

PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS SCIENCE

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Abstrak

Dari sudut pandang Filsafat Ilmu, penerapan istilah "*science*" dalam *Islamic religious science* merupakan hal yang dapat diperdebatkan, bahkan cukup kontroversial. Pertanyaan yang muncul kemudian adalah "Dapatkah diskusi serius dalam Filsafat Ilmu (*Philosophy of Science*) diterapkan dalam pembahasan *Islamic religious science* (ilmu-ilmu keislaman)?" Artikel ini mencoba menganalisis konsekuensi-konsekuensi dari dimasukkannya diskusi Filsafat Ilmu dalam tubuh *Islamic religious science*, berangkat dari kenyataan tidak adanya pemikir kontemporer Muslim yang menganalisis persoalan tersebut.

Sebagai langkah awal, perdebatan filosofis antara tiga pakar Filsafat Ilmu yaitu Karl R. Popper, Thomas Kuhn dan Imre Lakatos tentang konsep "*science*" diangkat, untuk selanjutnya dilihat relevan-sinya bagi *Islamic religious science*. Lebih spesifik, artikel ini menyoroti hubungan antara *Islamic religious science* dengan *research program* nya Imre Lakatos, dan menggarisbawahi bahwa rekonstruksi *Islamic religious science* adalah dalam wilayah *historical Islam*.

Satu hikmah terpenting yang dapat dipetik dari perdebatan di atas adalah penegasan bahwa semua teori, konsep formula, prinsip-prinsip dalam *Islamic religious science* hanyalah merupakan produk manusia, masyarakat dan budaya semata. Lewat kesadaran inilah ilmu-ilmu keislaman tersebut terbuka untuk dipertanyakan ulang, dirumuskan kembali sesuai dengan tantangan jaman yang mengitarinya. Persoalan yang muncul kemudian adalah adanya hambatan dari para peneliti sendiri yang mencemaskan apakah mereka mengadakan studi keislaman atau sesuatu yang lain.

Sosok *Islamic religious science* yang baru (setelah dihubungkan dengan *philosophy* dan *sociology of knowledge*) harus mempertimbangkan dengan sungguh-sungguh tiga dimensi pendekatan atas agama Islam yaitu: *linguistic-historical*, *theological-philosophical* dan *socio-anthropo-*

logical. Yang lebih penting lagi, hubungan antara tiga pendekatan ini haruslah bersifat *sirkular* dalam arti bahwa pendekatan multi-dimensi tersebut harus berdialog antara yang satu dan lainnya secara serius sebagai sebuah kesatuan entitas dengan seluruh implikasi dan konsekuensinya.

Sebagai kesimpulan, ilmu keislaman yang kritis hanya dapat dikonstruksikan secara sistematis lewat model pendekatan tiga dimensi yang bersifat sirkular dalam mana setiap dimensi dapat berhubungan dan berkomunikasi dengan yang lain. Dengan jalan inilah konteks penemuan (*discovery*) dalam *Islamic religious science* dapat berkembang dan konteks justifikasinya dapat ditekan serendah mungkin.

ملخص

انطلاقاً من وجهة نظر فلسفة العلوم، كان تطبيق مصطلح 'علم (Science)' في العلوم أو الدراسات الإسلامية أمراً قابلاً للنقاش بل مولعاً بالجدل. والسؤال إذن = 'هل المناقشة الجدية في فلسفة العلوم يمكن تطبيقها في العلوم والدراسات الإسلامية؟'

تحاول هذه المقالة على تحليل النتائج من استخدام فلسفة العلوم للبحث عن العلوم أو الدراسات الإسلامية. وذلك لما أننا لمّا نجد أحداً من المفكرين المسلمين المعاصرين الذي يهتم بتحليل تلك المشكلة.

بادئ ذي بدء، بحثت المقالة عن المناقشة الفلسفية عن مفهوم 'علم' التي جرت بين الفلاسفة الثلاثة، هم: كارل ر. بوبر (Karl R Popper) وتومس كهن (Thomas Kuhn) وإمري لاکاتوس (Imre Lakatos)، ثم يلي بعدها النظر إلى تناسب تلك المناقشة بالعلوم والدراسات الإسلامية. وفي هذه المقالة يختص النظر إلى أحوال المناسبة بين العلوم أو الدراسات الإسلامية وبرنامج البحث العلمي الذي أسسه إمري لاکاتوس، وتؤكد أن إعادة بناء العلوم والدراسات الإسلامية ليست من جهة تعاليم الإسلام المعيارية بل من جهة حقانيتها التاريخية.

