

# *Epistemological Integration*

Essentials of an Islamic Methodology

## EPISTEMOLOGICAL INTEGRATION

ESSENTIALS *of an* ISLAMIC  
METHODOLOGY



FATHI HASAN MALKAWI

IIIT Books-In-Brief Series

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ESSENTIALS OF AN ISLAMIC METHODOLOGY

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Original Edition Translated from Arabic by Nancy Roberts

Abridged by Wanda Krause

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**Epistemological Integration: Essentials of an Islamic Methodology** seeks to construct an intellectual framework for an Islamic methodology with a view to realizing practical training in the thoughtful investigation of issues related to knowledge in various fields. The book describes distinctive types of integration that characterize Islamic methodology, including integration of sources, means, and schools of thought, as well as existing realities with desired ideals. This approach is fully consistent with human nature, as variety is fundamental to the functions people perform and skills they can master.

The work essentially makes the case that fundamental to any Muslim intellectual and moral recovery is laying the foundations of sound thinking and values and developing practical means by which to bring the fruits of that knowledge, goals or ideas into a working arena. Epistemology and Methodology, as governed by *Tawhīd*, lie at the heart of this theory in order to renew the intellectual vitality, energy and spiritual understanding of Muslim thought and achievement, to function as the motivating force of a once vigorous Islamic civilization in a modern context.

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## Author's Preface

The matters that concern this project can be summed up in terms of four focal points: 1) the Islamic worldview, which includes the Islamic epistemological system and Islamic methodology; 2) methods for dealing with the sources of Islamic knowledge, which include the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah; 3) methods for dealing with our written heritage, including both the Islamic heritage and the human heritage as a whole; and 4) methods for dealing with reality, including both reality as it is (through field studies of facts on the ground and nature of things, events and phenomena), and reality as it ought to be (through futuristic studies).

The need for orderly thinking is not restricted to a single culture, nor to a single specialization or area of interest. Over the past fifty years, numerous scholars have attempted to purge Arab-Islamic thought and its associated methodology of false ideas. Some have used *uṣūlī* methods to explain the prosperity and distinctiveness of Islamic culture, while others have sought to explain the regression of Islamic civilization as resulting from the juristic method that prevailed among earlier Arab Muslim thinkers. Still others have argued that this same juristic method laid foundations and established criteria for interpreting religious texts, thereby depicting the principles of jurisprudence as a theory of hermeneutics, in which case it becomes a closed system. This type of evaluation lends more attention to the historical application of Islamic ways of thinking and the heritage they produced than it does to the principles that inhere in the original sources of these ways of thinking, that is, in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. It gives insufficient attention to the purposes these sources were intended to fulfill and the broad horizons such principles can open up to us in numerous fields of knowledge and spheres of life.

“Epistemological integration” – which is a comprehensive, systematic integration of the sources and means of knowledge – constitutes the

frame of reference for Islamic methodology. This book argues epistemological integration is a necessity. It is fully consistent with human nature. Variety is a natural, authentic phenomenon that should be accepted and put to good use. Hence, there is a genuine need for cooperation and integration, since variety is basic to human nature, with people coming from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, speaking different languages, or descending from different tribes. Variety is also fundamental to conceptualizations, beliefs, and religious faith and practice. *Methodology of Epistemological Integration: Essentials of Islamic Methodology* is an attempt to construct a program, which helps to spread awareness of methodological thinking, research and behavior.

## Chapter One

### Concepts of Relevance to Epistemological Integration

Chapter one has the following four sections:

1. Epistemological integration vs. the unity of knowledge.
2. The principle of divine oneness (*tawḥīd*) as the foundation for epistemological integration.
3. Epistemological integration in the Islamic worldview.
4. Constraints and obstacles along the path toward epistemological integration.

Discussion initially focuses on “epistemological integration” in relation to the unity of knowledge and the principle of God’s oneness, *tawḥīd* as the foundation for epistemological integration. Further discussed is epistemological integration citing some key scholars’ contributions with, lastly, constraints and obstacles along the path to epistemological integration. The chapter argues for the necessity for epistemological integration as a frame of reference for Islamic methodology as relates to thought, research, and conduct, as in the sound ways of dealing with questions relating to knowledge and behavior. In other words, the book’s goal is to build a model for epistemological integration of sources and means of knowledge, and how to acquire sound knowledge from integrated sources using integrated means.

The practice of devoting oneself entirely to a single specialization is actually a recent phenomenon in human history. It emerged in response to the unprecedented expansion that has taken place in human knowledge over the past century, with the result that it has become virtually impossible for a single scholar to specialize in more than one field. In earlier times, sages and scholars spoke of integration between knowledge and action. Among several others of the time, Ibn Rushd affirmed the possibility of linking wisdom and the divinely given law, while Ibn Taymiyyah affirmed the concept of integration in his insistence that there can be no contradiction between a correct understanding of divinely revealed texts and what is clear, explicit to human reason. Attempts followed to integrate principles, theories and scientific research on the one hand, and their practical applications on the other as “pure” science and technology joined hands. However, despite the dominance of a single specialization, there is now greater awareness of the need to integrate various areas, especially that of modernity with tradition, excellence with soul, etc.

The term “epistemological integration” (*al-takāmul al-maʿrifī*) can describe individuals who have an encyclopedic knowledge of things, especially in language, literature, Islamic jurisprudence, the Qurʾanic sciences, the Hadith sciences, history, and possibly astronomy, medicine or mathematics. The phenomenon of creative production in more than one field of knowledge was clearly a distinguishing feature of the age in which many well-known Muslim scholars lived. As mentioned, the practice of devoting oneself entirely to a single specialization is a recent phenomenon.

Epistemological integration might be classified as a branch of philosophy – ontology, epistemology, or ethics – in which case it takes on an abstract, theoretical dimension. It can also be classified as a type of cultural, social activity when the purpose for which it is undertaken is to provide necessary resources and to transform them into political, economic or social activity. The goal here is to facilitate life for people on the practical level, in which case it takes on a social, applied dimension. There are two dimensions to the process of epistemological integration: a productive dimension and a consumptive dimension. In its productive dimension, integration is a form of intellectual creativity, which requires special skills. Taking a productive or constructive approach, it is generally accompanied by an evaluation of the elements that will go into the new amalgam, and the matrix of relationships that bring them together for a new purpose or aim.



The consumptive dimension on the other hand has to do with the use of the intellectual structures upon which integration rests in order to understand the phenomena or issues under investigation, identify the distinguishing elements of knowledge in its integrative framework, and facilitate the communication of this knowledge to others. The difference between the productive-constructive and the consumptive dimensions of epistemological integration might be likened to the difference between the physicist who discovers a given natural law or the technologist who develops an instrument or machine based on this law, and the technician who works in a factory in which this instrument or machine is used.

Exponential growth in information and data has resulted in a mass of knowledge so vast that, in order for us to be able to cope with it, it has had to be divided up into separate fields and specializations, and the more our knowledge increases, the more it has to be divided and fragmented. Out of this process have emerged individuals with a reductionist view of the world who focus excessively on parts of the truth that are immediate and direct, while losing touch increasingly both with history and with the larger and more comprehensive picture of the cosmos. The knowledge and information in our possession draw our attention away from the whole and toward the parts.

Nonetheless, there is an ongoing recognition that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This “new science” recognizes that definitive knowledge, complete understanding, and total certainty of the truth are ideals that may never be realized. In their place it offers a new truth, namely, that the universe is not in a simple, static, disconnected state that has no meaning, like some mindless machine, and that human beings did not appear in this universe by accident or mere chance. Rather, the universe appears to be cohesive, its parts connected to one another, it grows and changes in a conscious fashion, its reality is integrated in its structure and features. While human beings appear to be a means of achieving the purpose for which the universe was created, the human mind appears to be the most complex entity known to us. One might venture the claim that the new science, through the powerful message it presents about the new reality, is heralding the dawn of the long-awaited new age, the post-modern age, in which the unity of knowledge can be realized.<sup>1</sup>

Numerous Muslim intellectuals began to be influenced by Western ideologies that raise a barrier between science and religion. As a result,

a large number of contemporary Muslims have taken it upon themselves to address the dangers involved in separating Islam from science and the need to re-establish the vital link between them based on the principle of divine unity. There is, in addition, an Islamic discourse on the unity of knowledge based in spiritual experience. This discourse views knowledge from a traditional perspective, which was expressed by the civilizations of the East within a metaphysical framework based on principles derived from the timeless teachings of the divine revelation in its various forms.

The concept of epistemological integration is linked to the concept of the unity of knowledge, which constitutes the logical foundation for such integration. The Islamic principle of divine oneness; i.e., *tawhīd*, is the foundation of Islam and that which gives Islamic civilization its identity. When Muslims developed the science of *al-tawhīd*, they combined within it the areas of logic, the theory of knowledge, metaphysics, and ethics. Islamic monotheism (*tawhīd*) draws a crucial distinction between the transcendent Creator and the created universe. It is the will of the Creator, which defines creatures' existence, their behavior, and their organic structure. The reality of God's oneness is manifested in the fact that the universe is founded upon orderly behavior. Such orderliness points to the unity of the authority that brought such order into being, namely, the one God.<sup>2</sup>

Acknowledgment of God's unity – *tawhīd* – presupposes by necessity an acknowledgement of the unity of truth as well. As *tawhīd* serves to confirm the absolute oneness of God Almighty, it likewise confirms the unity of sources of truth. God is the Creator of the natural world from which human beings derive knowledge. The object of knowledge consists of the things and events of nature, which are creations of God. It is a certainty that God knows these things and events, and it is equally certain that God is the source of revelation. Moreover, God gives human beings something of His vast, all-encompassing, perfect knowledge.

*Tawhīd* invites human beings to draw connections between God as Creator and the pursuit of knowledge in its various spheres. The reason for this is that when human beings perceive the work of God in all events and things, they are observing the work of divine creation. When they observe God's works in nature, they are engaging in the natural sciences, since the divine creation in nature is none other than the patterns and laws that God has deposited in the natural realm.

Similarly, when human beings perceive the work of divine creation in themselves or their societies, they are engaging in the human and social sciences.

Every one of us lives in accordance with his view of the cosmos – his/her worldview.<sup>3</sup> An Islamic worldview is an expression of the overall belief-based conceptualization embodied in Islamic doctrine. This conceptualization offers a comprehensive explanation of existence. It also gives rise to individuals' concrete way of life and the rules that govern their behavior in light of their understanding of their place in the universe and the purpose of their existence.<sup>4</sup>

Epistemological integration is not merely a mental activity and theoretical venture but, in addition, a psychological and educational process whose aim is to liberate the Muslim mind, nurture the Muslim psyche, and motivate Muslims to accomplish, create and reform. The analysis of crisis in the Muslim mind and psyche, would propose needed measures for dealing with these crises, among which is to rebuild and apply the monotheistic, integrational dimension of the Islamic worldview, as being a systematic, scientific, and comprehensive vision of love and goodness that puts resources to the best, most constructive possible use. The monotheistic approach involves acknowledging the integration and interdependence that exist between the divine revelation as embodied in nature, and in the written word.

