries don't just focus attention; they also inhibit the discovery and study of processes that transcend those boundaries and bias public policy development in certain directions.

Thus neither Muslim societies nor the West need more social sciences, which cannot meet the challenges of postnormal times that "defy comprehension and resolution based on the prevailing principles and specialized knowledge developed by separate social science disciplines." To be viable as future enterprises, the study argues, social sciences have to deal with complexity and intricate and mutual interdependence of "all forms of life with one another and their physical environment; the social complexity of myriad interactions and interrelationships between human beings, their institutions and cultures; and the psychological complexity of conscious and subconscious thoughts, feelings, attitudes, needs, desires, sensations, and impulses which confront us with the insoluble mystery of our own personalities and of all those we relate to." What 'wicked problems' demand is an approach that emphasises the interconnection of everything ('the unity of creation'), the multi-dimensional political, economic, ecological, social and cultural challenges confronting us all, east and west ('unity of humanity'); and the fact that we are all living interdependent lives on the earth, the abode of our terrestrial journey ('unity of life'). So the first principles, the axioms mistakenly described by the *Work Plan* as a "methodology," turn out to be essential both for navigating postnormal times and for the future survival of all humanity.

Any attempt at knowledge production that begins with these axioms, even though they are rooted in Islamic thought and worldview, is intrinsically universal. The first principles do not focus solely on 'Muslims' or 'Muslim societies' but on the whole of humanity. Moreover, a natural corollary of these axioms is that human society and individuality cannot be properly understood in terms of modernity, postmodernism, secularism, positivism, reductionism, formalism and naturalism and numerous other 'isms' that have brought us to the edge of chaos in the first place. Human beings are purposeful. We create social, economic, political and cultural institutions not just to

meet certain needs, achieve certain objectives, but also to realize certain values. We pursue knowledge not only to acquire greater understanding and more effective action in the real world but also to promote certain principles that integrate knowledge with our cherished values, emphasise the interdependence of creation, unite humanity, promote equity and justice, and preserve and enhance life. Henzell-Thomas refers to this when he constantly emphasizes "holistic education" and insists that "we should be talking about education in a more universal sense."

Any meaningful attempt to integrate knowledge must include science and technology – something that has been seriously neglected in our discussions. Henzell-Thomas expressed concern about "the widespread over-emphasis on the applied sciences over the social sciences and humanities in higher education" but also presented the counter-argument "that the corrective emphasis on science and technology has become unavoidable in view of the indisputably backward state of scientific research in Muslim societies." A study of 20 member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference has found that these countries spent only one-seventh of the global average on scientific research from 1996-2003. This equates to 0.34 percent of their gross domestic product. El-Affendi thought that "the basic needs of society in technical skills are largely being met." Ibrahim pointed out that some rich Arab states have "pumped huge sums into science and technology but what is there to show for the research output? This begs the question: was the oil money invested by way of R&D and higher education or was it used to purchase science and technology?" He suggested our reform efforts should be "broadened to attract more scholars and participants from the physical sciences."

There are some basic points to be made about science and technology. As Isaiah Berlin pointed out over half a century ago, science and technology, have "above all others, shaped human history" in our time. It is "certainly the greatest success story of our time"; and requires great and mounting attention from all quarters. But science cannot take indigenous root in a society where philosophy is shunned and there is a conspicuous absence of culture of curiosity, inquiry and scientific enterprise. Whatever the statistics say or do not say, the fact is that no meaningful science is done, or has been done for over a hundred years, in Muslim societies. Without a thriving scientific and technological culture, Muslims cannot play any part in shaping human history. Moreover, separating science from other aspects of knowledge, as though it was a totally neutral endeavour, as Tayob notes, is to "disingenuously separate technique from culture, creating binary relations between form and content, means and ends. The approach assumes that there is nothing that links (science), technology and ethics, form and content. In our times, this approach provides a justification for turning to the West, and reinforces dependency whilst appearing to be independent." At the very least, science and technology, as the driving forces of the future, also need to be critiqued and deconstructed from the perspective of the 'First Principles.' If, "Muslim culture identifies true knowledge with moral rectitude," as Henzell-Thomas states, than should we not be exploring the moral and ethical consequences of scientific and technological advances? Integration of knowledge would make little sense if we left an important part of the equation out of the reform agenda. How could we meaningfully promote the unity of creation, humanity or life while allowing science and technology to undermine these very principles?

Tayob goes on to say that those who suggest that social and human sciences could be separated from the technological sciences argue that "the former would be exclusively drawn from the intellectual legacy of Islam, while the latter as techniques would be

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imported and developed from the advances made by the laboratories and factories outside (mainly in the West)." But the intellectual legacy of Islam furnishes us with both: a great heritage of scientific works and an equally prodigious inheritance of social and human sciences. We need both to sustain our future endeavours. However, it is not a question of going back to the classical Islamic framework – even though, as Ibrahim notes, "we know the Bayt al-Hikmah of the Golden Age of Islam gave birth to not just philosophers but eminent scientists as the holistic pursuit of knowledge saw the genesis of 'philosopher-scientists' competent in a wide spectrum of intellectual disciplines" Our classical heritage was a product of another period, over a thousand years ago where change was slow if not quasi-static and society operated on a different scale and levels of complication. Our classical thought had its own problems, particularly with plurality and diversity. By anchoring ourselves with classical thought we risk the danger of overlooking plurality and diversity within Islam and may end up denying viable alternative paradigms that are not totally in sync with the classical outlook. But we do need to learn from, and build on, the heritage, revisit the works of our great thinkers to discover the contemporary relevance of their ideas, and, as Ibrahim once said, instead of preserving the ashes of their fire move forward with its flame.

