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THE PHILOSOPHICAL EXAMINATION ON INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND WAYS FORWARD

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Abstract:

The crisis of error and confusion of knowledge in cumulative today is inevitable as it has given birth to the false leaders who are incapable of making correct decision in their scope of responsibilities. Secularism as the poisoning ideology had inflicted chaos to the proper metaphysical realm of God with the subordination of existents in ranks through their corpus of so-called modern knowledge that have been rendered dominantly yet arguably as mainstream intellectualism. The nature of unified and hierarchical knowledge is mistreated and broken into fragmentation because the supreme, first principle of Tawhid as the soul of Islamic thought is suspended in knowledge production of modern science. As an antidote to this issue fast forward after the Islamization of knowledge was introduced, the idea of integration of knowledge was also brought into the picture to resolve the same brand crisis. However, the initiative

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of integration of knowledge as one of those has been grappling to present its philosophical underpinnings as in tandem with Islamic worldview as the valid solution to the knowledge crisis concerned. Therefore, this conceptual paper is esteemed to examine the philosophical structure of integration of knowledge idea as seen from Islamic mega scheme of knowledge. The data collection method involved in this writing was purely library search with the selection of literature from the advocates of integration of knowledge and some referenced from Islamic epistemology. The facts gathered were analyzed through content analysis technique with the approach of philosophical argumentation. The main findings of this writing were two-folded: i) The presentation of ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological examination of integration of knowledge idea and its limitations. ii) The proposed integration of knowledge framework as a one of the methodologies of Islamic source in knowledge production and preservation. We contend that the contribution of this writing would further reframe the implementation of integration of knowledge in academic research endeavor in the institution advocating this epistemological idea.

Keywords:

Integration of Knowledge, Philosophical Examination, Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology, Methodology

Introduction

As a preamble, the topic of integration of knowledge concerned in this paper will be discussed purely under the discipline of Islamic epistemology that offers the philosophical underpinnings of integration of knowledge idea at its greatest length. Epistemology as originally from Greek word, “episteme” and “logos” can be defined as the theory of knowledge, the philosophy of knowledge and the science of knowledge (Matthias & Ram Neta, 2020; Osman Bakar in Mulyadi Kartanegara, 2014). Wan Mohd Nor in Syed Muhammad Dawilah Al-Edrus (1999) refers Islamic epistemology as the philosophy of Islamic knowledge discourses the reality and truth, meaning, content, sources and process of knowledge. Abdul M. Lantong (2017) on the same hand describes Islamic epistemology as a branch of philosophy discipline that discourses the nature and attributes of knowledge in Islam, its sources, aims and objectives, its types and branches, and how can it be acquired. Epistemology also is uniquely coined by Acikgenc (2014) as human knowledge system that pertains the integrated running of intact nature of humans that consists of external and internal senses, mental faculties such as memory, consciousness, imagination, intellect and intuition. Based on the abovementioned definitions of Islamic epistemology, it can be understood as a knowledge about knowledge that deals with the relationship and process between subject and object of knowledge to arrive at the reality and truth in Islam as ultimately sourced from Al-Quran and Hadith. Distinguishing Islamic epistemology from western epistemology is a great importance as the primary concern of Muslims in the acquisition of knowledge as to achieve the knowledge (*‘ilm*) and vision of Allah (*Makrifah*). Learning epistemology is imperative as quoted from the speech of Baqir Sadr in Khudori Soleh (2018) for epistemology is analogized as the device and method to knowledge and a person who is not equipped with epistemology with encounter difficulties in knowledge and thus unable to expand his or her knowledge in intellectual manner.