Ibn Rushd affirmed, “Existent entities point to the Maker through our knowledge of their workmanship, and the more complete our knowledge of their workmanship, the more complete will be our knowledge of the Maker.”<sup>5</sup> According to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, the Qur’anic verses which speak about the stars can only be understood with help from astronomy, and the verses that have to do with health can only be understood based on the study of medicine, etc.<sup>6</sup> Al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd differed on the subject of epistemology; yet, they agreed on the need for the integration of knowledge, with al-Ghazālī seeing such integration in the structure of knowledge itself (integrality), and Ibn Rushd seeing it in the various sciences’ need for one another (complementarity).

In a specialized work spanning eleven volumes, Ibn Taymiyyah presented an exhaustive discussion of the sciences human reason has generated, be they philosophical or natural, in comparison with the texts of divine revelation. Ibn Taymiyyah was of the view that there

cannot be any contradiction between the two types of sciences. Rather, that which is truly rational will never conflict with the proper understanding of divine revelation.

However, there are constraints and obstacles along the path to epistemological integration. Scholars with narrow specializations will continue to make significant scientific accomplishments, and the vast majority of scholars strive to prove themselves through specialized work. Such scholars may feel that working in the areas of integration and unification would come at the expense of opportunities for competition and academic excellence, which would threaten their futures. Efforts to address problems relating to over-specialization and the resultant atomization of knowledge result in the emergence of personalities with a distressingly superficial understanding of things. In such situations, the results of epistemological integration are not encouraging; in fact, nothing is a greater hindrance to progress than the “jack of all trades, master of none” who chatters constantly about generalities in this field or that, but lacks the ability to delve deeply into any of them.<sup>7</sup>

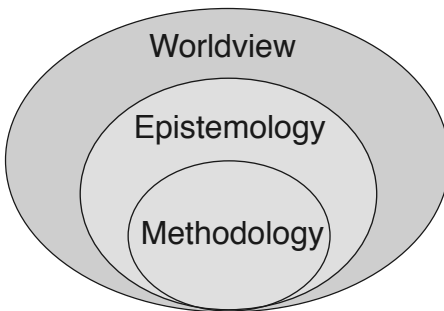
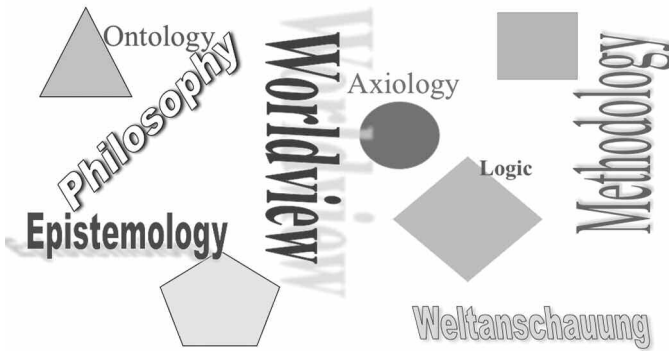
There is a danger that, under pressure to find evidence to support claims of unity and complementarity, those who support epistemological integration may search for links among the sciences or relationships among the data that have no real existence. Such efforts may backfire or produce futile or laughable results. At the same time, some studies may have the appearance of methodological rigor, when in fact they are filled with specialized jargon that conceals their superficiality and incoherence. However, an even greater danger lies in the natural human tendency to find what one is looking for, or what one is expecting to find. This tendency can lead a researcher unknowingly into error, thereby undermining the external validity of his research design.

One of the most serious obstacles facing new ideas and their applicability is the tendency to misunderstand those who advocate these ideas, or to misrepresent or misapply the ideas themselves. The sincere desire to adopt and promote an idea is not enough to persuade others of it, or to create the circumstances conducive to its acceptance and application. Rather, the idea also needs to be correctly understood and represented. In view of the variety of concepts relating to the unity and complementarity of the sciences and their association with specific metaphysical points of reference, these concepts are frequently

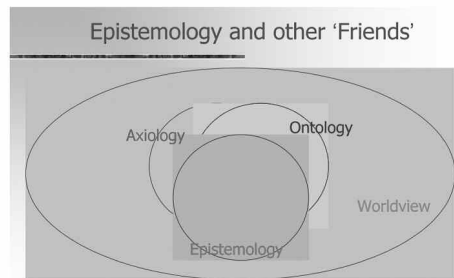
accompanied by a certain degree of confusion or ambiguity. As a result, they fail to achieve significant practical outcomes.

The purpose of this chapter has been to highlight the value of epistemological integration from a monotheistic (*tawhīdi*) Islamic perspective and the place of such integration in the Islamic approach to thought, research, and behavior. It is this approach, or methodology, which the next chapter will explain.

### Jungle of shapes, colors and directions



Circles of Belonging



*These three diagrams illustrate a method, putting a group of concepts together allows them to be seen in an interrelated and organized meanings way.*

## Chapter Two

# Method and Methodology: The Nature of Concepts and the Importance of Investigating Them

Chapter two has the following three sections:

1. Method and methodology: the concept and the term.
2. The importance of studying Islamic methodology and systematic thinking.
3. Fundamental concepts of relevance to methodology.

There is an ongoing need to research and discuss methodology and systematic thinking. The aim is to validate those aspects of existing methodology that are correct and effective, and to correct those aspects that are flawed. In this light, Chapter two seeks to clarify the meanings of the Qur’anic concept of “method” (*minhāj/manhaj*) and its relationship to other relevant Qur’anic terms. It thus proceeds first to distinguish between *minhāj/manhaj* (road, way, method) in the sense of a manner of arriving at a place or achieve a goal, and *manhajyyah* (methodology) as a way of going about a task. Second, it discusses the importance of research into Islamic methodology and systematic thinking, referencing some key scholars. Third, it discusses basic concepts of relevance to methodology with worldview as key to this discussion. It further clarifies the meanings of the concepts of worldview and epistemological system, as relates to *manhajyyah*.

For the purposes of distinguishing between method and methodology, the terms *nahj*, *manhaj* and *minhāj* are synonymous, referring to a clear, straight road or path that leads one easily to one’s destination. These words also convey the sense of traveling quickly down a road because of its straightness and freedom from obstacles, or accomplishing a task quickly due to the clarity of the manner in which it is to be done.<sup>8</sup> All three words are derived from the root *n-h-j*, which bears the sense of becoming clear, or being or becoming a clear road or path. *Minhāj* is a way of life, which it pursues in keeping with its shari‘ah, whose guidance helps to purify people’s souls.

The essential meaning of the term *minhāj/manhaj*, namely, ‘way’ or ‘path’, occurs scores of times in the Qur’an. The contexts in which

these terms appear are associated consistently with right guidance and error. Believers ask God to lead them along the straight path (*al-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*), the path of those upon whom God has bestowed His grace, thereby guiding them to the right way – not those who have earned God’s wrath and lost their way, but, rather, those who recognize the right path and to which they commit themselves.

The terms *minhāj*, *ṭarīq*, *ṣirāt*, *sunnah*, *hidāyah* (guidance), and *nūr* (light) share a number of significations in common, as they all have to do with human striving to tread the straight, clear path that leads to their intended destination and goal. If human beings’ purpose in this earthly existence is to worship God in the broadest sense, to be God’s stewards (*khalīfah*) on earth, and to achieve human development, then the *minhāj* is the means of achieving this end, or the path leading to this goal. This means or path will take the form of various intermediate goals. God has committed Himself to guiding people to the right path. To this end He makes the path plain while warning us that there are paths that lead to error rather than to truth.

The terms *manhaj*, *sabīl*, and *ṣirāt* all refer to a path or way that leads to the fulfillment of a specific purpose for which human beings strive to obtain knowledge or benefit of some kind. However, they can also refer to the path one follows in this life in order to attain the life to come. In other words, they include the idea of a path that leads to a life of perfection, and it is in this sense that the term *manhaj* is used most frequently in the Qur’anic revelation. A further value of *minhāj* is that one takes it as a path to reach one’s intended destination or goal, *maqṣid*. Movement is to be directional, along a straight path toward a goal or destination, and by means of a purposeful striving.

On the other hand, the term *manhajīyyah* can be rendered in English as “methodology,” which is defined as the science of method,” or “a branch of logic which analyzes the principles and procedures governing research into a given field of knowledge. The term “methodology” can also be used to refer to the theoretical foundations of a given philosophical school, that is, its fundamental assumptions, premises and concepts.<sup>9</sup> “Methodology” thus refers to a modern discipline that concerns itself with methods and ways of engaging in research and investigation, and which is of relevance to all sciences.

The sphere of operation for methodology encompasses all fields of knowledge in their various categorizations, whether they pertain to

revelation, reason, Islamic law, nature, society or other topics. Methodology may have to do with the way in which we think about these fields, the research conducted to acquire, test and apply knowledge, or day-to-day conduct and scientific practices engaged in based on the guidance provided by such knowledge. However, the terms *minhāj/manhaj*, *nahj* and *manhajyyah* are more closely linked to scientific research and its associated procedures than they are to issues relating to thought and individual conduct and practice.

Islamic methodology has to do with the process of thinking Islamically and the nature of the ideas that arise from this process. Hence, it is associated with Islam's overall aims and intents. The issue of methodology in its intellectual dimension is thus inseparable from the way of life that Islam seeks to promote and nurture in Muslim society. The aim of Islamic thought is to establish an Islamic way of life in this earthly realm so that it becomes a passageway to felicity in the life to come.

Research into and understanding of Islamic methodology and systematic thinking is essential, to understand other methodologies and their impact on our societies. We also need to familiarize ourselves with such methodologies and discern the ways in which we make use, adopt, confront and relate to them. The absence of practising Islamic methodology is a major factor in the intellectual crisis being faced by the Muslim community. Consequently, it is also important to recognize the need to join efforts to construct and clarify such a methodology as a basic foundation of the Islamic culture and civilization that the Muslim community seeks to establish.

It is rare to find a systematic practice on the part of Muslim specialists in the various epistemological fields. Thus, to confirm the existence of a methodological awareness that constitutes a foundation for the contemporary Islamic intellectual reform movement, I highlight the contributions of a few key scholars. These scholars include Isma'īl al Fārūqī, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, Taha Jabir Alalwani, Taha Abd al-Rahman, and Ahmad al-Raysuni.

Al Fārūqī viewed methodology as central to the Islamization of knowledge, basing his approach on the notion that the Muslim community is suffering from a serious loss of direction which threatens its ability to shoulder its responsibility to guide the world. In his view, the way to address the crisis facing the Muslim community, as arising



from within the educational system with the secular public educational system devoid of an Islamic perspective and a traditional Islamic educational system that is out of touch with reality and viewed as secondary importance to a western secular system, is to unify the two educational systems into a single system that aims to instil an Islamic worldview in students' minds and familiarize them with the nature of Islamic civilization and its defining features.