New paradigms do not emerge over night; nor do they displace existing paradigms suddenly and quickly. Paradigm shifts take decades of sustained thought and effort. Often the new emerges under the shadow of the old. Once again we face a paradox: to generate a new paradigm we need expertise and excellence in the old one! "Most research bodies currently encourage inter-disciplinarity and cross-disciplinary work," El-Affendi writes: "Some universities, such as Arizona SU, are experimenting with reconfiguring disciplines (thus abolishing Anthropology altogether in favour of a science of human exploration; that brings together biology, archaeology, geography, history, etc.). Some other ventures have gone even further, doing away with disciplines altogether, and forcing all staff to work together." However, in such outfits you still need someone to be good at the old basic disciplines, understand the latest thinking in discourse analysis, and be fully aware of new methodologies. "Not only that, but sub-specialisations also need to be catered for. No one these days can master all branches of physics and chemistry, let alone be good at all medical specialisations. Thus it is impossible to do away with many sub-specialisations in disciplines, let alone whole disciplines for simple practical reasons. But even if we decide to do away with disciplines, the entity undertaking such a move must include those who are competent in all the relevant disciplines to ensure that nothing is lost and much is gained by such moves. Otherwise, it could be like the Mongols chucking books into the Tigris without the slightest idea about what they contained." So the old paradigms linger on while the new develop and grow until they become the dominant paradigms – and the old may still continue in some functional way. Our project of reform should thus be seen in multi-generational terms. The seeds we sow in our times will only bear fruit in some not-so-distant future.

The Question of Language

Once we have determined what we wish to talk about, we need to decide how we talk about it. That is why we have devoted considerable time to the issues of language. Language is the basic tool through which we learn, teach, adapt to change and advance knowledge. It is an inseparable part of how we articulate our worldview, how we conceive ourselves as individuals and societies, shape our perceptions of the world around us, and engage with the world to change it. Yet, language is full of ambiguity

and in a fertile ground for misinterpretation or misunderstanding. Language is the preeminent tool of culture; and like culture, language has a history, layered like a vast archaeological site, the repository of acquired meaning. "Language is like a maze of little streets and squares," wrote Wittgenstein, "of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses." Like an old but thriving city, such as Fez or Istanbul, language is alive, lived in, adapting the old to new purposes. But the relationship between language and social change is not, and has never been, direct and uniform. As I have written elsewhere:

> Text is always subject to context and context provides for differential rates of change and usage in language and its multiple meanings. And society, like our language, is always a work in progress where ideas and attitudes as well as behaviours preserve, conserve, adapt, progress, liberalise and change according to the diversity of backgrounds and beliefs of the population at large.

> The more complex society becomes, the more specialised contexts it develops. This gives rise to more and more specialised groups, professions, disciplines of learning, as well as interest groups and subcultures, each of which can develop their own language to discuss their own business amongst themselves. At different rates and with varying affects these specialised languages and meaning can pass into the mainstream or affect the rest of society hardly at all. Complexity means different, even contradictory, meanings of words can continue to exist side by side or be used by different groups simultaneously. As new meanings and implications of language are being developed there is no inflexible law decreeing that old implications, associations or evocative import disappear.

We thus need to be precise in our use of language: we have to say what we intend to say, and ensure we say what we mean. Or, as Henzell-Thomas put it, "one of our pivotal objectives needs to be the marshalling of a level of terminology which provides orientation and balance in the way we navigate concepts." We have to distinguish authentic concepts from their distortions and counterfeits, their historic meaning and the new meaning we may wish to give them to "avoid being taken in or manipulated by ideological labels." So our first task in moving forward towards new paradigms is the development of "a balance and nuanced terminology based on different levels of description," which is "a key means in itself of resolving facile dichotomies."

At the very least, a concise terminology will help us avoid absurdities like 'Islamicity,' raising the connotations of ferocity and causticity. Indeed, during our discussion we came across an 'Islamicity index' described as "a measure which encompasses laws and governance, human and political rights, international relations, and economic factors," but which create the spectre of Islam globalising the world. The countries that topped the list and are seen as the most faithful to the values of the Qur'an – Ireland, Denmark, Sweden and the UK – would in fact be horrified to know that they have islamicity being pumped into their societies like electricity.

This task begins with the very description of what we have resolved to do, what we wish to talk about. I have used the term 'reform' but is it a process of reform, reconfiguration, revitalization, re-envisioning or transformation? The quest for the answer, according to Henzell-Thomas, is "a search for the Golden Mean, the 'due measure and proportion' invested in creation. A high objective, but are we not talking about 'higher' education"?

Henzell-Thomas generously provided a list of terms that have been used in the literature that we may consider:

1. *Reform* has been widely used. It was used, for example, in U.S.-Islamic World Forum paper 'Higher Education Reform in the Arab World,' co-convened by the Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World and the State of Qatar; and in the conference on 'Reforms in Islamic Education,' held at the Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge, 9-10 April, 2011. It might be noted that there are potentially negative connotations (for traditionalists) in the concept of reformation which may suggest a radical, even revolutionary, departure from traditional norms or orthodox teachings.

2. *Reconfiguration* has the sense of remodelling, restructuring, changing the shape. This is certainly one of the important challenges, as for example in the need to reform governance structures and effect major structural changes to address the problems of accommodating the massive influx of students who seek to enter the tertiary system in many Muslim societies. However, there is also an obvious need not only for *restructuring* but also for *revitalization* of content and values.

3. *Revitalization*, the term (along with "reform") used in AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman's occasional paper *Revitalizing Higher Education in the Muslim World* (IIIT Feb 2007) and in subsequent papers by the same author. Such revitalization involves, according to Ibrahim, the "revivification of Islamic knowledge and thought."

4. *Revision*, the term used in the 2002 *Arab Human Development Report*, which called for a "radical revision of educations systems in the Arab world" and "a program for education reform at the pan-Arab level."

5. *Re-envisioning* and *Revisioning*, the first was used in 'Re-envisioning the Future: Democratic Citizenship Education and Islamic Education,' a paper presented by Professor Paul Smeyers (Ghent University and K.U. Leuven) at the annual conference of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain at New College Oxford, 30 March-1 April, 2012. The second can have the general sense of re-evaluation, but it also has potentially pejorative connotations by association with Revisionism, a term which may not only refer to critical re-examination of historical facts or existing historiography, including the revision of fundamental ideological premises, but may also have the negative sense of denial of facts generally accepted by mainstream historians, or (as in the case of fictional revisionism) the making of substantial alterations to the characters or environment of a story. It should be noted that neither of these terms are used in future studies, where the simple term *visioning* – to create a vision of the future – is normally used.

6. *Reinventing*, the title of an October 2012 international conference in Madrid: 'Reinventing Higher Education,' where it was argued that higher education in Muslim countries needs a 'radical reinventing.'