ومن أهم الفوائد التي يمكن تحصيلها من تلك المناقشة هي التأكيد أن كل نظرية العلوم أو الدراسات الإسلامية، وصيغتها، وأساسها وقاعدتها ليس إلا نتائج محاولة

إنسانية وإجتماعية وثقافية . فتلك العلوم إذن أصبحت قابلة للسؤال وتصنيفها مرة أخرى حسب اعتراضات الزمان تحيطها . فمن المشاكل التي تصدر هنا هي الإعاقة من الباحثين أنفسهم الذين يتساءلون، أهم يبحثون عن العلوم و الدراسات الإسلامية ام شيء آخر .

فالشكل الجديد للعلوم و الدراسات الإسلامية (بعد اتصالها بفلسفة العلوم وسوسيولوجيا المعرفة) يلزم عليه أن يهتم بثلاثة المداخل فى الدراسة الإسلامية، وهى اللغوية التاريخية (linguistic-historical) والفلسفة الأولى والإلهية (theological-philosophical) والاجتماعية الانتروبولوجية (socio-anthropologica) . ومن أهم الأمور من ذلك كله هو أن يكون الاتصال بين هذه المداخل الثلاثة اتصالا دوريا ، أى أن تلك المداخل المتعددة لابد من أن تعتبر على أنها وحدة الكينونة بجميع تضاماتها وعواقبها الموجودة .

وأخيرا ، إن العلوم و الدراسات الإسلامية النقدية لا يمكن تأسيسها تأسيسا نظاميا إلا باستخدام تلك المداخل الثلاثة الدورية حيث كل بعد من تلك الأبعاد الثلاثة يتواصل ويتبادل ويتحاور بعضه ببعض . فبهذه الوسيلة يمكن اكتشاف العلوم و الدراسات الإسلامية أن يتضخم تضخما وأن تضغط إعادة الطلاء فيها إلى أسفل ما يمكن .

I. Critical observation of Islamic religious science

Eleven or twelve years after first publishing his well known book *Islam*,¹ Fazlur Rahman wrote another challenging work entitled *Islam & Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*.² The aim and style of exposition in these two books are totally different. The former is chiefly historical, while the latter is more critical in nature. From my own point of view, Rahman in his later work tries to initiate a more critical approach to the content and methodology of Islamic religious science. He identifies and characterizes Islamic religious science as a repetitive discipline, prone to hair-splitting detailed to the exclusion of the basic problem of a subject, overwhelmed by the literature of commentaries and su-

percommentaries, and having little new to say on anything. Islamic scholarship, according to him, is not widely regarded as an active pursuit, but rather given to passive acquisition of already established knowledge; disputation (*jadal*) soon became the favored means of winning a point and almost a substitute for genuine intellectual efforts at raising and grappling with real issues in a field, and so forth.³

The analytical or academic tool that he most frequently uses to validate his criticism is a differentiation between "normative" and "historical" Islam.⁴ By distinguishing these two aspects of Islam, he wanted to defend forcefully the normative aspect of Islam while remaining acutely critical of certain features of its historical development. Thus all constructions and formulations of Islamic religious sciences, such as theology (*kalām*), law and jurisprudence (*fiqh*), philosophy (*falsafah*), and sufism (*taṣawwuf*), are merely the unavoidable by-products of Muslim thought in its long historical evolution. Due to this fact, Muslim scholars everywhere and in any age should avoid becoming "prisoners of their own principles."⁵ All such constructions, principles and formulas are entirely bound by the limits of time and place.