Such a system would aim to reformulate all branches of modern knowledge from an Islamic perspective in the context of a well-rounded curriculum. This would enable members of the Muslim community to construct a contemporary Islamic knowledge that combines revelation and reason, thought and action and, in so doing, leads to earthly prosperity and felicity in the world to come. He saw both standing alone as equally powerless to revive and reform the Muslim community. Al Fārūqī thus called for the Islamization of knowledge as a necessary starting point for overcoming the dichotomy in the educational system, the dichotomy in the life of the Muslim community as a whole, and the ineffectiveness of traditional Islamic methodology.

AbuSulayman holds that there exists an Islamic methodology, which can be clearly distinguished from the methodologies of other cultures and peoples. This methodology represents a human effort to understand the interaction that needs to take place between the instructions contained in the revealed text and the issues people face on the ground in order to fulfill the religion's purposes and aims. This methodology is in a constant state of evolution and development, in an ongoing response to newly arising circumstances and challenges. For him, the key process for evolution entails first understanding Islamic texts based on the higher aims and intents of the religion, viewing all texts relevant to the topic under investigation in light of one another, and interpreting these texts within the temporal and geographical context in which they were written as a way of discerning the most prudent way to apply them to current realities.

Alalwani stresses the need to bring to light the "logic" of the Qur'an and what he terms "the cosmic Qur'anic methodology." This methodology is distinguished by a set of Qur'anic methodological determinants of which he details three: 1) *al-tawhīd* as the pivotal element of the Qur'anic worldview, 2) combining the "two readings," that is, our reading of the Qur'an and of the created universe, and 3) the structural unity of the Quran and the cosmic truths it encapsulates. Alalwani then

links these three Qur’anic methodological determinants with construction of an epistemological integration methodology.

Abdul-Rahman argues that researchers need to derive their own methodology through adherence to a set of theoretical and practical principles, the most important of which is to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the methods and approaches used by early Muslim scholars and thinkers from various scientific fields, as well as sound knowledge of modern methods and approaches. In so doing researchers can go beyond the practice of imitation and the borrowing of theories to that of innovative interpretation and the formulation of original methods, approaches, and theories.<sup>10</sup> He refers to his work as “the jurisprudence of philosophy.”

Al-Raysuni argues that Muslim thinkers need to be cognizant of both the higher intents of Islamic law and aims-based method, stating that *al-maqāṣid* (intents and purposes) constitute a distinctive manner of thinking and seeing, analyzing and evaluating, drawing conclusions and putting things together.<sup>11</sup> He believes that in light of the higher intents of Islamic law, we will be able to draw inferences, put pieces together, see how things compare, and how they are to be ordered. He further argues that such engagement must involve a methodical approach based on rules and principles, applicable to the practice of innovative interpretation and juristic reasoning, as is otherwise currently marked by a kind of inflexibility and exactitude, in order to deal with chaos and laxity.

It is essential to discuss basic concepts of relevance to methodology, namely worldview, and clarify the meanings of the concepts of worldview and epistemological system. Worldview significantly impacts the ways in which we perceive the world we live in, our place in that world, and the way we understand the natural and social sciences. People form an overall picture of themselves and of the world around them within the limits imposed by the location from which they are viewing things, the angle they take, their natural, psychological and social environment, and the prevailing system of thought with its linguistic components and authoritative frameworks. It is this overall picture – variously referred to as cosmic vision, overall idea, cosmic conceptualization, general philosophy, comprehensive explanation, explanatory paradigm, or ideology – that has widely come to be known as worldview.

It should be clarified, however, that an individual does not necessarily

construct his or her own worldview. Rather, it comes into being in every individual's mind in a more or less spontaneous manner. As such, worldview is a component of human beings' innate makeup, given their tendency to be influenced by the intellectual environment in which they live and to assimilate prevailing social customs and traditions.

From the Islamic perspective, worldview is a mental perception of the natural, social and psychological realms. As such, it is like a set of stationary and moving pictures, which draw people's attention and call them to reflect and contemplate with the aim of acquiring understanding and insight. Worldview is also an attitude toward the world, a state of mind that requires one to relate actively and constructively to the world, in peace and harmony, reverence and respect, desire and wonderment. Furthermore, worldview is a plan to change the world, that is, a set of goals through the achievement of which people hope to make the world more harmonious and balanced, and to put resources to use towards creating a better life for themselves and others in the realization that our earthly life is a place of preparation for life in the world to come.

Worldview – from the epistemological point of view, at least – is more important by far than any other factors of relevance to human behavior, because it is the only framework in which human reason can operate to acquire knowledge. Consequently, worldview constitutes the foundation for any epistemological theory. The elements that go to make up the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, are sometimes referred to as “the epistemological system.” An epistemological system concerns itself with issues of relevance to the history and evolution of human knowledge, the sources and tools of this knowledge, methods of classifying knowledge, and a clarification of its functions.

Worldview, or the greater range of vision, determines both the sources and tools of knowledge, while the nature of these sources and tools (the epistemological system, which is a sub sphere within worldview) defines the methods of dealing with the knowledge acquired. Methodology can thus be seen to be a sub sphere within an epistemological system or theory of knowledge. Given this overlap and mutual interdependence, we find that many thinkers and writers use the terms “worldview,” “epistemological system” and “methodology” interchangeably.<sup>12</sup>

However, the approach advocated here is to adopt the Qur'anic point

of reference as a guide to the definitions of concepts. The concept of method – *manhaj/minhāj* – as seen from the Qur’anic perspective is characterized by both generality and comprehensiveness, in which respect it is like all other Qur’anic concepts. Although there is some awareness of the need to develop an Islamic methodology, there is still little awareness of the principles and distinguishing features of such a methodology. Weaker still is the awareness of what we have termed “the methodology of epistemological integration.”

## Chapter Three

### **Methodological Awareness and Methodological Defects**

Chapter three has two main sections:

1. Methodological awareness.
2. Signs of methodological defects in the life of the Islamic community.

Chapter three clarifies what is meant by “methodological awareness” and its relationship to other types of awareness. The following seeks to demonstrate the importance of understanding both method and methodology and the forms of this understanding to be found among contemporary theorists of Islamic thought and action. It then brings to awareness a number of prevalent methodological defects or imbalances manifested in the Muslim community.

If the Muslim community wants to recover its lost pride and glory, rise to its global responsibilities and serve as a leader of human civilizations, then it will have to cultivate methodological awareness. Awareness is a term used to describe human beings’ consciousness of themselves and their surroundings. The term “awareness” includes the acts of bringing things together, understanding, preservation and memory. The “wide-awake ear” of which the Qur’an speaks is not a physical ear that picks up sound waves in the material world. Rather, it is an ear that understands and makes sense of what it has heard, and then puts this understanding to good use.<sup>13</sup> Methodological awareness is a realization of the need for a detailed, comprehensive understanding of the nature of reality, its difficulties, and its requirements. It is an awareness of how to deal with reality based on systematic, law-governed, purposeful

planning uninfluenced by personal reactions or the pressure that arises from the need to make immediate decisions. Methodological awareness entails the realization that the reality in which we live needs to be reformed by means of a sound methodology and an appeal to an all-inclusive worldview.

When we attempt to convey reality, as we perceive it, what we convey is not reality itself. Rather, we approximate reality to a greater or lesser degree depending on the degree to which our way, or methodology, of thinking is, or is not, appropriate.<sup>14</sup> This attempt is linked to the outcome of an interaction between three elements. The first element is the preconceptions in our minds. These preconceptions generally take the form of a set of principles and values, which are innate or originate in social structures and conditions. The second element is the set of tools employed by the mind, cognitive and emotional processes, and the mind's intuitive, imaginative and volitional capacities. The third element consists of objective facts, including the quantitative and qualitative features of the reality being experienced and its connection to other realities around it.

There is a crisis of Islamic awareness and, given this, also a growing awareness of it. The biggest reason for the crisis of Islamic awareness is that the proponents of these approaches from both extremes have, in most cases, been people in positions of authority in the Muslim community, whether in their capacity as government figures, or as intellectual leaders. The most serious form of awareness-related deception or confusion has to do with method or approach. At the same time, there is a growing awareness of the need for method and methodological thinking since the mid-twentieth century in various parts of the Islamic world, with "method" becoming a major preoccupation among scholars and specialists in the various branches of knowledge, in intellectual circles, and among those concerned with the Islamic call.

There are several examples of theorists in the realms of thought, science and political and religious movements having an awareness of method and its importance. Since the days of Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808 AH/1406 CE), the issue of methodology in the realm of historical studies has been unclear to many, who have relied on the texts passed down from their forebears as though their contents were unquestionable facts and, as a result, have fallen into methodological errors. Hence, one of the most important tasks facing Islamic thought today is that of guiding the

ongoing dialogue toward the theme of methodology. In the realm of thought, Taha Abd al-Rahman stresses the need for a contemporary religious vigilance in the Islamic world in connection with what he terms “intellectual backing.”<sup>15</sup> AbdulHamid AbuSulayman holds that reform of the Muslim community can only take place through family upbringing and educational institutions, and that solving the educational conundrums we face requires the development of “a methodology, i.e. ‘a science method’ and an organized, ongoing scientific study that goes beyond limited, haphazard reflections.”<sup>16</sup> In Taha Alalwani’s view, this situation calls for the development of a comprehensive methodological understanding, which can bring together the dual readings of Revelation and creation; i.e. the Qur’an and the created world.<sup>17</sup>

Sayf al-Din Abd al-Fattah has listed four elements that are needed in order to construct a sound methodological awareness: 1) awareness of the sources for Islamic methodological theorization, 2) awareness of the available Western methodological potential and the ability to access it, 3) awareness of methodological applications and the ability to interpret the sources of Islamic theorization, and 4) awareness of the difficulties involved in methodological application and ways of overcoming them.<sup>18</sup>

There are a number of prevalent methodological defects or imbalances manifested in the life of the Muslim community. Firstly, a variety of factors have contributed to the Muslim community’s descent into the cultural backwaters. However, the imbalance manifests itself in two aspects of peoples’ personalities. These imbalances are manifested within the intellectual or ideational aspect, where one observes a lack of clarity in his/her worldview and resultant perceptions. The other is the psychological-emotional aspect, where the imbalance manifests itself in the form of a weak will and lack of initiative. However, also, it manifests itself in Muslims’ way of thinking about matters of understanding, feeling, and practice. It is a methodological imbalance that has to do with the manner in which an idea is translated into a concrete reality, or the way in which a mental conviction is turned into an actual life practice.