7. *Regeneration*, a term often used in the sense of religious 'revival' and 'revivalism,' or in urban planning for developing and gentrifying a community.

8.   *Transformation*, the term largely associated with genetics where it refers to the natural or artificial alteration of cells, has also been used to refer to large scale changes such as in Dale F. Eickelman June 1999 Templeton Lecture on Religion and World Affairs entitled 'The Coming Transformation of the Muslim World.'

9.   *Revolution*, a term much favoured by radicals and those seeking to overturn the status quo is also sometimes used in relation to education. As an article in *University World News* reported: 'Saudi Arabia is an academic leader among Arab and Islamic countries and is joining the international scientific and higher education revolution.'

All these terms come wrapped with their particular histories, have positive and negative connotations, and are thus problematic. Further problems arise when we talk about 'authority' and returning to 'original sources.' For if we accept the authority of those who 'know' then we are back to square one: this is where legitimacy for authoritarianism is derived. When Henzell-Thomas urges us to "distinguish authentic concepts from their distortions and counterfeits," what does he mean by "authentic"? Who defines what is authentic? Can we pin something down as 'authentic' in history? Has the 'authentic' remained static in history or has it changed? Can we pin down the 'original essence' of things if they are often defined and redefined and lose their 'original' meaning?

Questions such as these raise some big issues. But the main issue is the obvious tension between the difficulty of pinning down what is supposedly 'authentic' (and thus defining our terms in relation to current conditions) and being as true as possible to the 'original essence' of things. Many young Muslims nowadays are trying to discover what they see as 'authentic Islam,' even returning to 'original' primary sources, yet end up with a literalist approach. Indeed, they often accept the 'authority' of those who 'know' in arriving at their literalist interpretation of what it means to be a Muslim in the twenty-first century. As Henzell-Thomas explains, "authenticity" and "authority" are connected in that the original meaning of "authentic" in English was "authoritative." "The word comes from Greek *authentikos* and its essential meaning is 'having the authority of the original creator,' that is, stamped (or 'signed') as coming from that 'source,' not a fake." So we are faced with a paradox here: "how to give space to both shifting and stable meanings, which is also the essential mission of avoiding the perils of, on the one hand, chronic rootlessness and disorientation, and, on the other hand, the aridity and fixity of authoritarian dogma."

There is also a clear link between "authentic" and "original." To be original, in the Greek sense, is to be "in accordance with our nature." As everyone has this innate capacity – even "simple" illiterate persons have the ability to understand universal principles – everyone could be "original." "It all goes back," writes Henzell-Thomas, "to a prehistoric Indo-European root which was the source also of English 'same, similar, and single.' This passed into Latin as *simplus*, 'single.' The 'simple' person is a 'single' undivided person, a person who is always 'the same,' true to himself or herself (Shakespeare: *This above all, to thine own self be true*). Simplicity is like a mirror which reflects the divine unity at the core of every human being." An original person can thus be authentic and hence authoritative (albeit not authoritarian) because he or she is stamped with the attributes of the ultimate *authority*, the original Creator. This connects us directly with the first principle of the unity of life and its foundation, the Islamic notion of the human being as *khalifa*, 'vicegerent' or 'representative' of God.

The overall aim here is to guard against ideological constructions of Islam as well as absolute relativism promoted so eagerly in postmodernist thought – and move towards some notion of plurality. The original French notion of ideology saw it as science of ideas and their truth and error but the term rapidly came to signify a total system of thought, emotion and attitude to humans, society and everything. Many Islamic movements, have often constructed Islam as an all-embracing ideology, a total and totalistic system that allows for no dissent, alternative perspectives, or plurality of any kind to flourish. Relativism is valuable when it promotes different viewpoints, perceptions and considerations, and even when it suggests that different views may not necessarily have absolute truth or validity. But it becomes a problem when it suggests, as in postmodernism, that there are no truths at all or nothing that can provide us with meaning. "So just as we might distinguish the creative world of ideas from the abstract constructs of ideology," notes Henzell-Thomas, we must also be aware of "the potential trap of a brand of relativism which abolishes all stable meaning."

Indeed, Henzell-Thomas provides us with an important list of terms that have to be clearly distinguished from each other:

> *identity* from *tribalism* and *sectarianism*, *diversity* from *division*, and *unity* (in diversity) from *uniformity* and the curse of standardised *mono-cultural* attitudes which dichotomise reality into competing *unilateral* or *unipolar* worldviews and ultimately into the isolating pathologies of civilizational *narcissism* and cultural *autism*. At the same time we need to distinguish the *authority* of divine revelation which liberates the human soul from the *authoritarianism* imposed by narrow human formulations which imprison it; and the existence of *absolute* and timeless truths from the tyranny of an *absolutism* which obliterates all context. The process can be carried further to distinguish *community* from *communalism* (or *communitarianism)*, *relationship* from *relativism,* and *individuality* from *individualism* and *solipsism;* and between *secularism* as an ideology seeking to marginalise or exclude religious voices in the public square and *secularity* in the procedural sense which assures religious freedom and gives a voice to all minorities.

> Similarly, the qualities of *individuality* need not be conflated with the *individualism*, which gives man no point of reference beyond his own ego and the gratification of his own individual desires. The expression of individuality, which is nothing more than the realisation and expression of the personal uniqueness of each human being, is not in opposition to the needs of the community. Quite the contrary, in an age of increasingly sterile conformity, uniformity and standardisation, the contribution of creative individuals who are realising their individual potential has never been needed more as a means of enriching and revitalising communities. *Communalism* will always suspect the individual of individualism, but a living *community* will respect and nurture individuality as a valid expression of diversity while being able to balance individual needs and modes of expression with collective rights.

