

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

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Islamization: Reforming Contemporary Knowledge

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INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE of ISLAMIC THOUGHT

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THE OCCASIONAL PAPERS SERIES

The publication program of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) has already addressed important issues in the field of Islamic thought and the Islamization of knowledge. In this respect a number of books have already appeared in several languages under fifteen main series: *Accessing the Islamic Intellectual Heritage*; *Academic Dissertations*; *Concepts and Terminology*; *Human Development*; *Indices*; *Islamic Methodology*; *Islamization of Culture*; *Islamization of Knowledge*; *Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought*; *Lectures*; *Occasional Papers*; *Perspectives on Islamic Thought*; *Reform Movements and Methodologies of Change*; *Research Monographs* and *Studies in the Islamization of Knowledge*.

The *Occasional Papers* series, published by the Institute's London Office, covers a number of research papers, articles and lectures from the Institute's world-wide program as well as from Muslim scholars willing to make contributions. These are presented individually in the form of booklets that can be easily read or referred to. It is hoped that the booklets will reach students, scholars, and specialists as well as major sections of the world's Muslims alike in order to generate a fruitful debate on the vital issue of Islamization, and to create an awareness of the intellectual crisis in its various shapes and forms, while encouraging an active role in the proposed course of action and solution. This series is also translated into other languages.

The sixth paper in this series *Islamization: Reforming Contemporary Knowledge*, was first published in the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences (AJISS)* Vol. 2 No. 2 under the title "Islamization of Knowledge with Special Reference to Political Science."

The use of Islamic terminology in transliteration is a policy of the IIIT. Some of the terms used are untranslatable, while others are so important that the Institute felt that familiarity with them is necessary for a better understanding of Islamic issues. These terms have been footnoted once or sometimes explained briefly

between brackets. All those which have not yet been accepted in Anglo-Saxon dictionaries are in *italic*. As many of these occur more than once, readers are advised to refer to the relevant footnotes whenever necessary.

When mentioning dates the Islamic one comes first, separated from the Gregorian one by a slash. When an Islamic date is mentioned alone, it is followed by AH.

The translation of the Qur'an used in this series is that of 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī (Amana Corporation, revised, 1989). However we made changes to verses quoted from it whenever we deemed it necessary for the sake of elucidation and precision of meaning.

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EDITORS' NOTE

The paper briefly tabulates the wide-ranging problems besetting the universal nation of Islam today and perceives the crisis of thought to be the root cause of present affliction. This is tragically ironic, the paper argues, since a profound respect for reason and knowledge characterized early Islam and was responsible for its brilliant success. Later developments, however, caused a split resulting in the creation of two leaderships: political and intellectual, the former adopting harsh, repressive measures, and the latter responding with rigidity and entrenchment. Thus the vigorous and insightful *ijtihād* of *al Khulafā' al Rāshidūn*'s time was sealed up, giving way to an inane fondness in the culture for abstraction and a general erosion of bold, creative thinking.

An attempt to recapture the original vitality, which was ever concomitant with the high moral code of Islam, in order to address the amazingly complex, intertwined and flexional aspects of modern life, forms much of the argument of the paper. In the process, both past and contemporary trends are scrutinized and major areas of debate delineated. Emphasized throughout is the need for reform and redefinition in areas like *ijma'*, *iftā'*, and *qiyās*. This is also extended to such concepts as reason, knowledge, and education in relation to divine revelation. Fashionable and borrowed concepts like democracy and sovereignty are examined in the context of a considered Islamization of one discipline—that of political science.

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