If this is in fact the case, the question which comes to the fore is: "Why has there been so little progress and growth in the discourse of Islamic religious science from the medieval period to nowadays, while change constantly happens in concepts, methodology, framework, approach, discourse, theory, in short, invirtually all aspects of human knowledge?" Rahman summarizes his critical observation on the reality of Islamic religious science as follows:

... with the habit of writing commentaries for their own sake and the steady dwindling of original thought, the Muslim world witnessed the rise of a type of scholar who was truly encyclopedic in the scope of his learning but had little new to say on anything. This category of scholar-cum-commentator must be distinguished on the one hand from a very different type of a comprehensive thinker like Aristotle or even lesser figure like Ibn Sina, who welded a variety of fields of inquiry into unified system and coherent world view, and on the other hand from the modern type of specialist whose knowledge has extremely narrow confines. The latter-day medieval Muslim scholar I am talking about "studied" all the fields of knowledge available, but he did this mainly through commentaries and was himself a commentator and a compiler. ... One important but implicit assumption of this is that scholarship is not regarded as an active pursuit, a creative "reaching out" of the mind to the unknown -- as is the case today -

- but rather as a more or less passive acquisition of already established knowledge.⁶

Rahman's critical observations on Islamic religious science can be paraphrased using the language of contemporary philosophy of science, exemplified in the writings of Karl R. Popper, Thomas S. Kuhn and Imre Lakatos. Thus, we might ask: "Why do we find so much more 'context of justification' in Islamic religious science than 'context of discovery'?"⁷ Or, using Thomas S. Kuhn's analytical terms: "Why is there a clear tendency to defend exhaustively 'normal science' rather than pursue 'revolutionary science' in the discourse of Islamic thought?"⁸ Or, to use Imre Lakatos' phraseology: "Why is there so much discussion of the 'hard core' which is strongly defended and unfalsified, rather than rigorous discussion of the domain of the 'protective belt,' which is capable of being tested, confirmed, criticized, and falsified in the discourse of Islamic religious science?"⁹

From the standpoint of traditional discussion in the philosophy of science, it is debatable, perhaps even controversial, to employ the word "science" in reference to the social sciences, humanities and, especially, in the Islamic religious sciences.¹⁰ Rahman does not clarify why he chooses the word "science" to describe Islamic studies in his book. Leaving aside the controversy as a whole, and accepting that Islamic studies may conceivably termed a "science," the next and the most obvious question is: "Can the rigorous and serious discussion in the philosophy of science be applied to the study of Islamic religious science?" Although Rahman is radical enough in his treatment of the issue, he never questions the possibility of the applicability of scientific principles to the discipline of Islamic religious science. If Rahman's assumptions are valid, the introduction and inclusion of the discussion of philosophy of science within the body of Islamic religious science has considerable repercussions for the latter. It is these repercussions that I will try to develop and explore a little bit more in this paper.

Rahman faces certain painful realities that come with the application of scientific method, the first of these being the need for a critical examination of the attitude towards the Islamic *past*. It is ever more urgent because, owing to the peculiar psychological complex, that they have developed *vis-a-vis* the west, Muslims have come to defend that *past as though it were our God*.¹¹ Accordingly, he suggests the urgent need for systematic reconstruction in the fields of theology (*kalām*), law and ethics (*fiqh*), philosophy (*falsafah*) and the social sciences.¹²

Parallel to Rahman's suggestion that social science methodology be applied to the study of Islam, a number of scholars have urged that it be subjected to the methods and insights of the scientific study of religion (*Religionswissenschaft*). This discipline, which has emerged in the West, is favored by, among others, Charles J. Adams in the last lines of his long article on "Islamic Religious Tradition," and strongly recommended by Richard C. Martin.¹³ Adams repeats this advice in his foreword to the book entitled *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*. For Adams, a symposium on Islam and the history of religions held at Arizona State University in January 1980 was testimony to a partial but growing conquest of the gap between the history of religions and Islamic religious studies. The agenda of the symposium was not one of considering questions of method and approach to this field of study in the abstract, but of devoting attention to specific aspects of the Islamic tradition and of actually employing some of the theoretical insights and methodological richness of the science of religion to cast light on different areas of interest.¹⁴

To be sure, Fazlur Rahman and Charles J. Adams are not alone in having adopted this critical stance. The problem of epistemology in Islamic religious science and Islamic thought in general has been the object of increasingly severe attack and academic critique. Another contemporary Muslim scholar who takes the same position as Rahman's, if not somewhat more radical, is Mohamed Arkoun.¹⁵ Many of his articles and books published in recent years constantly reiterate the need to criticize epistemologically (*al-naqd al-ibistimi*) the body and the construction of Islamic thought in general. The following quotation is representative of Arkoun's ideas on the problem of contemporary Islamic thought :