The guiding principle in delineating the meaning of our terms, El-Affendi has suggested, should be balance; and we should remember, as the Qur'an tells us, that those who do not know are not equal to those who know and heed the warning of the Sacred Text not to follow our forefathers and classical scholars blindly. But under postnormal conditions, knowing itself is limited; or rather, it is intertwined with three varieties of ignorance – so wonderfully popularised by the great neo-liberal warmonger Donald

Rumsfeld – known knowns, known unknowns and unknown unknowns (what we may call the Unthought). We need a whole array of different and multiple perspectives to counter these varieties of ignorance – rather than assume that those who know actually know anything! Moreover, we must assume that each perspective is valid within its own domains – in other words, it is a known known. But even here there are elements of ignorance that we may have to tackle. Reaching a balanced position on an issue is thus not as easy as it may appear. There is also the issue of distinguishing between balance and compromise, as Henzell-Thomas suggests and illustrates the distinction by comparing balance to moderation: "we might well understand it in its authentic Qur'anic sense (or indeed in al-Ghazali's use of the concept of the golden mean as the ideal of human character) but we presumably would not want to accept it as meaning a dull compromise or in the sense it is often applied in public discourse and the media, where a 'moderate Muslim' is a good (not too religious) Muslim who is silent and invisible in the public square, effectively neutered and untroublesome."

Any worthwhile effort at reform must acknowledge and be aware of these distinctions. For it is through such a process – including semantic analysis of Islamic terms such as *khalifa*, *amanah*, and numerous others that we have not mentioned such as *shura*, *istislah*, *zulm*, *ahsan*, etc. – we will move forward to the pluralistic Qur'anic vision of unity within diversity. Plurality is not simply the acknowledgement of the mere existence of a diversity, or simply tolerating the Other, but following the injunction to "'know one another,' to explore the best of all traditions through respectful co-existence, mutual recognition, active engagement, and transforming love," as Henzell-Thomas put it.

One term we did embrace is polylogue, used for a wide-ranging conversation involving different traditions, perspectives and viewpoints. It emphasises the fact that more than two (dialogue) voices, perspectives and positions are involved in the resolution of a complex problems; and that we need to appreciate other 'truths,' however unpalatable, other positions, even though they may be unpleasant to us, to arrive at a consensual position that can meaningfully be described as 'unity with diversity.' As Henzell-Thomas notes, "polylogue is nothing if not about relationship. And I think it's so important to emphasize that this is not only about speaking but also about listening, a wide-ranging listening exercise." Polylogues, to which we shall return shortly, are one way of handling the contradictions and dichotomies we constantly encounter.

Contradictions and Dilemmas

It was repeatedly pointed out in our discussions that to build a solid conceptual framework for envisioning the reform of higher education, we need to resolve the fundamental dichotomies which consistently and persistently confront us such as tradition and modernity, text and context, stability and dynamism. The tree of reform should not only have its branches reaching into the sky, but also its roots firmly in the ground. On tradition and modernity, for example, it was pointed out that we should take a balanced approach – both have good and bad points, and we need both. We should, for example, move beyond the traditionalist paradigm, so entrenched in Muslim societies, that regards modernity in total disdain; or to use the words of Henzell-Thomas, "which harps on about the 'myth of progress,' the horrors of 'individualism,' 'secularism' and 'modernity,' and sees all human history as a downward trajectory of cumulative entropy, by which man becomes further and further removed from his 'primordial' and 'pristine' nature." But at the same time we need to acknowledge that modernity denigrates tradition, undermines the cultural heritage that sustains tradition,

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and seeks to replace tradition with modern secularism. Not surprisingly, the very social fabric of daily Muslim life is under threat of extinction. Similarly, we should not romanticise tradition and assume that everything based on tradition, or history and legacy, is by definition good. "In search for an alternative paradigm with indigenous integrity," Henzell-Thomas argued, "Muslims must channel the desire for some universality in Islamic values to establish the foundation of Islamic humanism, because it identifies something central to all humanity. Accordingly, the viability of the tradition rests upon its universal integrity that can affirm the belief that such a Muslim tradition is able to generate necessary confidence in its application and, at the same time, provide a model for expanded universal justification in conversation with secular or any other tradition that seeks Muslim attention."

Henzell-Thomas furnished a short list of contradictions and dichotomies, with additions from Ibrahim, that we must wrestle with:

- Knowledge and Values
- Secularism and Religion
- Utilitarianism and Usefulness
- Quantity and Quality
- Relativism and Transcendent Reality
- Efficiency and Moral Excellence
- The Rational and the Animal
- Justice to one's Self and Injustice

Many of these dichotomies are related to each other. For example, the challenge of reconciling knowledge and values can also be conceptualised as the challenge of doing equal justice to efficiency and moral excellence or quantity and quality. But a basic point about contradictions, which often emerge in complex systems, is that they are by definition opposing, irreconcilable views, which cannot be resolved: they can only be transcended. In other words, contradictions have to be synthesised in a new position that incorporates most of the incongruous elements of different positions. As Henzell-Thomas explained: "within the Western discipline of developmental psychology, K. Riegel identifies the ability to accept contradictions, constructive confrontations and asynchronies as the highest stage of cognitive development, and James Fowler associates dialectical thinking with the development of faith. It goes without saying that the dialectical process is not one either of compromise or loose relativism, but one of creative tension which ultimately transforms contradictions into complementarities, releasing the open-minded thinker from ingrained habits and conditioned patterns of thought, established affiliations, fear of change and instability, and reluctance to approach anything which may be threatening to one's own sense of 'self.' False certainties derived from such conditioning are not the same as the 'certitude' (*yaqin*) which al-Ghazali sees as the product of 'tasting' (*dhawq*) or direct experience."

In our journey towards transcending contradictions and reaching 'the highest stage of cognitive development,' we start out with the biggest contradictions of all: the contradiction between 'Us' and the 'Others,' so perceptively and well-articulated by Tayob. It begins, as Tayob notes, "with a neat division between what is called Islamic and what is called un-Islamic," and ends with the politics of identity. All historic attempts at reform of education, including that of the *Work Plan*, Tayob argues agree on the conception of identity: "they see the self as distinct from the Other. The Other was identified as utterly different, either a source of threat or value. For some, the self was threatened by an alien philosophy and humanity, which called for radical action in

one form or another. For others, the self could benefit from the other. Generally, a politics of identity supported these projects. And that politics was founded and rooted on the self and Other that were basically different from and incommensurable with each other. There was little common ground between self and Other: no common history, common values or common destiny." This sense of superiority over the Other – not just 'the West' but also Hindu India, indigenous cultures and languages, not just other sects but also other ways of knowing – has been a hallmark of Muslim thinking. Those who reject modern education, Tayob notes, see no value in the Other at all; some would happily kill the Other presumably to demonstrate the superiority of their own version of Islam! "The list of Others," writes Tayob, "keeps on expanding" – it begins with the *kuffar*, goes on to Shi'ites, but also then includes intimate allies who differ on minute issues. Those who support bifurcation also police the boundaries between self and Other on a continual basis. The irony and even tragedy, of course, lies in the fact that the unity of humanity would have been forgotten. And those who propose integration grapple with the underlying unity of the human condition, set against the particular self. They emphasize the value of the Other as a source of value – but not the Other as Self.'