Specific expressions of methodological imbalance include those of one’s worldview, one’s ability to understand and deal with reality, where there is a failure to link causes to effects, or to discern truth and working at cross-purposes with reality. A healthy methodological

balance, on the other hand, is characterized by comprehensively linking the worlds of the seen and the unseen, beneficial and harmful aspects of this or that phenomenon, present and future considerations, the situation in a particular location and the broader environment that surrounds it, as well as immediate and remote effects of actions and events. Methodological imbalance in this context reveals itself in attempts to restrict a given issue or phenomenon to a single dimension to the exclusion of others, the consideration of a limited number of the available facts, and/or what is immediately and directly apparent in the situation at hand. This type of methodological imbalance sometimes takes the form of searching for the truth in a narrow, limited space within the various realms of knowledge by looking, for example, only at what has come down to us historically to the exclusion of more recent developments. This partial or atomistic approach to the study of written history may limit itself to the juristic aspect of things without attempting to grapple with the foundational sources represented by the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah.

It might express itself through focus being placed exclusively on the textual aspect of an issue and its ramifications without giving thought to areas of application in relation to questions about the universe, matter, and human progress and civilization.

One might, for example, restrict him or herself to a single school of thought or jurisprudence without taking account of other schools whose perspectives might provide him/her with fuller insight into things, or enrich his/her mind by giving expression to a broader understanding of the religion and its higher purposes or aims.

Other manifestations include an incomplete view of time, which results in the practice of limiting one's assessment of things to a particular period of history. Imbalance may result in difficulties in assessing the relative importance of issues and what rulings apply to them, and elevating the status of particular ethical principles, actions and rites as though they were the heart of the Islamic message, leading to the sacrificing of far more vital interests. Such constitutes a major hindrance to progress toward the desired Islamic cultural advances.

An impaired ability to understand and deal with reality has to do with the way in which we look at the natural world and the world of human beings. This defect may manifest itself in a failure to give proper consideration to reality, relying instead on abstract conceptualizations,

be they mental abstractions on the order of Greek philosophy and its derivatives, or spiritual abstractions on the order of Gnosticism and its outcomes. This methodological defect may also take the form of a pious otherworldliness that overlooks the realities of life and the requirements of human society. There is also a type of social otherworldliness, which neglects broad sectors of society due to the isolation of the educated elite and their unwillingness to involve themselves in the concerns of the masses, or an indifference to reality that grows out of despair of changing the way things are. The eventual outcome of this disregard for facts is an ignorance that robs people of the ability to cope with reality.

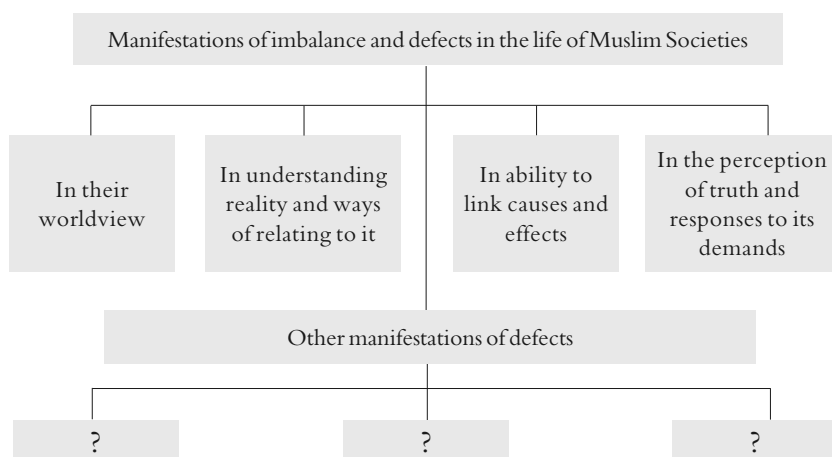
Disregard for Muslims' real-life circumstances may have been reinforced in some Muslim sectors by still another methodological defect, namely, adoption of the situation in the West as the ideal example of advancement and progress. This defect can be seen on the practical level in the practice of devising reform programs derived from a Western idealism that is not well suited to Muslims' situations, since they fail to reflect the cultural, social and religious particularities of Muslims' lives and circumstances.

Failure to link causes to effects may reveal itself in a failure to take account of natural causes on the pretext of relying entirely on God, or the belief that acknowledging natural causation is inconsistent with Islamic doctrine according to which God Almighty is the Sole Actor in the universe. Those who think and behave in this manner see earthly phenomena, including human beings, as bearing little or no responsibility for outcomes because, in their belief, outcomes are the province of God alone rather than being the results of previous causes in time. At the other extreme, there are individuals who rule out the supernatural element altogether in the realm of causation. Such individuals are of the belief that outcomes are brought about by natural causes alone without any divine interference or intervention.

Lastly, a failure to discern truth and working at cross-purposes with reality often has to do with a failure to heed the truth. For example, smoking brings a greater death toll than all the wars being waged around the globe. The dangers of smoking are not limited to the health risks that threaten smokers and those around them. They also include the financial burdens caused by the purchase of tobacco, the cost of which sometimes consumes up to one-quarter of a family's entire income. This type of economic waste is clearly beyond reason. The



seriousness of the above methodological imbalances may be seen in the fact that individuals with good ideas are effectively prevented from presenting these ideas in a sound manner, that is, from bringing them out of the realm of mental abstraction and ideals and into the realm of day-to-day life.



## Chapter Four

### Evolution of the Concept of Method In Islamic and Western Thought

Chapter four has the following three sections:

1. Evolution of the concept of method in Islamic thought.
2. Evolution of the concept of method in Western thought.
3. The relationship between the concept of methodology and the evolution of scientific fields in Islamic and Western history.

A brief overview of the history of method (*manhaj*) is presented with particular attention given to the most significant phases of the evolution of the term, “method” in both Islamic thought and Western thought. The purpose is to show how the meanings of texts, human social conditions and the natural world come together in Islamic methodology. Further discussion is given on the contributions made by Aristotle, Francis Bacon, and René Descartes to the development of the concept of method in Western thought. Finally, the chapter seeks to affirm the

impact of evolving human experience on the evolution of the concept of method and, in so doing, ends with a comparison of the trajectory of the development of the concept of method and methodological practices in the Islamic and Western heritages.

“Method” during the lifetimes of the Prophet’s Companions consisted of deriving legal rulings from the Qur’an and the Sunnah, directly or through the process of *ijtihād*. These are the sources that made up the methodology on the basis of which Muslims derived knowledge in the specific sense of legal rulings. For this reason scholars referred to them as sources of legislation. Scholars also used analogical reasoning, basing their rulings on the value, spirit and fundamental purpose of the action being ruled on.

First generation Muslims felt that the Qur’an and the Prophet’s explanations and applications thereof were sufficient to order their day-to-day affairs. Consequently, after the Prophet’s death, consensus (*ijmaʿ*), analogical reasoning (*qiyās*), juristic preference (*istihsān*), the processes of defining human interests and the overarching aims of Islamic law were all forms of reasoned interpretation (*ijtihād*), the goal of which was to increase their understanding of the meanings of the Qur’anic revelation and what they learned through the Prophetic Sunnah. Through reflection, human beings are able to discover the laws God has established on the psychological, social and cosmic planes and, having grasped these realities, to legislate the laws needed to order life’s affairs, to establish a community devoted to truth and justice, and to construct an enlightened civilization.

The natural and social sciences, when linked to the guidance contained in the Qur’an, lead toward a better understanding of phenomena and events. The Qur’an was not only addressing the first generation of Muslims concerning the sciences they needed to establish. Nor was it addressing Muslims alone. Rather, it was addressing the entire human race, providing them with the source of guidance they needed to manage all their affairs. Such reflection helped Muslim scholars to appreciate the Qur’an’s focus on informing people and directing them to what they ought to do, a focus whose aim is to help people both to achieve their interests in this earthly realm and to lead a life that earns them God’s pleasure in the world to come.

As Islamic society began occupying itself with philosophical studies and as the natural sciences and scholarly works translated from Greek,

Persian and other languages began making their way into Arab Islamic culture, there arose a need for systematic writings that would set down rules for scientific investigation. Use was made initially of reasoning from analogy and logical proofs, after which this approach was expanded and applied on a broader basis. Noting the insufficiency of this approach, scholars added the approach of reasoning or inference from induction. Specialized books were written on the classification of the sciences, their general methods, and their applications to particular sciences.

Method among Islamic thinkers has been in evidence historically in more than one field of study. In fact, its manifestations can be traced in virtually all fields. Systematic or methodological thought is associated with specific rules and principles in both the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah. Similarly, it was evident in the practices of the Companions and Successors of the Prophet, while the writings of hadith scholars and jurists lent it greater definition and established its rules and premises. The concept and practice of method were further defined and classified in the works of scholastic theologians, philosophers, mystics and historians. Nevertheless, the field, which is known pre-eminently for its concern for method is the science of the principles of jurisprudence, which set the foundations for Islamic legislation.

In terms of the evolution of the concept of method in Western thought, the prevailing pattern is based on two primary foundations: 1) recorded human history excluding religious sources, and 2) the history of the European peoples excluding that of other peoples or, at the very least, undermining their importance. Hence, the history of philosophy, the history of science, and the history of civilization itself, begin in Greece and end in Western Europe and its North American extensions.

Of all Greek philosophers and thinkers, Aristotle (384-322 BC) may well be the most mature, and the one who has most profoundly influenced Western thought and human thought overall, especially with respect to the development of methods of research and investigation in philosophy and science. Aristotle's contributions span a wide variety of fields, including ontology, ethics, politics, natural science, and metaphysics. All of Aristotle's works were marked by a peculiar manner of reasoning which came later to be known as Aristotelian logic, and which rests fundamentally on the method of analogical reasoning.

The Roman Empire fell heir to the rich intellectual, rhetorical and philosophical legacy of the Greeks. Decay accelerated after 285 CE, at which time the Roman state was partitioned into a Western Roman Empire and an Eastern (Byzantine) Roman Empire. This same period of time witnessed the birth of Islam, which created a stable society, which occupied the Levant, Iraq, Persia and Egypt, regions that had previously been home to ancient civilizations. Muslim scholars benefited from the new Islamic spirit of liberation in the realms of research and discovery, and drew on existing knowledge by familiarizing themselves with the sciences established by their predecessors from India, Persia and Greece. Most of the Greek legacy was translated into Arabic, and schools and universities were founded. This new awareness contributed significantly to subsequent religious reform movements, and served as a powerful impetus toward more research and experimentation by scholars and scientists.