The crisis of error and confusion of knowledge in cumulative today is inevitable as it has given birth to the false leaders who are incapable of making correct decision in their private lives and in fact in the scope of social responsibilities (*amanah*) (Al-Attas, 2001). A lot of divides be it

spiritually, physically, socially and ecologically happening today are epitomized from the crisis of secularism (as understood as ideology). Secularism as the poisoning ideology had inflicted chaos to the proper metaphysical realm of God with the subordination of existents in ranks through their corpus of so-called modern knowledge that have been rendered dominantly yet arguably as mainstream intellectualism. The nature of unified and hierarchical knowledge is mistreated and broken into fragmentation and dualism because the supreme, first principle of *Tawhid* as the soul of Islamic thought is suspended in knowledge production of modern science. As an antidote to this issue fast forward after the *Islamization* of knowledge was introduced, the idea of integration of knowledge was also brought into the picture to resolve the same brand crisis.

However, due to some epistemological ambiguities traced in the approach of integration of knowledge in reviving the Islamic intellectual tradition in current epoch especially in the term 'integration' itself in knowledge, in recognizing its pioneering, leading thinkers initiated and its tentative blueprint of execution in Muslims' education, integration of knowledge seems to be grappling to present its philosophical underpinnings as in tandem with Islamic worldview as the valid solution to the knowledge crisis concerned. Considering the fact that many Islamic universities today have started to employ the idea of integration of knowledge as the philosophy of their universities in the expense of the idea is continuously anew (Sardar & Thomas, 2018), this enumeration will shed the light on the philosophical justifications of integration of knowledge for the understanding of university leaders and academics. Therefore, this paper is esteemed to undergo a philosophical examination on the idea of integration of knowledge from the aspect of ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology. Throughout these examinations, some critiques will be highlighted in order for the researchers to situate the position of integration of knowledge initiative in the map of Islamic tradition and thus, formulate a more comprehensive guidelines to execute integration of knowledge as in line with the concept of knowledge and truth in Islam. The data collection method involved in this writing was purely library search with the selection of literature from the advocates of integration of knowledge and some were referenced from Islamic epistemology. The facts gathered from those literature were analyzed through content analysis technique with the approach of philosophical argumentation.

The Ideas of Integration of Knowledge

Why integration is important? Uniquely in this regard, the 'why' comes first before the 'what' because the proposition Integration of Knowledge will not be in the picture without the discussion of Islamization of knowledge. Integration of knowledge is well-known as a paradigm of knowledge production from epistemological perspective to revive the Islamic intellectual tradition which means it strives for reconstructing the present corpus of knowledge under the command of *Tawhid*. When talking about the history of integration of knowledge, it cannot be standing aloof from the discussion of Islamization of knowledge. Although the paradigm of integration of knowledge and Islamization of knowledge are basically to restore knowledge to its original account in Islam (unifying centering on *Tawhid*, hierarchical, value-laden and integrated in nature), yet the demarcation between integration and Islamization of knowledge were mistaken pointed out. This is because there was misunderstanding by many for its application bears so much efforts to reconstruct the contemporary sciences that were founded from the ideologies alienated from Islamic worldview (Secularism). It is indeed necessitates scholars to understand much of Islamic metaphysical, epistemological axiological and methodological scheme of things that demands intellectual rigor (Wan Mohd Nor, 2013)

in which, such *Tawhidic* integrated thinking framework cannot be acquired through the narrow specialization of discipline; rather it must be acquired through the learning of the unifying scheme of Islamic worldview as a mega system of life in Islam that informs the recognition and acknowledgement of *Wajibul wujud*, Allah swt and the end or intrinsic pursuit of every creation created by Him accordingly in their respective proper places in the system.

In general, despite the enthusiasm, the Islamization of knowledge work plans have stayed to a limit when counting the number of proposed ideas of different individuals, institutions or school of thoughts. Furthermore, little progress has been achieved due to an un-unified agreement on the actual concept of Islamization and the lack of a professional agreement on framework, as each Muslim scholars argue from their different relative perspectives (*Adi Setia, 2005*). This is raised through the observation on how the project of Islamization of Knowledge brought by Prof Al-Attas has been misunderstood by some where the authors suppose that due to the devoid of epistemological exclusivity of the word 'Islam' as appealed to the universality of knowledge to non-Muslims (which means lack of participation of universal audience) coined with the *murakkab* (arranged) curriculum and long duration Islamization of knowledge is required to be actualized. Due to this, some have diverted to another paradigm of knowledge by introducing integration of knowledge as an alternative approach.