Tayob suggests that meaningful reform requires a more inclusive and bolder approach to identity. Muslims often assume that they face unique problems and create research programmes and institutions that are exclusively suited for Muslims. This is a truncated approach to a complex, interconnected world. The problems of religion and secularism, as well as ethical and technological issues, that we witness in the West are also problems of Muslim societies – they are a mirror reflection of our own problems. The way religion has been turned into an instrument, for example, is not simply a problem of colonial history and western societies, as many Muslim scholars have argued. Muslim societies too have turned religion into an instrument. An evaluation of religion, its meaning, values and worldview thus has to be a part of educational reform. Similarly, all the problems we face at global levels are also Muslim problems – they will affect Muslims as much as any other group of people on the planet. The new paradigms have to be based on the axioms that the self is not just reflected in the Other but is also a projection of the unintegrated self, or in Jungian terms, of the 'shadow,' unexplored or unconscious aspects of the self, hence 'dark,' and thus fuel for demonization of all those who are different from us. Thus, the major moral, ethical, political, social, scientific, technological and cultural challenges facing the world have to be an integral part of a programme of reform.

It is interesting to note that Tayob uses insights from Rumi to develop arguments similar to those in postnormal times theory which are based on analysis of trend extrapolations, complex emergent systems, chaos theory, foresight and futures studies. A clear indication that our heritage has a great deal to say to us and our epoch. Given that power is now shifting from the West, or as Tayob puts it, "tomorrow is going on in India, Brazil, China," we need to develop partnerships with those "who are worried about the future of humanity and about life on earth."

Rankings and Futures Generations

In the light of this synthesis of our deliberations and the overall analysis offered here, our discussion on university ranking appears rather superfluous. It is clearly not the case, as El-Affendi suggests that "in established industrialised societies" most of the "important debates about the overall general direction of society" have "been

the major moral, ethical, political, social, scientific, technological and cultural challenges facing the world have to be an integral part of a programme of reform.

resolved." Rather these debates have resurfaced with increased vigour as a plethora of new books suggests; and the direction in which western societies are leading themselves, the rest of the world, and the planet is now being seen as detrimental to all life on Earth. This raises a number of questions on, to use Ibrahim's words, the "glaring issue" of "the global rankings" where Muslim universities consistently do exceptionally badly. Thus, we need to do something to improve our ranking and catch up. But what are we catching up with? An already crumbling higher education system? A system that fragments knowledge, perpetuates disciplinary structures that justify the dominant paradigm, and that has generally contributed to the planetary crisis that we all face? Do we want to compete with this system on its own terms and within its paradigm so that our universities rise up on the ranking ladder? Would catching up with the 'quality of education' in the West in a world dominated by a monolithic paradigm of cultural domination eradicate a sense of cultural homelessness experienced by Muslim students? And where would we end up if we 'catch up'? In a place where, to use the words of Harry Lewis in *Excellence Without a Soul* (much cited in our discussions) colleges and universities are "afraid to talk about truth, meaning, purpose and what it means to be human"; and where the "ideal of a liberal education lives on in name only" and no one teaches "the things that will free the human mind and spirit." Of course, to eschew the ranking system does not mean that one is endorsing the existing state of affairs in higher educational institutions of the Muslim world. As repeatedly pointed out in our discussion, the quality of education in Muslim universities is exceptionally poor, there is no freedom of inquiry, and, as a consequence, most of our brighter students seek post-graduate studies in the West almost as a routine. We begin with acknowledgment of the current reality but take in critiques of western institutions because, as Henzell-Thomas states, they are "important correctives to the assumption that the panacea for education in the Muslim world is the uncritical emulation of Western models, as if the main criterion for 'success' in 'catching up' amongst 'lame-duck' Muslim institutions is improvement in their global ranking as defined by international ranking systems and criteria." The point is how do we collectively – the West and the Muslim world – produce a new paradigm of education that not only promotes critical thought and the spirit of inquiry but also dares to talk about truth, meaning, purpose and what it means to be human in our complex and interconnected world.

There was a more enlightening discussion on inclusiveness and the young generation. El-Affendi hinted that our work should be empirically grounded, which presumably means we need to engage with the current cohort of students. In his response to El-Affendi, Henzell-Thomas was more explicit: "we may need a guiding paradigm but it is concrete empirical engagement which will provide the evidence that will enable us to refine our provisional hypotheses through the ensuing process of dialectic. From my own point of view, that absolutely requires that I have some insight into what young people (men and women) have to say about their own experiences." A basic maxim of futures studies, and hence all efforts at reform that are by nature future oriented, is that "the young people themselves *are* the future" (the irony is that very little futures works actually incorporates futures generations). Reformers themselves never live to enjoy the fruits of their reforms (or experience the nightmares they may have unleashed). It is the next generation that has to deal with the reforms and take them forward. That is why it is essential that we not only bring young people in our discussion but make them an integral part of our overall project.