The history of Europe witnessed a number of important way stations in the evolution of methods in Western thought. Francis Bacon (1561-1626 CE) was an English philosopher who lived during a period of Europe's history in which the Greek philosophy founded upon debate and abstract thought was prevalent. During this period, numerous scientific discoveries and inventions were made. Bacon stressed the need for the progression of science at a time when Aristotle's logic was proving woefully inadequate to this task in the new era. Whereas Aristotle's logic presupposed certainty by relying upon non-negotiable assumptions whose validity could not be questioned, Bacon proposed an inductive system of argumentation that relied on inquiry into the basic evidence found in the natural world. In Bacon's system, the researcher into the sciences gradually moved from basic data, which he had compiled by dint of ongoing effort through the use of "the new organ" toward higher levels of probability.<sup>19</sup>

In Bacon's system, the process of scientific logic begins with induction and scientific experimentation by means of which the facts are discovered. It then goes on to trace these facts back to universal principles through the use of Aristotelian logic. The facts are then recorded and conveyed to others through the use of explanatory methods and techniques. Bacon's logic is divided into two parts. The first part deconstructs "illusions" which "block men's minds," preventing them from arriving at the truth. The second part is a new system capable of discovering the facts as they are. It is a system based on induction and scientific experimentation.

René Descartes (1596-1650 CE) was a French philosopher who had been educated in a number of different European countries at a time when the system of logic founded on the Aristotelian syllogism held sway over thought in Europe's religious establishment. In Descartes' view, the Aristotelian method based on syllogisms was incapable of generating new knowledge and, therefore, fruitless. Descartes' method is based on four principles. The first principle is never to accept anything as true that one does not know to be such, and to avoid biased or hasty judgments. The second principle is to divide each difficulty into as many parts as possible so as to facilitate its resolution. The third principle is to conduct one's thoughts in an orderly fashion, beginning with those objects that are simpler and easier to know "in order to ascend little by little, as by degrees, to the knowledge of the most composite things."<sup>20</sup> And the fourth principle is to go back and make certain that there is no aspect of the difficulty concerned that one has failed to make note of and investigate.<sup>21</sup>

Scientific rationalism emerged in the seventeenth century and took a leading role in the eighteenth century. This approach supplanted metaphysics and religion. Scientific rationalism formulated a secular positivistic philosophy that touted the unlimited potentials of science and the scientific method and human beings' ability to achieve total control over nature. Hence, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed the emergence of pessimistic thought trends whose adherents believed that scientific progress had created a bourgeois ideology that had robbed people of certain aspects of their humanity by exalting reason and neglecting intuition, sentiment and emotion. The spirit of pessimism developed into "ascientific" methods and approaches that purported to represent "the new science" as an alternative to the science associated with modernism. This "new science" has found expression in a variety of currents, schools of thought and methods, all of which fall under the rubric of what has come to be known as "postmodernism."

Comparing the trajectory of the development of the concept of method and methodological practices in the Islamic and Western heritages, some scholars may point out that the concept of methodology in the history of Western thought has been linked primarily to the natural sciences, whereas in the history of Islamic thought it has been linked for the most part with the sciences dealing with divine revelation. This would not be a fair and correct description of the difference.

Human knowledge originated as a gift from God by means of which God distinguished human beings from other creatures. When God “imparted unto Adam the names of all things” (Qur’an 2:31), He gave him the ability to acquire knowledge from its two sources (divine revelation and the created universe) by means of its two instruments (reason and sensory perception). Some writers portray the evolution of research methods as a steadily upward progression. However, the truth is that in every stage of their evolution, human beings have used a variety of methods and means of acquiring knowledge.

The nations of the world make use of the knowledge available to them in proportion to the degree of advancement they enjoy. This is the situation in which Europe found itself during its Dark Ages (approximately 500-1000 CE) following the collapse of the Roman Empire both East and West. The nations of Europe failed to see the value of the rich Greek heritage to which they had fallen heir in the fields of medicine, mathematics, philosophy, geometry, literature and poetry. When, by contrast, the Muslims found themselves in a position of cultural ascendancy, they saw the value of what they had at their disposal, as well as the knowledge possessed at that time by the Europeans, Indians and others. Hence, they quickly set about to transfer this knowledge to themselves. They sifted through the scientific works that had come into their possession, bringing things to light, editing texts, accepting things and rejecting others, developing and modernizing. When, on the other hand, the Muslims found themselves in a state of backwardness, they were unable to make use of the legacy they had received from their forebears, and failed properly to appreciate the value of the achievements their scholars had made in earlier times. Later, when fortunes changed and Europe had its awakening, the European nations realized the value of the Greek heritage the Muslims had given humanity through their efforts. They also discovered the pioneering developments the Muslims had achieved in the various scientific disciplines, whereas the Muslims themselves were unable to make use of these very same achievements during the time of their own backwardness.

Most essentially, the Islamic perspective views the concept of science as having to do with the evolution of human perceptive capacities in all areas of life, including the material, the social, the psychological and the spiritual. The authoritative point of reference for this perspective is the divine revelation, which relates chapters from the story of humankind’s evolution in its earliest stages.

Our purpose in linking the concept of methodology with the evolution of the various sciences has been to show that in the sphere of human endeavor, it is difficult to distinguish one realm that is natural. Methodology did not simply spring up suddenly in the context of modern civilizations; nor is it the exclusive product of a particular community, people or particular era. Every community and nation is entitled to search in its history for the ways in which it has contributed to the development of science and civilization, and to take pride in these contributions. However, it should not, in the process, gain say over the equally significant contributions made by other communities or nations.

## Chapter Five

### Schools of Islamic Methodology

Chapter five has two main sections:

1. Method as seen from a unitary vision vs. a monotheistic vision.
2. Examples of methodological schools
  - a) The rationalist-Scholastic-philosophical school.
  - b) The experiential-Sufi school.
  - c) The scientific-empirical school.
  - d) The juristic-*uṣūlī* school.

The basic argument made in discussion is that Islamic methodology encompasses a number of different approaches and areas of interest which, despite their diversity, are united by the premises that underlie their modes of thought, research, and conduct. It is these shared premises, which they appeal to in their efforts to achieve their aims, and which mark their various expressions and formulations. In this endeavour, the chapter distinguishes between *wāḥid* or unitary perspective (one method working at a time) and *tawḥīdī* or unifying perspective (that is, several methods working at a time) of Islamic methodology.

The chapter briefly demonstrates the importance of *tawḥīdī* methodology for integrating and uniting the various levels of methodological work, from thought about research, to research procedures and regulatory guidelines. It further identifies the most significant defining

characteristics of a number of methodological schools: the rationalist, the mystical, the empirical-scientific, and the juristic-*uṣūlī*. It draws attention to the variety that exists within each of the Islamic methodological schools and clarifies the developmental features of a number of methodological schools in Islamic history. To this end, it cites examples of scholars and thinkers representative of each of the Islamic methodological schools.

By “unitary view”, we mean a vision according to which at any given time, there is only one approach to thought and research in relation to a given issue, question, or aspect of reality in the natural, social or human spheres. Seen from this perspective, human thought has evolved in a linear fashion, passing out of one phase and into another in such a way that in any given phase of their evolution, human beings have been adopting one approach only and no other.

The researcher who adopts the concept of “*tawḥīdī* methodology” employs each of these various methods for the purpose it is best suited to achieve, without forgetting that there are other methods that he or she could also use at another time or in another situation. This practice is consistent with the notion of a multiplicity of approaches, which we are terming “methodological pluralism.” The researcher, thus, unites different methodological elements and procedures in an integral, self-consistent endeavor to reach his/her stated aim.

The notion of methodological schools occupies a central place in the methodology of epistemological integration, since a discussion of methodological schools will include the notions of plurality, integration and the divine unity as they apply to methods or approaches as opposed to the notion of a single approach. Hence, method in the Islamic vision may be described as “*tawḥīdī*,” but not as “unitary.” The term “integration” refers to the need in research situations for elements that may belong to numerous distinct approaches. As for *tawḥīdī*, it means directing research efforts, which are characterized by multiple elements and integrated functions, toward achievement of the ultimate aim of the research, with every step and phase of the research being connected to every other.

In illustration of the notion of methodological integration, we find that the empirical scientific method, whether it was applied to the natural sciences or the humanities, relied until quite recently upon quantitative data which was organized into tables and charts and subjected to



statistical analysis. The aim of this process was to arrive at results that could be interpreted based on statistical tests or quantitative descriptions. However, the ongoing debate over the advantages of quantitative research, which may provide more precise, fixed descriptions, and qualitative research, which tends to provide greater validity and reliability of results, led researchers to see that, in fact, both types of research need to be used in specific situations.

The *tawhīdī* methodology advocated here is not limited to combining or integrating research methods and tools based on research related procedural requirements. Rather, it goes beyond this to lay the foundations for an approach that unites the three levels of methodological activity, namely, 1) ways of thinking about the research topic, 2) research procedures relating to data collection and analysis and methods of deriving and interpreting results, and 3) research ethics, that is, criteria governing conduct of research activity which call for fairness, integrity and impartiality in one's search for truth. The efforts entailed by the *tawhīdī* methodology include, then derivation of knowledge from its sources, the use of knowledge-acquisition tools, and integration of these sources and tools.

However, a number of methodological schools have contributed to shaping the thought and research of Muslims. These include the rationalist, mystical, empirical-scientific, and juristic-*uṣūlī* schools. The rationalist-scholastic philosophical school is marked by the important place it gives to human reason, particularly as it relates to questions of belief. Books of traditional Islamic learning are filled with theological and philosophical debates over the relative authority to be assigned to reason and revelation in the methodology one adopts for deriving doctrinal rulings. The Qur'an contains hundreds of verses (*āyāt*, or "signs"), which instruct us to engage in rational investigation. Not only do they instruct us to use our reason, they even show us how to use it in establishing doctrine, that is, by relying on revelation as a source of knowledge and on reason as a tool. Being itself an authoritative point of reference, the Qur'an demonstrates the role and functions of reason, making it the focal point of discourse and human responsibility without any need for speculative theological schools.

Methodological thought manifested itself in Muslims' use of reason to understand and process the texts of revelation – that is, the text of the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah – as well as in the concern to employ these revealed texts for the purpose of deriving legal rulings in diverse

manners. It was these varied ways of deriving legal rulings that paved the way for the appearance of the juristic schools founded by scholars such as Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, al-Shāfi‘ī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Ḥazm, and others. However, these scholars saw no need to discuss whether to give priority to reason or revelation, since the Qur’anic methodology to which they adhered made it unnecessary to engage in such debate.

In a subsequent development, certain scholars of the scholastic theological school relinquished the notion that reason and revelation are somehow inconsistent. Such scholars stressed the need to avoid any appearance of conflict (*dar’ al-ta‘āruḍ*) between reason and revelation, the importance of agreement between “the correct understanding of revelation and the explicit import of reason,” and the need to formulate what Ibn Rushd referred to as “the definitive word on the link between wisdom and the Islamic law” (*faṣl al-maqāl fī mā bayn al-sharī‘ah wa al-ḥikmah min ittiṣāl*). These and other expressions of the balance and complementarity between reason and revelation served to revive the Qur’anic approach that had been adhered to by early Muslim scholars.