In the journey of crafting the new way of bringing *Tawhid* into the discussion of knowledge through Integration of knowledge, some might neglect the whole view of original account of knowledge in Islam from its ontological and epistemological scheme which means they tend to integrating knowledge at its surface outlook (methodological) rather than integrating knowledge from its foundational level (metaphysical). Some scholars are determined to do integration of knowledge yet it was done in the superficial manner by simply coupling related Quranic verses or hadith in their far-reaching 'applied' sciences or the mis-matching of the right employment of Islamic theories into their researches as so to be seen Islamic. These happened are due to the lack of comprehension on the unifying metaphysical framework of knowledge in Islam that is centered from *Tawhid* which rules as The Theory of Everything (Osman Bakar, 2020). Some might also be in the ignorance of using the proper methodological approach in doing researches pertaining to the Integration of knowledge because they are purely not aware of what are the parts disintegrated and why and how they parted from the actual whole of knowledge as well as 'who' as the critical part of it as an 'integrator' (Osman Bakar, 2018). Indeed, by adorning mind with simplistic way of understanding the map and rules of knowledge in Islam, an integrator will never succeed to address *Tawhid* in their respective disciplines.

Mohd Rushdan (2019) in his definition of integration of *naqli* and *aqli* knowledge emphasizing that the integration between knowledge sourced from revelation and knowledge sourced from human thought centering on the Islamic worldview (Islamic worldview) as the basis of the integration of knowledge with the aim of building knowledgeable, civilized and leadership-person on the basis of justice. The understanding of the integration of knowledge is not simplistically incorporating the concept of knowledge based on religious revelation in the discussion of knowledge based on human rationale. Yet, the concept and application of knowledge integration must be structured and interweaved more systematically at ontological, epistemological and axiological level such by looking at the appropriateness of the context of the discussion of knowledge from the perspective of revelation (*wahy*) before being integrated with current modern knowledge. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to propose here that the

meaning of integration also demands the formation of a new philosophy of knowledge after the process of screening, adapting and cleaning all the elements of secularism that make up the philosophy of modern knowledge.

As referring to Malkawi (2014) in his grand project of epistemological integration, this initiative is purely conceptualized as the methodology of knowledge in Islam. He contends that it might be classified as a branch of philosophy – ontology, epistemology, or ethics – in which the matter it takes on an abstract and theoretical dimension. It can also be categorized as cultural and social endeavours when the purpose for which it is undertaken is to provide necessary resources and to transform them into political, economic or social activity. Malkawi (2014) connotes epistemological integration as *takamul ma'rifah* which can be used to describe people with an encyclopedic knowledge of disciplines such as language, literature, Islamic jurisprudence, the Quranic sciences, the Hadith sciences, history, and possibly astronomy, medicine or mathematics. Malkawi also argue that the practice of narrow-specialization in academics is mere the recent practice that is away from what Muslims' intellectual tradition has offered. Malkawi then stresses the fact that in the context of the Islamization of Knowledge, epistemological integration (or the reform of contemporary Islamic thought) requires pre-requisite criteria as follow:

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

There are some existing conceptual ideas of integration of knowledge. They are as follow:

1. Integration of science and religion
2. Integration of *naqli* and *aqli* knowledge
3. Integration of knowledge and *'amal*
4. Integrated Learning Model (*Paduan Ilmu, pendidikan terkamir*)
5. Interconnectedness of religious science with other sciences
6. Unity of Allah, knowledge, beings and life
7. Analogies to the parable of knowledge tree (*Shajaratun 'ilm*), spider-web

It is to note that it is not so much an explicit methodology but the basic principles of the worldview of Islam. Inspired from the doctrine of Unity of Allah as the cardinal principle of Islam, it prospers a systematic work plans that leads us to the unity of creations (cosmic order, and the interconnection of everything), the unity of knowledge, unity of life (human existence is an *amanah* from God, and human beings are vicegerent, or *khalifah*, of the abode of our terrestrial odyssey), unity of humanity, and finally the integrative nature of revelation and reason (Sardar & Thomas, 2010). Collectively, these principles are interweaving and offering us an excellent framework for the pursuit of real knowledge and for the reform of Muslims' epistemology.