But to be truly inclusive we need to involve all potential stakeholders in our discussions; our "empirical approach" should include, as Henzell-Thomas says, "a wide-ranging

listening exercise." There are two basic reasons for this. One, if we are working on the basis of unity of life and humanity, it is obviously necessary that we have as many representatives of humanity as practically possible in our deliberations. Two, given that we are dealing with complex issues and situations, it is important to realise that we can only grasp their multifaceted dimensions through complex perspectives. In emergent complex systems, this is known as Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety: a complex system needs another complex system to understand and navigate it. In postnormal science research (PNS), where sophisticated scientific issues with complex ethical, social, cultural and environmental consequences are being analysed, a mechanism called 'Extended Peer Community' is used. It involves wide ranging consultation with all those who may be affected by the outcome of science – including critics who do not share the paradigm, journalists, protesters, environment activists, bloggers, clergy, business interests, housewives and lay people. In postnormal times theory we call it Polylogue, where experts, critics, feminists, students, young researchers and scholars, as well as lay people are consciously and deliberately chosen within a structured discussion to arrive at a pluralistic synthesis. Things do not change positively with an 'all-male cast of older men,' when others, who probably have more at stake and certainly have as much to contribute, feel excluded. Positive, desirable change, we have learned during the last decades, is only ushered through inclusive, open and transparent deliberations. This means we have to consciously bring people of different backgrounds, ages, genders, sects, and perspectives into our meetings – and then provide them enough space to state their viewpoints as stakeholders. At the very least, we must nurture the young through a direct understanding of their needs, anxieties and aspirations. The lack of such respect and engagement with young voices is surely one of the main reasons for many of the problems besetting Muslim societies.

Moving Forward

So what are we talking about when we are talking about reform of higher education? The answers that emerge from our deliberations so far can be stated in turning the "awkward questions," asked by Henzell-Thomas at the end of his long commentary on El-Affendi's paper, into positive statements. We are talking about 'holistic education' in a more universal sense. Our goal is to create a new paradigm based on the first principles, as outlined in the *Work Plan*, where knowledge, creation, life and humanity are perceived as integrated within a universal framework. As such, we intend to go beyond the attachment to existing paradigms and models (which are usually inherently dichotomous and adversarial) in the realisation that the way forward is a new mode of consciousness which is integrative and inclusive and involves embracing the Other. In this endeavour, we aim to guard against the degeneration of valuable concepts and critiques into crippling ideologies and fixed frames of thought – so as not to repeat the mistakes of our predecessors. We aim to excavate the achievements of Islamic civilisation, demonstrate their contemporary relevance, and differentiate them from archaism and nostalgia which characterise civilizational bankruptcy. We aim to balance critical thinking with ethical values. As we aim to be a beacon of excellence for all humankind, we are aware of the need for such a potentially transformational contribution to be couched in terms which are generally accessible to a wider audience. Hence, we conceive this as a contribution to educational development in all societies, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. But our more specific objective is to generate a thought process with which Muslims can think as Muslims and think their way out of the contemporary crises. We aim to initiate a process that will usher a revival of thought and spirit of inquiry in Muslim societies, shift Muslim societies away from a politics of identity

We aim to excavate the achievements of Islamic civilisation, demonstrate their contemporary relevance, and differentiate them from archaism and nostalgia which characterise civilizational bankruptcy. We aim to balance critical thinking with ethical values.

towards aspirational values, encourage Muslim engagement with the contemporary world with all its complexity and contradictions, and create an informed citizenry fully equipped to take leadership role in the modern world.

Yet, we might make mistakes. But, at least, they will be new mistakes!

What Do We Need to Do to Achieve Our Vision?

We need to tackle the issue of reform in higher education from a number of different standpoints. We need empirical work as well as a theoretical analysis, including as Henzell-Thomas put it, "systematic mapping of current discourses, philosophies and theoretical positions to inform the development of a paradigm rooted in empirical inquiry." We need to revisit our philosophical and intellectual heritage and rediscover the ideas and notions that have contemporary relevance. We need to understand the fabric of modern knowledge production and appreciate the forces that are shaping the contemporary world: "it is precisely by recognising and understanding the condition of the world at this particular time that the challenge of religious and cultural pluralism can be met," says Henzell-Thomas. We need to be constantly on our guard against what might be called "terminological entropy," that degradation and running down of meaning within conceptual vocabularies: "this is not to give precedence to the temporal world over the spiritual world, nor to set one against the other, but to understand that human minds are conditioned differently in each age, and that tradition must be dynamically self-renewing and responsive to new conditions and new questions if it is to remain a living tradition." We need to distinguish between disorientated intellectual curiosity (no matter how 'open-minded,' 'original' and 'creative') and the intellectual endeavour grounded in the highest ethical and spiritual values which characterises a truly great civilisation. We need to be inclusive, involve young scholars, have more appropriate representations of gender and sects, and engage in wide-ranging listening exercises. And we need to explore the full range of methodologies by which the mind can be liberated from fixed frames of thought that are resistant to modification and change.

We are thus aiming to create a new discourse: a system of knowledge, new paradigms, concepts, terminology, canons, statements that have meaning for us, through which we deconstruct power and ideologies and engage and change the world.

A more holistic picture emerges when we combine what we wish to achieve with what we need to achieve it. In essence, what we are saying is that the world is not just there to be talked about; it has to be brought into being based on the axiom and principles we cherish. And through the process of creating a new world we come to understand ourselves, our history, our relationship to each other and Others, and our place in relation to Others in the world. We are thus aiming to create a new discourse: a system of knowledge, new paradigms, concepts, terminology, canons, statements that have meaning for us, through which we deconstruct power and ideologies and engage and change the world.

The project conceived by the *Work Plan* thus now shifts gear and moves from 'Islamization of Knowledge' to become a discourse on 'Integration of Knowledge.' For the new, emerging discourse to become an on-going multi-generational endeavour, rather than simply a one-time effort, it needs a thriving discourse community that shares its axioms and principles, works collectively to develop and expand the discourse using its concepts and terminology and communicates its achievements and goals. One cannot exist without the other: this is where we meet and resolve El-Affendi's "circular problem": "in order to generate new knowledge, we need viable institutions; but in order to have viable institutions, we need a new form of knowledge and

knowledge-producing and knowledge-absorbing capacities. So where and how do we start?" We work from both ends simultaneously.