Research on Islam as a religion is blocked because Muslims are becoming increasingly subject to the growing political, cultural and psychological constraints in their societies, while Islamologists, fascinated by the political effectiveness of the "fundamentalists" give precedence to a combination of political science and political sociology in describing what they see as short-term trends, rather than have recourse to the vitally necessary *critical reappraisal of the epistemic framework of the Islamic cognitive system* regarded from the long-term point of view.¹⁶

The problem of the rationality (or transcendentality, if you like) and the historicity of Islamic thought and Islamic religious science comes under fire, especially, from many present-day Muslim scholars. To men-

tion but a few, these include such thinkers as Muḥammad ‘Ābid al-Jābirī,¹⁷ Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd,¹⁸ Muḥammad Shaḥrūr,¹⁹ and ‘Abdullāh Aḥmad al-Na’īm.²⁰ Nevertheless, based on my tentative observation, none of the current generation of Muslim thinkers has seen the relevancy of the theories and methodologies that are essential features of the philosophy of science to the discussion of Islamic religious science in their critiques of the vast body of Islamic religious science and thought. As long as Islamic religious science and Islamic studies are referred to as “sciences,” I think it is valid to expect that they interact and engage in dialogue with the concerns of philosophy of science.²¹

II. Competing theories in scientific discourse : a glimpse at the problem of scientific growth

The growth, development and progress of science, which basically poses an acute problem for Islamic religious science, is actually a central aspect of the academic discussion in the domain of the philosophy of science. Needless to say, it is impossible for me to take into account all the issues that have been debated within this philosophical discipline in the last few decades. Given the aim of my essay I will concentrate only on some of the discussion on the nature of theories and methodologies in their relationship with the growth and the development of science. Here too I cannot give a complete picture of the situation but have to content myself with only giving glimpses of it.

Before discussing this vital subject, let me first present the analytical terms most commonly used to express the two great traditions within the philosophy of science. The first of these is the *naturalistic* tradition, while the other is the *humanistic*.²² Some of the key ideas that come up in the naturalistic tradition are the corrigibility and incorrigibility of knowledge; explanation and falsification; system, model & theory; framework, pattern and paradigm; theory-laden; ongoing investigative traditions; normal science and revolutionary science; anomaly; commensurability and incommensurability of theory; puzzle solving within normal science; context of justification and context of discovery; hard core and protective belt; the heuristic principle; and many others. The humanistic tradition on the other hand concerns itself with such key concepts as meaning; explanative and interpretative social science; hermeneutics; insider and outsider understanding; idealist and reductionist approaches; *verstehen* vs. *erklaren*; objectivity and subjectivity; objectivity and involvement; value and fact; text and context; meaning and expression;

sociology of knowledge; knowledge as cultural artifact; society as organism; society as structural-functional system; religion as a social or psychological projection; and others.²³

In the following, I will limit myself to exposing and selecting from the ideas of Thomas S. Kuhn, Karl R. Popper and Imre Lakatos, and particularly from their rigorous discussions concerning the problem of the emergence of a new theory which poses a challenge to an old one in the field of scientific inquiry. Only some of the key ideas mentioned above will be discussed in their proper context.

Defending, maintaining, criticizing, examining, scrutinizing, improving, and refining scientific theories are the primary tasks of one who pursues research and development in any field of scientific activity. This means that scientific activities should produce, apply and criticize previous theories, not merely reproduce them. When we are asked what they mean by a theory, some scientists say that a theory consists of an established hypothesis or set of hypotheses about facts, or a general law of nature or simply a systematized body of ideas. Others prefer to say that a theory is a system of utterances where the internal relationships have been made explicit. Both kinds of terminology admit the possibility that the systematization of a theory can be developed in several ways in all branches of knowledge, be it natural sciences, the humanities, social sciences, or whatever.²⁴

According to Kuhn, theories cannot be compared and therefore cannot be placed in a relation of entailment. This is so because different theories are connected with different systems of concepts or, to use Kuhn's own term, with different paradigms. This means that scientists with different paradigms do not have the same theories and therefore talk about different things.²⁵ To hold a *paradigm* means to embrace certain general conceptions about what the object under research and investigation truly is, which *methods* are the most adequate to the task, which *problems* can be expected to arise, which *solutions* are conceivable and which *actual applications of the theory* are exemplary or paradigmatic so that they can function as *orienting patterns* for the researchers.