The experiential Sufi school relies on the distinction between experiential knowledge on one hand and, on the other, the various other types of knowledge that are acquired through revelation, sensory perception or reason. Experiential knowledge is likewise associated with specific methodological procedures. The knowledge that comes via revelation, sensory perception or reason might be described as “acquisition” (*kasb*). Experiential knowledge, by contrast, might be described as an “endowment” (*wahb*). For it is a gift from God, who grants it to those individuals who strive against their baser nature through worship and the remembrance of God and who continue to ascend to higher and higher levels of purification and consciousness of the Divine until they are in such a state of nearness to God that they merit this divine bequest.

The Sufis have exerted great efforts to ground the mystical-experiential method in the texts of Islamic revelation and law as well as in human reason. In so doing, they have sought to demonstrate that experiential knowledge is an actual possibility, and that the supposition that one can only arrive at true knowledge based on rational evidence acquired and employed in keeping with known methods “is a narrowing of God’s wide mercy.”<sup>22</sup> In the course of grounding experiential knowledge in religious texts, the Sufis have focused on Qur’anic verses which link human beings’ achievement of a deep consciousness of God

with the spiritual gifts God grants them. These gifts include discernment, sustenance, light, mercy, guidance, and wisdom, all of which Sufis understand to be types of experiential knowledge.

The scientific-empirical school involves employing the procedures best suited to the nature of the research topic, be they field observations, practical experiments, quantitative measures, or various inductive processes, are likewise inherent to the distinctively Islamic understanding of this method. Whereas the scientific-empirical method has specifically to do with acquiring knowledge about the physical nature of things, the methodology of epistemological integration requires the use of the scientific-empirical method in whichever situation calls for it, just as it uses other methods in whatever situations require them. As for the methodological authority to which appeal was made, it found its locus in the texts of the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah as well as the reasoned interpretations put forward by early Muslim scholars.

The Islamic methodology that served as a guide to research stressed the importance of making use of sensory perception, reason, examination, reflection and contemplation in the search for the patterns and laws that govern events and explain natural, social, and historical phenomena. It was by means of such thought processes that scholars read religious texts and came to conclusions concerning practical realities and human nature as manifested in individuals and society. Moreover, such processes were carried out in an integrated fashion that made use of divine revelation and the created universe, and reason and sensory perception.

The Arabic Islamic heritage did not bequeath us books specializing in the scientific empirical method. If methodological thought had been served in the Islamic heritage as it has been in the Western heritage, we would discover that certain texts from the Islamic heritage are of equal, if not greater, value than the writings of Newton and Descartes, who, benefitting from the accumulation of methodological knowledge and expertise that was available to them in their time, were able to lay a theoretical foundation for methodological activity and research.

The juristic and *uṣūlī* methods both focus on the actions of human beings in their capacity as servants of God who are accountable to Him for their conduct. The discipline of the principles of jurisprudence lends itself to integration given the fact that it is a science in which, in the words of Ibn Juzay, "reason has been mingled with revelation, and

which involves examination of both evidence and the rulings to which it points. As such, it has been a significant aid toward understanding the Book of God and the words and actions of the Messenger of God.”<sup>23</sup> The *uṣūlī* method consists of rules, which regulate the process of *ijtihād* for the purpose of deriving legal rulings relevant to rites of worship and day-to-day transactions and of relating more effectively to the Qur’an and the Prophetic Sunnah.

No methodological school has emerged fully formed. Each of them began with a distinctive experience or insight on the part of some scholar who then went on to introduce a method of investigation, research, and treatment of intellectual or theological issues. The practices of this or that methodological school have sometimes ramified to form sub-schools. Hence, the maturation of a method and the integration of its various elements do not necessarily mean that it has stopped growing, developing and changing. On the contrary, the law of change and development governs all of these schools.

It may be necessary to point out that the integrated nature of what we call Islamic methodology is not limited to the using of one of these four mentioned methods or another when it is appropriate, rather this integrated nature means also that more than one of them could be used in the same research setting.

## Chapter Six

### Sources and Tools of Methodology

Chapter six has the following five sections:

1. The concept of “source.”
2. The sources of methodology.
3. Methodological “tools.”
4. Tools of thought, research and conduct.
5. The model for epistemological integration.

Presented here is a discussion of the terms “source” and “tool” and concepts of relevance to each. The chapter distinguishes between sources and tools in the areas of thought and research, and identifies the primary and secondary sources from which Muslims draw knowledge, rulings, and data, as well as the principle tools Muslims

employ in order to obtain data and information from their sources to arrive at what we have termed the “epistemological integration model.”

The Arabic term for “source,” that is, *maṣḍar*, is derived from the trilateral root *ṣ-d-r*. The noun *ṣadr*, derived from the same root, means the beginning of something or its front part.<sup>24</sup> Another meaning of the word *ṣadr* (plural, *ṣudūr*) is the chest or breast, which contains the heart as the site of understanding. The term “source” (*maṣḍar*) and its derivatives are used in numerous epistemological fields. For example, in the fields of geography and environmental sciences, the word “source” (*maṣḍar*) is used to refer to the location or site from which various sorts of materials are taken.

The term “source” is used when speaking of jurisprudence and its origins (the sources of Islamic legislation). The sources of Islamic legislation are the Qur’an, the Prophetic Sunnah, and independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) in its dual branches of analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) and consensus (*ijmāʿ*). As for the methodology for arriving at rulings from their sources, it is a science founded upon reason, confidence in the reliability of these sources, and the necessity of turning to them and drawing on them. These sources, therefore, are the foundations of the methodology by means of which reason derives the practical rulings that provide Muslims with guidance in their thought and behavior. To serve people’s interests and meet their needs, we arrive at the source of the knowledge that needs to be acquired by means of appropriate tools and established procedures.

For sources of methodology, we rely on revelation, the created world, and the integrating of revelation and the created world. There is a significant overlap between the sources from which we obtain knowledge, of whatever sort it happens to be, and on the basis of which we derive legal rulings; and the sources of our research methodology and our way of thinking. By “revelation” we mean the message which God revealed to His Prophet Muhammad and which he communicated to others, then clarified to them in word and deed. This revealed message includes what might be termed “the explicit revelation,” (*wahy Jalyy*) that is, the Qur’an, and the “hidden revelation,” (*wahy Khafyy*) that is, the Prophetic Sunnah, or the words and actions by means of which the Prophet clarified the meanings of the Qur’an, applied its rulings, and made specific that which in the Qur’an is stated in more general terms.

The term “revelation” (*wahy*), as used in the Qur’an, can refer to messages God communicates to chosen individuals in ways that we may or may not understand. It may come, for example, in the form of an inspiration, a thought that occurs to them, or a dream. The term *wahy* can refer to messages that God communicates to other creatures as well. The Qur’an is the source that generates Islamic legal rulings on rites of worship, day-to-day transactions, ethical standards, and the criteria for human thought that order the ways in which human beings understand and respond to things, ideas, and events.

As for the Prophetic Sunnah, which we have termed “the hidden revelation,” it is a companion to the Qur’an. Muslims hold that all of God’s messengers and prophets are infallible with respect to the messages they deliver from God, including their practical rulings and instructions on how to lead a life of godliness and integrity that will ensure people blessing both in this life and the life to come. The accounts that make up the Prophetic Sunnah cover a broad range of topics relating to the various areas of human life, and they serve a variety of purposes. Some accounts clarify the meaning of the Qur’an, others detail Qur’anic statements that are general in nature, while still others show how the Prophet applied Qur’anic teachings in ways that provide us with practical guidance or serve as a practical example for us to follow in this or that area of life.

The created universe, as second source of human knowledge, can distinguish three different levels:

1. The natural, material world ranging from microscopic entities to vast, far-flung galaxies that can only be seen with the aid of powerful telescopes;
2. The social world, which includes human beings’ lives as peoples, tribes, societies, communities and nation-states; family relationships, social relationships, and international relations; and the systems and laws that define people’s rights and obligations; and
3. The psychological world, that is, the realm of the individual human being on the level of mind and spirit, life and death, health and illness, knowledge and ignorance, thought and emotion, feelings and responses; how one thinks, how one’s abilities grow and develop, how one ages and deteriorates, why and how one loves and hates.

The Qur’an declares the texts of its own verses; the written signs, as well as God’s signs in the created world; visible signs, both to be

sources of knowledge. God is both the One who sent the written revelation down from on high and the One who created the world with all its objects, phenomena and events. To God alone belongs all sovereignty. That is to say, God is the ultimate source of all the means of guidance He provides and in relation to all human affairs. Human beings read the words of the Qur'an, and "read" what is visibly displayed before them of the created world, including the material, natural world, the social world, and the psychological world. They witness it, ponder it, measure it, calculate it, test it and put it to use.

The "reading" of God's signs in the created world, from the depths of people's souls to the vast horizons of the cosmos, leads the individual to the One Creator. Furthermore, when we read what has been written in a book, that is, what has been written with a pen (whether literally or figuratively), it is because God has taught us how to write with the pen, that is, how to record the various types of knowledge we have acquired. The Qur'an (which means, "reading" or "recitation") thus consists of two complementary, integrated readings, each of which helps to complete the other. It is thus essential that we combine these two readings in order to obtain the wisdom and guidance we need. The two readings complete each other when the written revelation is read in order better to understand and relate to the created world, and when the created world is "read" in order better to understand and relate to the written revelation.

A tool is a means of fulfilling an intention or attaining a goal. If a well is a source of water, then buckets and pumps are tools for obtaining the water. The way in which we are presenting methodological tools may differ from the way they are generally presented in research literature, which tends to restrict itself to techniques and procedural methods used in data collection, such as laboratory experiments, questionnaires, interviews and the like. We resort to the use of tools in order to reveal information that was previously unknown and which would not be immediately obvious to us. Methodological tools includes the major concepts, general entry points, "intellectual-ideological schools of thought, grand theories and explanatory models which the research employs as methodological tools, not only in order to compile research material and basic data but, in addition, in order to organize, analyze and explain such data, then use the resultant knowledge as an epistemological or ideological tool."<sup>25</sup> We use our sensory perceptions to collect data, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to make a neat separation between the function of the physical senses and that of the

mind, or reason, in understanding the possible meanings to be found in the texts of the divine revelation. Rather, the working principle is that of integration and complementarity.

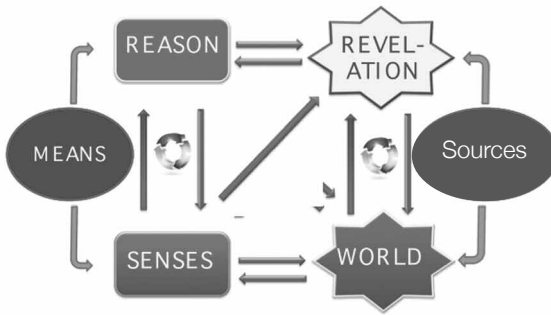
Therefore, in order to develop a method of relating to the Qur'an as a source of knowledge, we need to draw a distinction between two ways of conceptualizing the relationship between the Qur'an and the realities people face. Furthermore, in order to develop a method for relating to the Qur'an as a source of knowledge, we need to approach it with specific problems that require solutions, crises we hope to overcome, and questions that need answers. However, in order to define a problem, we need to understand the context in which the problem is occurring. This context may have to do with material objects and natural phenomena, with social and international relations, or with psychological issues relating to the individual and his or her changing states and conditions, etc. The proper reading of the written revelation takes place through the use of both our reason and our senses in order to link the written revelation to the world, while the proper reading of the world takes place through the use of both our reason and our senses in order to link the world to the written revelation, what we call "the jurisprudence of reality."