I propose we start with a network of discourse community which we build from the ground upwards. As the network – and hence the community – come together and develops, it will produce new knowledge, and the new knowledge will feed into the discourse and propel it. We need to create a formal, global network of individual scholars, intellectuals, postgraduate students, and activists who accept our premise that an 'Integration of Knowledge' discourse is urgently needed. It is important to realise that the members of the network cannot just be Muslims; we also need input from other cultures; and not just from the West but also from India, China and Latin America. Although in the initial stage, when the contours of the discourse are being established, it would probably be better for most of the members of the network to be Muslim. The network is 'formal' in the sense that its members are selected on the basis of certain criteria, it is coordinated and funded, all collectively work within the discourse, and everyone participates in sustaining and developing the discourse. The researchers work in groups, local or international, as – what in network theory is called – nodes. Each node, an interdisciplinary team, tackles specific topics within an overall framework – using the same terminology and concepts as the building blocks of their research. Each node selects its own Chair who is responsible for the work of the Node and communications with the coordinators. During the year, members of the network discuss their work and seek input from other nodes via digital technology. However, all the nodes are brought together once a year to present the fruits of their research, to be assessed and critiqued by their peers, and to set the agenda for the following year. The annual Conference, probably a week long affair, also serves as a training ground for future scholars with specific workshops and lectures on methodology, critical analysis of emerging issues, and challenges of the future. Every member has access to the entire Integration of Knowledge project, its research output and its scholarly community. The output of the project is shared with Muslim and western institutions of higher education on a periodic basis to seek their views and criticism as well as to address their issues and concerns. The nodes eventually become El-Affendi's cherished "Centres of Excellence," located in "several locations in the Muslim world and in the West," but they focus not on social sciences but specific subjects that are an integral part of the 'Integration of Knowledge' discourse. Moreover, these centres are not imposed from the top, based on some plans that have been drawn, but evolved and mature organically to thriving sites of thought and knowledge production.

From our deliberations so far, we can identify four potential nodes that ought to be set up during the first phase of the project.

First, as Tayob has argued so forcefully, we need to begin with values, which means we have to "re-open the questions raised first in theology (*kalam*) in reaction to the challenge of rationalism in the history of Islamic thought." The first principles provide us with an overall framework of very general values but to go beyond into specific issues we need to work out what values we are actually talking about and promoting within what contexts. There is no fixed answer to the question 'what is goodness': a fresh water lake is good and provides a wholesome drink but the same lake becomes 'bad' when environment and other factors pollute its water. When Tayob asks, "what values should be promoted in our contemporary world marked by science, capitalism, diversity, mediatisation and globalization? What values should be promoted in educational institutions in relation to the Other as the enemy, the neighbour, the stranger and as the environment?," he is asking wicked questions that have complex

answers, which may themselves change with new advances in science, the emergence of new technologies, shifts in the nature of capitalism, and as accelerating change transforms society and social relations. Even the question, 'are these values fully determined by revelation,' requires a great deal of complex thought. Part of our problem is that philosophy has virtually disappeared from the Muslim world – which was one reason amongst others for the decline of Muslim civilization – and as a result we do not have a tradition of engaging with deep philosophical and ethical issues. Moreover, in a complex, interconnected, globalised world, often at the edge of chaos, it is not easy to determine, even for cultures with a vibrant philosophical tradition, what is good, better or best. The problem is pushed further into complexity in times of accelerating change when what is good may not actually remain good for long. So the problem will not be solved simply by looking back into *kalam* or the philosophical tradition of the Mutazalites or the Sufis. In some cases, we may find relevant and vibrant answers, as Tayob shows with Rumi. But the Great and Good of Muslim civilization did not solve all the problems of humanity; not all our contemporary questions of ethics and morality, which are deep, complex and have dynamic answers, can be discovered by interrogating our intellectual and spiritual heritage. Hence, we need to do both: revisit the philosophical heritage of Islam and develop a contemporary philosophical tradition of Islam, by engaging with contemporary philosophical trends of other traditions which are also struggling with complex issues of ethics and attempting to grapple with the moral and ethical issues we face today. Thus the accent has to be on the contemporary context and the group has to be truly interdisciplinary with representatives from other cultures.

Second, we need a node that works to deconstruct the definitional power of the modern knowledge system, including as Henzell-Thomas puts it, "systematic mapping of current discourses, philosophies and theoretical positions" and examines the current paradigm of knowledge and education in Muslim societies with the aim of producing alternative paradigms of knowledge formation. The goal is to produce alternatives that are more inclusive and humane but also rooted in both the intellectual history and tradition of Islam and the exploration of contemporary Muslim values carried out by the first node.

Third, the issues of legacy, heritage and our intellectual history have been raised again and again. For example, Sachedina asserts that "Muslim thinkers must engage in retrieving the original impulse of Islamic tradition, namely, to seek different forms of intellectual and spiritual engagement of Islamic heritage in multi-faith societies." However, he limits the exercise to "the long forgotten Islamic theological discourse that undergirded the renowned legal-ethical methodology" which "needs to be revived as a public religious discourse to increase the necessary applicability of theory to practice, of text to context and concrete space." Of course, the "public role of religion is not limited to public rituals that are performed individually as well as collectively"; but it cannot, surely, be limited to theology either. (I would venture to say that much of our classical legacy is part of our current problem). We need to see our heritage in all its sophisticated diversity – including the historical discourses on knowledge and its classification, philosophical debates and disputes, history and historiography, scientific and technological accomplishment, educational developments, city planning, environmental and ecological concerns, social and political criticism, art and literature, and other human accomplishments. In other words, we need to see the Muslim civilisation as a human civilisation – as, for example, portrayed by Marshall Hodgson, and not simply as a truncated entity obsessed with theological issues. We need a group of scholars, including of Islam and Islamic history but also historians and philosophers of science and technology, artists and novelists as well as literary critics and art

historians, to produce a more coherent and integrated picture of our legacy as human achievements. Or, as Hodgson would put it, as universal "world history" and not just as history of Islam. The function of this node is to provide relevant analysis of the legacy that feeds into nodes one and two.

Fourth, we need a group of sociologists, critics and futurists to work on contemporary trends – how they are affecting Muslim societies, changing social, economic and cultural behaviour, and creating desires and aspirations – and explore their impact on future generations of Muslims. Meaningful work of reform can only be done with an eye to the future. The new paradigms we aim to develop and evolve, the change we seek, can only occur in the future. We thus need to have some understanding of the kind of world we may find ourselves in ten, twenty years from now: what new arrangements of power will mean for Muslim societies, what new demands will confront Muslims cultures, and what would Muslims need to survive an even more complex and interconnected world of the future. The exercise involves both: understanding the dynamics that are shaping the contemporary world and appreciating the forces of change that are ushering a more colonising or a more liberating future. And equally important: how do the different pieces of research come together in an overall discourse, and how will the new paradigm we are aiming to develop and evolve fit the frameworks that alternative futures may produce. If one were to capture what we are aiming to do in one sentence, it would be: shaping a more viable future of Islam and Muslims and the world. Thus this node uses the outcomes of the first three nodes to develop a positive vision of Muslim societies and shapes policies, strategies and procedures that take us from here – the crisis ridden present – to there, a viable and thriving future.