The relation between paradigm and theory is regarded as a very close one. In adhering to a certain paradigm and to the theories which the paradigm makes possible, scientists concern themselves only with those problems which lie within the limits of the paradigm and associated theories. Kuhn calls the scientific activity which consists in dealing with those and only those problems *normal science*.²⁶ Most of the problems in

“normal science” can be adequately treated by established theories, but situations can emerge when the problems which arise from a certain theory become too numerous or too perplexing and the proposed solutions take on more the character of *ad hoc* solutions. In such a situation, scientists may abandon the traditional paradigm for a new one and work out new theories.

According to Kuhn’s investigations into the history of science, the transition from one theory to another and therefore from one paradigm to another does not take place on the basis of argument and logical reasoning, but because of a shift of paradigm. Kuhn calls this transition a scientific revolution. One example which is often referred to, in the debate between Kuhnians and Popperians, is the breakdown of Newtonian physics as the only foundation for theories in physics, caused by the implications of Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity.

For Popper, normal science, as it is conceived by Kuhn, is characterized by dogmatism and irrationalism. This is so because the normal scientist wants to rescue his or her theories from being proven false by introducing an *ad hoc* complement as soon as criticism has been raised against the theory. However, the only aim of the *ad hoc* complement is to explain away the difficulty, not to solve it. Popper contrasts this dogmatic attitude with a critical one. Scientific development presupposes a never-ending process of testing proposed hypotheses and theories by qualified attempts to disprove them.

Already this brief comparison between Popper and Kuhn shows that the fundamental difference between their positions in the philosophy of science has to do with differences in their views of theories. Let us look for a moment at Imre Lakatos’ conception of a “research program” in responding to Kuhn’s theory. Largely in response to Kuhn’s assault on some of the cherished assumptions of traditional philosophy of science, Imre Lakatos has developed an alternative theory about the role of these theories in the evolution of scientific thought. Calling such general theories “research programmes,” Lakatos argues that research programmes have three elements:²⁷ (1) a “hard core” (or “negative heuristic”) of fundamental assumptions which cannot be abandoned or modified without repudiation of the research programme,²⁸ (2) the “positive heuristic,” which contains “a partially articulated set of suggestions or hints on how to change, modify, sophisticate our specific theories whenever we wish to improve them,” and (3) “a series of theories, T1, T2, T3 ... where each subsequent theory “result[s] from adding auxiliary clauses to ... the previ-

ous theory.”²⁹ Such theories are the specific instantiations of a general research programme. Research programmes can be progressive or regressive in a variety of ways: but progress, for Lakatos even more than for Kuhn, is a function exclusively of the empirical growth of a tradition. It is the possession of greater “empirical content” which makes one theory superior to, and more progressive than, another.

Lakatos’ model is, in many respects, an improvement on Kuhn’s notion of paradigm and an extension of Karl R. Popper’s falsificationist theory. Unlike Kuhn, Lakatos allows for, and stresses, the historical importance of the co-existence of several alternative research programmes at the same time and within the same domain. Unlike Kuhn, who often takes the view that paradigms are incommensurable and thus not open to rational comparison, Lakatos insists that we can objectively compare the relative progress of competing research traditions. More than Kuhn, Lakatos tries to grapple with the thorny question of the relation of the super-theory to its constituent mini-theories.

Every research tradition will be associated with a series of specific theories, each of which is designed to particularize the ontology of the research tradition and to illustrate, or satisfy, its methodology. The mechanistic research tradition in seventeenth century optics, for example, includes several of Descartes’ theories as well as the optical theories of Hooke, Rohault, Hobbes, Regis and Huygens. Many of the theories within a given evolving research tradition will be mutually inconsistent rivals, precisely because some theories represent attempts, within the framework of tradition, to improve and correct their predecessors.³⁰

Lakatos’ extension of Popper’s falsificationist view appears when he declares that the main division is not into individual theories but into programs, each encompassing multiple theories.³¹ A research program contains both a “hard core” and a “protective belt.” The core is composed of fundamental tenets; the belt, of derivative tenets, or auxiliary hypotheses. The belt is what gets directly tested. In the wake of falsification from scrutinizing and testing, the belt gets revised and the core is thereby spared.³² Yet the belt is meant to safeguard the core only provisionally. If the belt cannot be adjusted in fixed ways to meet challenges to it, the whole program must go. Lakatos opposes nonfalsifiability no less than premature abandonment. Nonfalsifiability is dogmatism.