Methodological tools can be classified as either tools of thought, tools of research, or tools of conduct. It is difficult to draw distinct lines between these three domains, which are interrelated and overlapping. Although thought can take place without research, no research can take place without thought. As for conduct or practice, many patterns of behavior are pursued as a matter of mere habit, and are thus not accompanied by a great deal of thought. Thinking tools include the things people do in order to organize and clarify their thoughts: by linking ideas, for example, or by expressing them through representative drawings or shapes. When ideas are linked to such drawings and shapes, abstract notions become tied to concrete figures, which renders them clearer and easier to remember, teach, review, test and critique. Research tools can best be discussed by distinguishing among the three levels at which they operate: 1) tools of research data collection, 2) tools of research data analysis, and 3) tools of research data interpretation. Data analysis tools have to do with quantitative (statistical) analytical procedures, qualitative analytical procedures, or a mixture of the two.

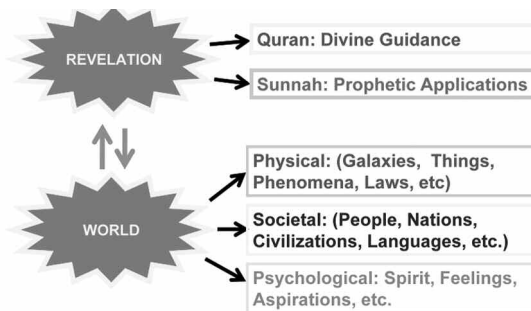
The epistemological integration equation model we advocate, however,



makes clear that deriving knowledge from the written revelation requires not only reason, but sensory perception, just as deriving knowledge from the created world requires not only sensory perception, but reason as well. The inborn nature, with which God has endowed human beings and other created beings, has an important role to play in our understanding of the complementary nature of the sources and tools of knowledge. Our inborn moral awareness leads us to strive for justice, promote human rights and treat one another with integrity and equity, for it is in these ways that human beings' best interests are served. Our God-given moral compass works together with the tools of knowledge to enable us to understand the messages conveyed by the written revelation, which is our source and authoritative point of reference; it also assists us in making practical distinctions between cases of altruism and selfishness, righteousness and evil. In line with this model, it is imperative that we deepen our understanding of the divinely intended order of things so that we can integrate sources and tools of knowledge with ever increasing efficacy.



*The Epistemological Integration Model.*



*Components of the Two Sources of Knowledge.*

## Chapter Seven

## Methodological Principles and Values

## PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC METHODOLOGY

- A. General methodological principles
  - a) Internal consistency and harmony Islamic worldview, the epistemological
  - b) Qur'an Prophetic Sunnah as final authority
  - c) Combined reading of revelation and creation
  - d) Applying values of *tawhīd*, *tazkiyah* and *'umrān*
  - e) Processing fundamentals of the Islamization of knowledge:
    - command of original sources,
    - command of contemporary knowledge,
    - creative advance into excellence.
- B. Specific methodological principles
  1. Thought-related methodological principles: thinking to be: Universal, Comprehensive, Orderly, Causal, Strategic, Aims-oriented, Practical etc.
  2. Research-related methodological principles: think of the motto: "If you are transmitting information, strive for accuracy, and if you are making a claim, provide proof." These principles have to do with:
    - a) documentation (with honesty, integrity, and objectivity)
    - b) evidence (be practical, rational, and consistent with revelation).
  3. Conduct-related methodological principles have to do with:
    - a) intention,
    - b) adherence, and
    - c) creativity.

Chapter seven has the following two main sections:

1. An introduction to the principles of methodology.
2. The basics of methodological values.
  - a) Divine oneness (*tawhīd*): the first foundation of the triad of governing values.
  - b) Purification (*tazkiyah*) in the governing value system.
  - c) Social development (*'umrān*) in the system of higher values.

There is an attempt to define the concepts of “principle” and “value” within the Islamic intellectual framework, in general, and within the framework of Islamic methodology, in particular. This chapter explains Islam’s central higher values – monotheism (*tawhīd*), purification (*tazkiyah*), and development/prosperity/civilization (*‘umrān*) and some of the numerous secondary principles that can be derived from any one of them. The principles of methodology (*mabādi’ al-manhajīyyah*) are the premises on which Islamic methodology bases its thought, research, and conduct. The chapter seeks to explain how when one applies these principles, Muslim communities become beacons of right guidance for other societies of the world.

The terms “principle” and “value” are often used synonymously or interchangeable. The noun “principle” (Arabic *mabda’*, plural *mabādi’*) as it is used in discussions of Islamic methodology is a modern term. There is no reference in either the Qur’an or the Prophetic Sunnah to the technical sense of this word as it is used today. The noun *mabda’*, which is derived from the verb *bada’a*, meaning, “to begin,” is not found in the Qur’an. However, the Qur’an does use numerous forms of the verb *bada’a*, all of which speak in one way or another of the commencement of an action. Most Qur’anic verses in which some form of the verb *bada’a* appears couple this verb with its opposite, that is, *a‘āda*, meaning, “to bring back” or “do again.”

When used as a technical term, the word “principle” appears in a variety of contexts. Depending on the context, the word “principle” can refer to information, beliefs, postulates, assumptions, premises, constants, or relationships between the concepts that define the theories and conclusions that can be tested and proven. The word “principles” can refer to governing values that guide behavior and standards for regulating and evaluating conduct. Similarly, it can refer to the foundations of an intellectual edifice, a religious belief, a practical course of action, and so on.

Given our definition of “methodology” as a science which concerns itself with ways of thinking, research methods, and patterns of behavior, it follows that, like other sciences, the science of methodology will have associated principles. The principles of methodology are the topics that constitute the basics of the science, that is, its major facts and concepts, how it began and developed, its theories, and its practical applications. The methodology of which we are speaking is an action we engage in, an effort we make. Hence, it must begin with a

conceptualization of where it will lead, it must arise out of the beliefs we hold, and it must adhere consistently to the standards, criteria and values that reflect these beliefs. In the context of a discussion of Islamic methodology, what we mean by “principles” are the premises on the basis of which the methodology proceeds in the realm of thought, research and conduct, to which it appeals in its efforts to reach its goals, and which lend their distinctive mark to its expressions and formulations.

The principles of methodology fall on a number of levels, of which we refer here to two: the level of the general or universal, and the level of the partial and specific. On the general level, these principles have to do with the pillars of Islam, the pillars of faith and higher values, or *maqāṣid*, while on the partial, specific level, they take the form of rules, standards and defining features of thought or research activity that aim to acquire, test and employ knowledge, or criteria for regulating and guiding conduct. Those on the specific level include the thought-related (thinking to be universal, comprehensive, orderly, causal, aims-oriented, strategic, and practical), research-related (documentation) and conduct-related (principles having to do with: a) intention, b) adherence, and c) creativity).

Islamic doctrine places central importance on affirmation of the divine oneness. Seen from the Islamic perspective, this affirmation is of intrinsic value, with all other values being derived from it. The entire world is subject by its very nature to the requirements of the divine unity. Hence, if human beings want to be in harmony with the world, they have no choice but to be purified from within by turning to God alone in worship. There are numerous examples where this oneness manifests on the individual and community levels. The family is the foundational unit of society and stresses the importance of promoting and strengthening family ties. The community’s existence is based on the doctrine of God’s oneness. Divine guidance is valid for everyone everywhere and the Muslim ummah is the foundation for human togetherness. The ethics of an Islamic economic system as they apply to work, production and consumption promote positive attitudes, responsibility and equity, thereby helping to achieve material and spiritual well-being for the members of society. *Tawḥīd* serves as the source of Islamic values that find concrete expression in virtually all aspects of Islamic life, from thought and rational investigation, to the political, social and economic systems, to the realm of aesthetics and Muslims’ approach to the various art forms.

The object of purification (*tazkiyah*) and reform is human beings who – as individuals, groups, and members of the wider ummah – are accountable before God for the way they dispose of what they have been entrusted with on Earth. An individual purifies him/herself by entering faith. Purification of the soul involves avoiding sinful acts that would incite God’s displeasure and performing works of righteousness that merit His favor. A unique mainstay of the overall social system, zakah functions to purify the individual Muslim of miserliness by helping him or her not to become too attached to wealth. Purification is associated with various forms of struggle. There is the inward struggle against one’s baser self. There is the struggle that involves sacrificing personal comfort and possessions. On the individual level, purification has to do with feelings, thoughts, intentions, attitudes, and personal conduct. The zakah, which the Muslim is required to distribute among the needy, is a means of purifying the individual who distributes the wealth, the wealth of the individual, and the wealth of the society as a whole; this is a process that brings both blessing and growth.

The process of developing and prospering the Earth, on which we and other creatures live, involves making sound use of all that God has deposited on our planet – on its land, in its seas, oceans, lakes and rivers, and in its atmosphere – be it in the form of living creatures, natural phenomena and cycles, or sources of energy. This involves evolution, whether through the individual’s lifespan or the communities’, and as such takes time. However, material development and prosperity have to do with the concrete aspects of civilization resulting from the knowledge and experience that accumulate over time as we observe the regularity in the universe, discover the laws that govern objects and events, and acquire the ability to predict events’ occurrences. The non-material side of human civilization is advanced as people gain experience in ordering their social and economic affairs, including the passage of laws and establishment of systems that regulate and manage relations among people living in the same location. Such advances give rise to cultures. People’s lives on this Earth have a purpose. The Earth existed before we did. We were created in order to worship God and be *khalifah* on the Earth. This is why God holds us accountable for what He has given us.

We need to deepen our understanding of this value system through additional studies and research, then work to derive secondary value systems, which can be transferred from the realms of personal piety

and the Islamic legal sciences to that of the humanities and the social and the physical sciences. This achieved, we can then apply these principles in such a way that Muslim communities become beacons of right guidance for other societies of the world.

## Concluding Remarks

Concluding Remarks have the following four sections:

1. Requirements for achieving epistemological integration.
2. Defining features of epistemological integration in the realm of thought.
3. Epistemological integration methodology in research.
4. Manifestations of the epistemological integration in the realm of conduct.

In the context of this book we are using the term “integration” in connection with what we have termed “the Epistemological Integration Model.” This Model is based on three levels of complementarity or interdependence:

- interdependence between the two sources of knowledge, viz., the cosmos and written revelation;
- interdependence between the two tools of knowledge, namely, reason and sensory perception, and
- interdependence between sources and tools.