Philosophical Examination on Integration of Knowledge

The term 'integration' is defined as a process of combining or accumulating that makes one thing out of two or more things (Oxford Dictionary). The term 'integration' to be applied in the unifying scheme of knowledge as originally accounted in Islam can be very loose and misleading if the process of integration not to be seen through the lens of the worldview of Islam. Islamic worldview (*Rukyatul-Islam-lil-wujud*) projects the ontological facts (reality and the vision of truth-*haqiqah*) in Islam that sets the final meaning, pursuit and essence of everything. Some scholars are determined to do integration of knowledge yet it was done in the superficial manner by simply coupling related Quranic verses or hadith in their far-reaching 'applied' sciences (ayatization) or the mis-matching of the right employment of Islamic theories into their researches as so to be seen Islamic. Basic key-terms of Islam governing the worldview of Islam are not addressed through the semantic structure of Quranic Arabic leading to the error and narrow definition of the knowledge interpretation.

Then, direct integration of knowledge without considering the attributes and hierarchical natures of knowledge can be leading to misinterpretation of knowledge creation. That will cause the equalization of all knowledge on the same level of comparison leading to the wrong employment of methodology with the essence of object of study. Not recognizing the legitimate channels of knowledge in principle and its place in the knowledge system accordingly creating epistemological vice that is extremism of thought in elevating a stream of thought whether empirical or rationalism. Failure to understand the authority of knowledge. Academics are inclined and uncritical to be the consumer/ users of existing contemporary western theories and superficially/forced- combining Quranic verses with the relative contexts of research. Some might also be in the ignorance of using the proper methodological approach in doing researches pertaining to the Integration of knowledge because they are purely not aware of what are the parts disintegrated and why and how they parted from the actual mega scheme of knowledge as well as 'who' as the critical part of it as an 'integrator' (Osman Bakar, 2018).

Integration of Knowledge Framework and Ways Forward

Basing Integration of Knowledge with Clear Islamic Worldview Centering on Tawhid

It is clearly to contend that integration of knowledge necessitates the basic axioms of the worldview of Islam centering on *Tawhid* (Doctrine of oneness). From the Unity of Allah, 'the first principle of Islam and of everything Islamic,' the Work Plan systematically leads us to the unity of creation (cosmic order, and the interconnection of everything), the unity of knowledge, unity of life (human existence is an *amanah* from God, and human beings are trustees, or *khalifah*, of the abode of our terrestrial journey), unity of humanity, and finally the complementary nature of revelation and reason (Sardar & Thomas, 2010). The interconnectedness between man to God, man to his or her self, man to other men and man to universe (other creations) must be established as the thinking framework of *Tawhidic* paradigm in doing integration of knowledge.

The illustration is as follow:

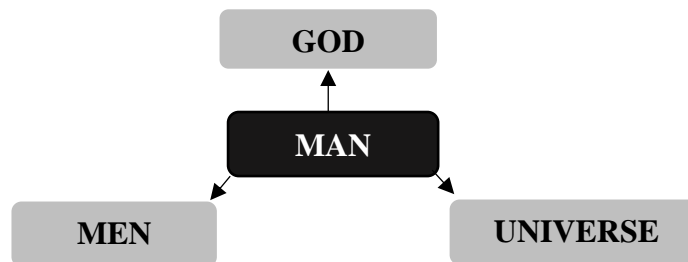


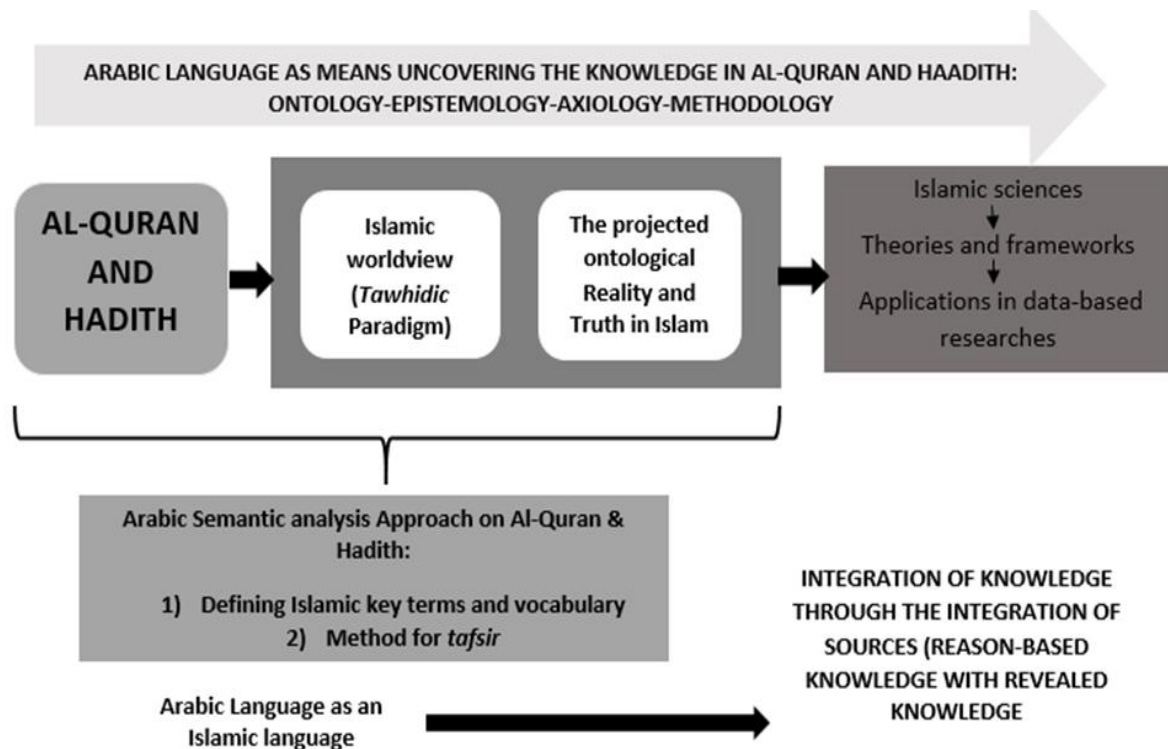
Illustration 1.0 Thinking Framework of *Tawhidic* Paradigm in Doing Integration of Knowledge

The interconnectedness between man to God, man to his or her self, man to other men and man to universe (other creations) must be established as the thinking framework of *Tawhidic* paradigm in doing integration of knowledge. Thus, this unity of thought will then spring out the elements of Islamic worldview (*Ru'yatul Islam lil wujud*) according to Al-Attas as being refined into nine fundamental elements which are God (*Rabb and ilah*), Revelation (*wahy*), His creation (*khalq and makhluk*), man and the psychology of human soul (*insan and ruh*), knowledge (*'ilm and ma'rifah*), religion (*din*), freedom (*ikhtiyar*), values and virtues (*fadilah*) and happiness (*sa'adah*) (Salina, 2019). By having known all abovementioned, an integrator of knowledge is equipped with the thinking framework as in line with Islamic worldview and thus, capable of being just to himself and others by recognizing and acknowledging the proper, appropriate, right and accurate place for a particular thing, condition or self in the hierarchical order of existence with regards to the superiority of Creator above all (Muhammad Zainiy, 2002; Muhammad Zainiy, 2020).