The three philosophers of science discussed above unanimously and critically agree that the inner dynamic force which makes scientific progress possible is the spirit and ethos of scholars and researchers them-

selves to invent new theories and their readiness to revise, improve, examine, scrutinize, or disprove the previous theory in its respective field of study using a certain methodology. Theories which explain realities, be they natural, humanities, social, religious, Islamic or whatsoever represent effective tools for measuring whether there is any scientific progress and development or not. Only by using those theories, with their set of methodology, hypothesis and approach, within a designed research program can those systematized ideas be characterized as scientific activity.

Now, what is the relevancy of raising the philosophical debate between Kuhn, Popper and Lakatos in the field of Islamic religious science? I do not pretend that these discussions can be fully applied in the field of Islamic religious science; nevertheless I believe that much of what they said can provide us with an idea as to how scientific activity in general actually works, particularly as a historical process. One of the important lessons that can be learned from Kuhn and Popper's controversy (Lakatos' significance will be delineated in the following section) is that any theories, ideas, formulas, principles, frame-works, or concepts in scientific discourse must be open to question, criticism, scrutiny, and testing. The development and growth of science can only be accomplished through the initial effort and determination on the part of the researchers to get rid of difficulties, anomalies or inconsistencies embedded in previous theories or through the deliberate attempts of scientists and researchers to disprove those theories. A further requirement for the healthy development of scientific inquiry, as I see it, is interaction and dialogue with other disciplines outside its own traditional domain.

These factors urge and oblige researchers, scholars and scientists to rethink, reevaluate and reexamine every previous paradigm and theory in order to arrive at solutions to new problems. For Fazlur Rahman and his colleagues, this kind of academic and scholarly activity is scarcely to be found in the real practice of Islamic religious science. The Islamic religious sciences, which are largely the product of the human construction and imagination, eventually became dogmatic, having been routinized, made repetitive and sacralized (*taqdīs al-afkār al-dīniyyah*).³³

Muslim scholars rarely give any thought to the historicity of the construction of Islamic religious science, and therefore miss out on the "scientific revolution," to use Kuhn's analytical term. In Popperian terms, on the other hand, Islamic religious science seems to be immune from being reexamined, tested, questioned and falsified. This happens because the historical aspect of Islamic religious science is totally blurred, even con-

fused with the normative aspects of piety, to the extent that it is often verbally translated as revelation itself.

III. Does Islamic religious science constitute a "research program" in the Lakatosian sense?

It may seem unfair to raise any question concerning the progress and growth of Islamic religious science from the perspective of the philosophy of science. After all, there has been no end of intellectuals and scholars -- Muslim and non-Muslim, in the East and in the West -- who have carried out research in this field of studies. Their contribution to the progress and development of Islamic religious science is not in any doubt. My only concern here is to formulate a coherent response and, if possible, a solution to Rahman's critical observation. It should not be forgotten in any case that Rahman raised only drew attention to this serious and acute problem of Islamic religious science after he himself had already written a comprehensive book on Islamic religious science entitled *Islam*. If the situation had been the reverse, and *Islam* had appeared after he had raised these methodological objections, then it might have been supposed that he had come up with an answer to his concern. This however was not the case, and it can only be assumed that Rahman was led to question the validity of Islamic scientific inquiry by his investigation of its historical development.

Another implication and consequence of Rahman's critical observation may be expressed by the following question: "Does Islamic religious science constitute a research program which involves competing theories, as is commonly found and presumed in all other branches of knowledge?" Rahman himself does not provide any answer to this question. Nevertheless, there is a hint or a signal from Rahman as to which direction a research program in Islamic religious science should be directed, reconstructed and reformulated.