The term “integration” has also been associated with the process of combining our readings of the written revelation and the created world. In the context of the Islamization of knowledge, epistemological integration (or the reform of contemporary Islamic thought) requires that we:

1. possess adequate knowledge of Islam’s principles and aims;
2. develop a methodology suited to the application of these principles or aims;
3. employ this methodology to understand and relate to contemporary sciences;
4. form a modern-day Islamic character which is solid and effective;
5. enable the Muslim community at large to make distinct contributions to human civilization and provide it with the guidance derived from divine revelation.

The current pedagogical approach involves presenting Islamic doctrines, rites of worship and practices as they were viewed and understood in the past. However, what we present about Islam needs to be taught in a manner that relates it to present-day reality and the tasks that face the Muslim in this present-day context. For only then will we be capable of the kinds of distinctive achievements that will place us in the lead among the nations of the world.

In the realm of thought, epistemological integration enables thought to be purpose-oriented in that it achieves understanding of a revealed text in light of the wise purpose for which it was revealed in the context of particular concrete realities and circumstances. Thought becomes comprehensive, as in based on an inclusive worldview which locates particular issues in their wider contexts, giving each of them its proper place and significance in relation to times, places, and circumstances. Thought becomes more orderly, in that it connects events, phenomena and outcomes with their causes and governing universal divine laws. It becomes more practical, since it views everything in terms of how it relates to concrete reality while investigating all possible scenarios in search of solutions to existing problems. It becomes more strategic, predictable and positive as it focuses on ways of constructing the future and achieving cultural advancement for the Muslim ummah.

In terms of a research methodology, using such approach enables the researcher to understand texts of the Qur'an as constituting the key source of general guidance for us in our strivings to attain, test and use knowledge for the purpose of achieving human development and the betterment of life on planet Earth. Based on the guidance they derive from the Qur'an, researchers will be prepared to undertake whatever scientific activity is required by the subject under investigation, such as familiarizing themselves with others' works and viewpoints or partaking in observation and experimentation.

In terms of conduct, such methodological integration enables integration of various worlds: the world of persons, the world of ideas, the world of things, and other worlds as well, since both thought and research span a variety of realms. It involves conscious, insightful adherence to a well-established approach in which the individual's conduct conforms to the path set forth by the Prophet. Human conduct is not merely associated with the outward, practical aspect of action. However, this outward, visible aspect is, in reality, a direct outcome of an action that is subtle and unseen and which includes the processes

of reflection and cogitation, examination of alternatives and choices, contrasts and comparisons in the course of which an individual arrives at a decision. This kind of inward conduct is an action undertaken by the heart or conscience. Those who take such approach systematically in the midst of their dominant cultures to create change are true reformers.

In conclusion, we will need to adopt what would be called “methodological culture” to be an essential component of qualifications of the integrated Muslim scientist or scholar, particularly university professors, who realize that systematic (methodological) thinking is a fundamental element of their academic persona and overall identity. In their specialized academic culture they are scholars, while in their social milieu they are reformers, as well as educators of present and future generations. It is university professors in particular who engage in systematic thinking as a means of defining things and making distinctions, systematic research as a professional activity, and systematic behavior as a daily commitment. These things take place spontaneously, however, since methodological thinking and acting have become an integral part of them.

*And God Almighty knows best.*



### **The Author**

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Allen Utke, “The (Re)unification of Knowledge: Why? How? Where? When?” in G. Benson, R. Glasberg, and B. Griffith, *Perspectives on the Unity and Integration of Knowledge* (New York: Peter Lange, 1998), p.20. Islamic methodology neither views all of modernism’s achievements as evil, nor all the promises of post-modernism as good.
- <sup>2</sup> Isma‘īl R. al Fārūqī, *Al-Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, reprint, (Herndon, VA: IIIT, 2000), p.17.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.51
- <sup>4</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Khaṣā’iṣ al-Taṣawwur al-Islāmī wa Muqawwimātuhu* (Distinguishing Features and Components of Islamic Conceptualization), part I, reprint, (Kuwait: International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IFSO), 1983), p.7.
- <sup>5</sup> Abū al-Walid ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-Maqāl fī mā Bayn al-Ḥikmatī wa al-Sharī‘ah min al-Ittiṣāl* (The Definitive Word on the Link Between Wisdom and the Divinely Revealed Law), Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri (ed.), (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥdah al-‘Arabiyyah (Center for Arab Unity Studies), pp.85-88.
- <sup>6</sup> Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Jawāhir al-Qur’ān wa Duraruhu* (Gems and Pearls of the Qur’an), (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1988), pp.26-27.
- <sup>7</sup> See Thomas Tritton, “Integrated Learning: Passing Fad or Foundation for the Future?” in Antonio Damasio, et al. (eds.), *Unity of Knowledge: The Convergence of Natural and Human Sciences* (New York: The New York Academy of Sciences, 2001), p.272.
- <sup>8</sup> I discovered that these three terms were used interchangeably in the title to the same book over the course of several centuries. The original title of the book was *Minhāj al-Ṭālibīn wa ‘Umdat al-Muftīn* by Imam Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 676 AH/1277 CE).
- <sup>9</sup> Michael Agnos, (ed.), *Webster’s New World College Dictionary*, 4th edn., (Foster City, CA: Webster’s New World, 2001), p.906. See also the *Oxford Illustrated American Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.515.
- <sup>10</sup> Taha Abd al-Rahman, *Tajdīd al-Manhaj fī Taqwīm al-Turāth* (Updating Approaches to the Evaluation of the [Islamic] Heritage), (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Thaqafi al-‘Arabi, 1994), pp.19-20.
- <sup>11</sup> Ahmad al-Raysuni, *Al-Fikr al-Maqāsidī: Qawā‘iduhu wa Fawā‘iduhu* (Aims

- Based Thought: Its Guiding Principles and Its Benefits), Pocketbook Series no. 9, published by *al-Zaman* Newspaper, (Casa Blanca, 1999), p.99.
- <sup>12</sup> Fathi Malkawi, (ed.), *Naḥwa Binā' Niẓām Ma'rifī Islāmī* (Toward the Construction of an Islamic Epistemological System), (Amman, Jordan: IIIT, 2000). See in particular the article contributed by the late Abdelwahab Elmessiri entitled, "Fī al-Dars al-Ma'rifī" (On the Epistemological Lesson), pp.41-60.
- <sup>13</sup> We read in *Sūrah al-Ḥāqqah* 69:11-12, "[And] behold: when the waters [of Noah's flood] burst beyond all limits, it was We who caused you to be borne [to safety] in that floating ark, so that We might make all this a [lasting] reminder to you all, and that every wide-awake ear might consciously take it in."
- <sup>14</sup> Nasr Muhammad Arif, (ed.), *Qaḍāyā al-Manhajīyyah fī al-'Ulūm al-Islāmiyyah wa al-Ijtimā'īyyah: A'māl Mu'tamar al-Manhajīyyah al-Mun'aqidah fī al-Jazā'ir*, 1989 (Issues Pertaining to Methodology in the Islamic and Social Sciences: Proceedings of the Conference on Methodology Convened in Algeria, 1989), (Cairo: IIIT, 1996), p.10.
- <sup>15</sup> Taha Abd al-Rahman, *Al-'Amal al-Dīnī wa Tajdīd al-'Aql* (Religious Action and Renewal of the Mind, (Beirut: Al-Markaz al-Thaqafī al-'Arabī, 1997), pp.9-10.
- <sup>16</sup> AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, *Azmat al-Irādah wa al-Wijdān al-Muslim: al-Bu'd al-Ghā'ib fī Mashrū' Islāh al-Ummah* (Crisis in Muslim Thought and Sentiment: The Missing Dimension of the Enterprise to Reform the Muslim Community), (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 2005), p.126.
- <sup>17</sup> Taha Jabir al-Alwani, *Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought*. Compiled from the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (London and Washington: IIIT, 2005), p.11.
- <sup>18</sup> Sayf al-Din Abd al-Fattah, *Ḥawla al-Manhajīyyah al-Islāmiyyah: Muqaddimāt wa Taṭbīqāt* (On Islamic Methodology: Basic Principles and Applications), a paper presented at the Third Training Course on Islamic Methodology, held at the office of the International Institute of Islamic Thought, Amman, Jordan, 12-17 November 1998, pp.5-6.
- <sup>19</sup> Lisa Jardine, from the Editor's Introduction to Francis Bacon, *The New Organon* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.xii.
- <sup>20</sup> René Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, translated by Donald A. Cress, 4th edn., (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company Inc.), from the editor's preface, p.6.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.
- <sup>22</sup> Abd al-Hamid Madkur, "Al-Manhaj al-'Irfānī al-Dhawqī 'ind Šūfiyyat al-Islām" (The Mystical-Experiential Approach of Islam's Sufis) in Ahmed Fouad Pasha, et.al., *Al-Manhajīyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, part 1, pp.571.

- <sup>23</sup> Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Jazī, *Taqrīb al-Wuṣūl ilā ʿIlm al-Uṣūl* (Toward a Proper Understanding of the Principles of Jurisprudence), edited, with commentary, by Abd Allah al-Jaburi, (Amman, Jordan: Dar al Nafāʿis, 2002), p.25.
- <sup>24</sup> ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Taʿrīfāt* (Book of Definitions), (ed.), Ibrahim al-Abyari, (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, no date), p.174.
- <sup>25</sup> Muhammad Muhammad Amziyan, *Manhaj al-Baḥṭh al-Ijtimāʿī bayn al-Waḍʿiyyah wa al-Miʿyāriyyah* (Social Research Method: Positivism vs. Normativity), (Herndon, VA: IIIT, 1991), p.129.

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**Epistemological Integration: Essentials of an Islamic Methodology** is a program which seeks to construct an intellectual framework for Islamic methodology with a view to realizing practical training in the thoughtful investigation of issues related to knowledge in various fields. The book's title affirms the distinctive types of integration that characterize Islamic methodology, including integration of sources, means, and schools of thought, as well as existing realities with desired ideals etc. This is fully consistent with human nature, as variety is fundamental to the functions people perform and skills they master.

The work essentially makes the case that fundamental to any Muslim recovery is laying the foundations of sound thinking and values that integrate the two main sources of knowledge: Revelation and Reality (that is the created worlds, physical, societal and psychological) under the umbrella of *Tawhīd*. This concept of integration implies using both human theoretical conceptualization and practical experimental investigation whilst also affirming the need to apply human capabilities in understanding the divine text, and acquiring sound knowledge of the physical world in terms of its resources, as well as accumulated past and present human experiences. The aim being to vitalize human potential and creativity. Every methodology is associated with both mental activity and practical procedures for constructing thought systems needed to solve problems and answer questions. Hence the integration of thinking, research and practice is fundamental to any methodology. Islamic methodology adopts that and extends human hopes to integrate efforts so that humanity can realistically achieve prosperity on earth and earn eternal happiness in the afterlife.