The Employment of the Islamic Language in Defining and Interpreting Knowledge

Indeed, language reflects ontology (Al-Attas, 1995). The discourse on language especially the Arabic language is of a great importance in the quest of knowledge about reality and truth in Islam. The vision of Islamic reality and truth indeed pertains the question of ontology. Ontology or better known as metaphysics is the intelligible science of existence (*wujud*) and essence (*mahiyah*) of every individual existent as to be understood in the trajectory of humans' intuition (Ibn Sina in Majid Fakhri, 1985; Al Attas, 1995). Regarding the speciality of the Arabic language because it is related to Islam, namely as the language of the Qur'an and the language of worship in Islam, has been stated by Mobarak:

“... You will not find any exact language related to 'aqidah like Arabic, because it is the language of the Qur'an which is the language of 'worship: therefore it is the true container for understanding the Qur'an and Science derived from it.... (Mobarak, 1988)



The Position of Arabic Language in the Framework of Integration of knowledge

Understanding the Essentials of Islamic Epistemology

Particularly in the arena of Islamic epistemology, there are indispensable attributes of knowledge can be drawn from the verse of '*bismirabbik*' (read by the name of God). '*Bismirabbik*' in this sense is seeking knowledge that gives multi-dimensional benefits to all and at the same time increases our faith to God. In order to ensure the right process of integration in Islamic epistemological framework, it is crucial for us to examine the nature and hierarchy of knowledge as to see what aspects of knowledge to be integrated. Attribute of knowledge can be seen in two dimensions:

i. Knowledge is hierarchical and harmonious based on its sources Islam affirms that humans are possible to acquire knowledge through variety of sources. By putting revelation as the supreme one, Islam never silent the emphasis of acquiring knowledge from other avenues such as external senses, rationality, intuition, divine inspiration and revelation. External senses and rationality are attributed as the empirical whereas the rest are categorized as metaphysical in nature. Osman Bakar (2019) refers empirical knowledge as *ilm hushuli* whereas the rest three as *ilm hudhuri*. *Ilm hushuli* is the knowledge acquired through cognitive ability through his or her faculty of rational or external senses. In contrary, *ilm hudhuri* refers to knowledge that is epitomized from the spiritual experience in which the process of such is granted directly from God.

ii. Knowledge is integrated (from physical to metaphysical level) Islam sees the aspect of metaphysics (revelation, intuition and divine inspiration) as the foundation of the integration

of knowledge because all the discipline of knowledge is pursued to reach the certainty of truth. However, it is ultimately a fact that the absolute truth can only be gleaned through the metaphysical one. Nasr (2003) said that: "Metaphysics, in which in fact is one and be named metaphysic in the singular, is the science of Real, of the origin and end of thing, of Absolute and, in its light, the relative. It is a science as strict and exact as mathematics and with the same clarity and certitude, but one which can only be attained through intellectual intuition and not simply through rationation." Metaphysics is said to be the determinant of integration of knowledge. From this excerpt, the revelation data in Islam doesn't cut its tie with the demand of the sense or rational data. In the simpler sense, *naqli* provisions are always be complemented by *aqli* provisions or vice versa. However, revelation should be determinant of truth and being harmonized by other sources of knowledge.

Reconciliation of the Cleavage between Faith and Reason

*"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding. Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides God give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying, "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You (above such a thing); then protect us from the punishment of the Fire." (Surah Ali Imran: 190-191). Based on this verse, God Almighty has created myriads of signs through His creations as a means for His servants to understand His existence and powerfulness. This is recognizable by humans as we have been gifted by God with mind (*Ulul-Albab*). This has been supported by Golshani (1986) saying that "From the Quranic viewpoint, understanding nature is not fruitful undertaking except when it helps us to understand the Wise Creator of this world and to attain close proximity to Him. Understanding nature can promote man's insight towards the cognition of Allah and enables him to be better utilizing the gifts of Allah for his own eternal felicity and well-being."*