While the four nodes have their own subject areas, they work in an interdisciplinary and integrated fashion to shape the new discourse of Integration of Knowledge. Of course, other subject areas for research and exploration, and with them new nodes, will emerge as we proceed with our work. But I would suggest that this is the bare minimum we need to initiate an Integration of Knowledge network and discourse community. A great deal of the work of the network can revolve around the re-launched *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*: a discourse community needs a journal which in turn becomes a platform around which the community evolves and matures. It would take time to find suitable scholars for our initial nodes; I would suggest that we allow at least two years to identify the individuals, seek their consent, and bring them together for an inaugural conference.

However, the time in between is important for doing some ground work. There are three specific projects that need to be undertaken to ensure that the 'Integration of Knowledge' network has some basis to work from; and they should be initiated now.

1. To learn from recent history, and as El-Affendi says, to have some ideas about "what went wrong," we need a critical study of the experiences of IIUM in Kuala Lumpur as well as other experiments such as Turkey's Gülen Movement, which has established a string of universities, and numerous Ismaili initiatives spearheaded by the Agha Khan, who has established Chairs in various western universities, built institutions of higher education in Pakistan and elsewhere. The study can also examine successful experiments in related contexts (selected institutions in Singapore, India and South Korea, for example) where some relative success appears to have been achieved. This is a task that can be undertaken by a couple of researchers and can be done within a year.

> **If one were to capture what we are aiming to do in one sentence, it would be: shaping a more viable future of Islam and Muslims and the world.**

2. We need every member of the network to use the same concepts and terminology, hence the same language, in developing the discourse. This requires a detailed lexicon of both English and Islamic terms and concepts to avoid confusion and distortion (by Muslims and non-Muslims), as well as to define them in our own specific way, give them a contemporary meaning, and incorporate them within the 'Integration of Knowledge' discourse. What, for example, do *we* mean by freedom, human rights, democracy, secularism and so on? What is the contemporary relevance of Islamic terms like *khalifa*, *shura*, *ijma*, *istislah*, or *ihsan*? The physicist Niels Bohr once told his colleague: "No, no, you're not thinking; you are just being logical." This is because we don't just think logically; we also think with and through concepts. Terms and concepts are the basic building blocks through which a worldview is shaped and which shape the world. Raymond Williams knew this well: his *Keywords*, not only developed, as the subtitle suggests, *A Vocabulary for Culture and Society* but laid the foundations of the disciplines of cultural studies, media studies, postcolonial studies and had a major influence on the emergence of postmodernism. Thus we need more than a glossary or a dictionary. The lexicon has to be an exploration of the changing meaning of terms and concepts, a historical and moral critique, and an attempt at contemporary formulation that has meaning within our first principles – a tool for developing a more nuanced understanding of indispensable terms and concepts that become the building blocks of the Integration of Knowledge discourse. It's function is to lay the foundation of a new integrative and inclusive 'mode of consciousness' that moves us toward the new paradigm. It is a task that can be performed by a single scholar, with expertise in linguistics; but the lexicon has to discussed, debated and critiqued by a collective for it to be widely accepted.

3. To ensure that all the members of the 'Integration of Knowledge' network are aware of the essential works of our intellectual and literary legacy, as well as to infuse an appreciation of our rich heritage in the young generation, we need a text on the Muslim canons. These are works of universal significance, produced within an Islamic purview that we need to read and re-read, over and over again. The canons serve as a repository of our memory: they do not only enlighten us about the past but also provide hope for the future. Therefore, we need something more than a mere list of authors of the canons – we also need to know something about their universal and timeless content as well as their contemporary significance. What do they say to us *now*? At this juncture, it is interesting to note the impact Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon* had on academia. It was deliberately produced at a time when questions began to be raised about the status and use of the corpus of mostly American philosophical and literary texts that had to be read by undergraduates – not just in the US but almost everywhere. Multiculturalism was in vogue and issues about world literature and philosophical traditions of the non-West had come to the fore; and demands were being raised that non-western classics should also be taught in western universities. Indeed, many institutions were changing their curriculum. Bloom's work was a product of his concern that the philosophical ideals, historical accomplishments, and literary classics of Western civilisation were being abandoned. But it was not just a question of what the students should read but also, more importantly, an issue of power. Almost single-handedly he corrected the course and brought everyone into alignment! Twenty years later, the emerging shifts in global power are once again transforming the shape of culture, art and literature and the way they are conceived and studied. So it is an

opportune moment to produce a volume that provides an integrated perspective on Muslim canons, demonstrates their universal significance, ensures that members of the 'Integration of Knowledge' network are aware of them, and encourages students to read and engage with them. Bloom toiled for years on his volume; but this project can be accomplished within a couple of years by an interdisciplinary team of scholars.

4. It has been emphasised repeatedly in our deliberations that we should listen to the young and bring them into our discussions. Steps have already been taken towards this goal and our future meetings and conferences are planned to coincide with the Summer Schools organised by IIIT in Istanbul, Sarajevo and other places. Participants from both meetings can engage with each other and the young scholars could be brought in to take part in our debates as equals. However, we should also take a more specific step: commission an 'age cohort' study to discover the problems, needs, anxieties, aspirations, and hopes of this generation, and see what kinds of values and concerns they will bring with them regarding higher education when they move into positions of power and influence in a decade or so. It need not be an elaborate exercise, although it can be. A structured survey of a representative population should do the job!

The king is dead: 'Islamization of Knowledge,' like most ideas, has moved on. It was a product of its time and context. But it has left a legacy: not least in articulating concerns about the dire state of Muslim thought and education, drawing attention to the Eurocentric nature of social sciences and enunciating the first principles. We move forward with 'Integration of Knowledge.' Long live the king. We hope that the new king is suitably attired.

The king is dead: 'Islamization of Knowledge,' … We move forward with 'Integration of Knowledge.' Long live the king.

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