The Establishment of the Relationship between the Subjects of Knowledge (Knower), The Possessor of Knowledge (God) and The Object of Knowledge (The Known)

Spiritual capacity of knower to receive the meaning of knowledge: Knowledge is both the arrival of meaning in the soul as well as the soul's arrival at meaning. It means that the soul is not merely a passive recipient like the tabula rasa, but it is also an active one in the sense of setting itself in readiness to receive what it wants to receive, and so to consciously strive for the arrival at meaning (Al-Attas, 1995). The unity of subject and object in the case of knowledge by presence guarantees its epistemological value. In knowledge by presence, the relation of subject to object is one of unity and identity. To use the terminology of Muslim philosophers, here we are dealing with the unity of knowledge, the knower, and the known. (Mulla Sadra in Ali Mesbah, 2020). There is absolutely no distinction between the phenomenon of knowledge, its subject and its object. The act of knowledge stems from subject, extends to itself or its existential affairs, and this very connection is called knowledge. There is neither mediation nor duality. Unity is the key to the solidity of this type of knowledge that bars falsehood from its territory. This unity will lead to the state of justice where everything is in its proper place and treatment. The same solidarity between subject and object culminates in this knowledge's transferability, for with the transfer of such knowledge, the subject should also move to the comprehensive realm of the second subject

In the pursuit of seeking the real knowledge, the capacity of spirituality of knowledge seeker must be given a central attention. This idea of integration of knowledge is essentially epistemological in nature where it deals with knowledge at its entirety; therefore all academics

are in the position of giving justice to the right of knowledge based on its essences. According to Al- Attas (1995), “knowledge is the arrival of meaning of a thing or an object of knowledge to the soul while it is also meant as the arrival of the soul at the meaning of a thing or an object of knowledge”. In the simpler sense, knowledge is both the arrival of meaning in the soul as well as the soul’s arrival at meaning. This requires spiritual effort to make the soul ready to receive meanings from the lower to higher degree of knowledge.

Indeed, the reality of man is naturally occupied with the verb of seeking the truth (meaning of life and understanding himself or herself). Man is in the position of giving the meaning to his or her life as so to attain virtue through the accomplishment of his or her functions. Therefore, man will never be enlightened about the questions of life until they are guided by true knowledge. True knowledge can only be attained through the procession of mind that can lead the meaning of the knowledge to arrive at the *Qalb* and then, from *Qalb* the meaning is translated into proper and correct action. *Qalb* (in the case of being sound) is perceived and functioning as a generator that reflects and understands matters in order to transform them into actions and the acquisition of knowledge is not only stuck at that level yet the sense of deontological effect to actualize the pursuit of a particular thing becomes possible (Bilal Philips, 2015). In a simpler analogy, heart is like a mirror. The smooth surface (sound) of heart will reflect the light ray (knowledge acquired) in symmetrical manner (straight path and the demonstration of *adabic* qualities) and in contrary, the rough or defected mirror will reflect the light that is astray.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as a grand project of Islamic intellectual revivalism, integration of knowledge is premised in the virtue of replying to the problem of dichotomy and fragmentation of contemporary knowledge due to the separation of sciences from *Tawhid*. The idea of integration of knowledge encounters difficulties in presenting its philosophical justifications be it ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological in interconnected and comprehensive manner without the process of *Islamization* to be established beforehand. In venturing integration of knowledge initiative especially in higher learning education, conclusive and comprehensive framework of integration of knowledge must be established in agreed term. Despite the pitfalls, integration of knowledge is having potentials to develop the paradigm of knowledge from the scale of intra-disciplinary up to multi-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary to trans-disciplinary. The advocates of integration of knowledge must progressively put forth its philosophical justifications, highlight its leading expert thinkers as the public reference and workable plans to be implemented in the arena of research, curriculum, teaching and learning in higher learning institutions to make sure integration of knowledge becomes the nucleus to the knowledge culture and problem solvers.

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