From my point of view, using the language of Imre Lakatos, Rahman's "normative Islam" is similar to or parallel with the "hard core" of science, while his "historical Islam" is similar to or parallel with the domain of the "protective belt," namely the precise domain of what may be called science, i.e. knowledge which may be directly tested, reexamined, scrutinized, questioned, reformulated and reconstructed. This is made clear by Rahman's explanation, as follows:

... This criterion which must judge between the differences among Muslims and those among Muslims and non-Muslims as to what

normative Islam at the intellectual level is, must remain *the Qur'an itself and the Prophet's definitive conduct*. Among non-Muslims, primary thought is of the Islamicist scholar who deals with the great tradition. As for the social scientist, particularly the *anthropologist*, he studies the little tradition as an empirical reality without talking about normative Islam. The wish is not to decry the work of those who study actual Muslim societies; on the contrary, *their work is not only highly useful but an essential prerequisite even for any would be Muslim reformer*. Criticism is due because when social scientists study "Islam as it is actually lived", they tend to believe that this situation is static and even perhaps "normative for those people".³⁴

The battlefield where the reconstruction of Islamic religious science is to take place is to be found in the domain of "historical Islam," not in that of "normative Islam." All Islamic religious sciences, especially theology (*kalām*), Qur'anic studies (*tafsīr*), Muslim traditions (*ḥadīth*), law (*fiqh*), philosophy (*falsafah*), sufism (*taṣawwuf*) and practical ethics (*akhlāq*) are "historical Islam." Their body of knowledge was constructed and formulated by human beings at certain moments of time circumscribed by problems and challenges which were real and valid for those times. Thus, due to the fact that problems and the challenges are totally different from time to time, not to say from age to age, those constructions of knowledge are by nature open to being reexamined, rescrutinized, reformulated and reconstructed by scholars and researchers of every period and background.

Taking together Rahman's statement, Arkoun's proclamation, Richard C. Martin's proposal and to some extent Charles J. Adams' idea as one thread, there seems to be a deep longing and urgent need for Muslim scholars nowadays to reconstruct Islamic religious science by transplanting and using theories and methodologies that originally come from outside its traditional boundaries.³⁵ In addressing this definite and crucial problem, Mohamed Arkoun is the most vocal, if not to say radical, among his colleagues. He strongly and insistently calls for the use of methodologies and theories developed in the social sciences as a tool of analysis or model of research program in the domain of the new image of Islamic studies. He never hesitates to use this new methodology in Islamic religious science, since he regards this type of new approach to the study of social science and the study of religion as only the continuation, improvement and development of methodology and theory which previously

had been worked out and formulated by the scholars of the medieval period. Notice the following statement:

... the phenomenon of revelation is no longer a problem reserved for *theologians*: it is an area of strategic intervention for the *historian* (history of the text of the Koran and of exegetic literature), the specialist in *linguistic and semiotics* (theory of religious discourse and critique of theological discourse), *the sociologist* (sociology of faith, hope, religious discourse, religious practice related to the Koran and / or to archaic local tradition), *the psychologist* (internalization of "values" and of the acquired capital of religious symbolism, and the role of "Revelation" in the psycho-socio-cultural integration of the person), *the jurist* (origin and foundations of "religious" law), and *the anthropologist* (Revelation as discourse legitimizing all kinds of domination: political, economic, psychological, symbolic: the domination of women by men, of children and adolescents by adults, of workers by employers, of the subject-citizen by the ruler, of the believer by the saint, of the aspirant-disciple by the spiritual teacher, of the layman by the scholar ('*alim*), etc.).³⁶

The possibility of enlarging and extending a research program in order to foster progress and growth in Islamic religious science at least in the area of "historical Islam" is wide open. The "historical Islam," which is in the domain of the "protective belt" in Lakatosian terminology, is the real focus and concrete domain for the program of reconstruction and reformation of Islamic religious science in the modern period. And it can only be successfully accomplished by transplanting the methodologies, theories and research traditions which have been thoroughly discussed and developed in the humanities, social sciences and religious studies.

For the sake of clarity let me take, as a comparative example, the current discussion amongst Christian theologians as to how to benefit from the rigorous discussion of epistemology and the philosophy of science that has developed in recent years. The most significant recent development in the theory of knowledge is the change from *foundationalism* to *holism*. In the philosophy of science, foundational assertions were first taken to be descriptions of sense-data.³⁷

Some Christian theologians have provided an interesting analysis of how foundationalism affected theology in the modern period, looking specifically at the way Scripture has been pressed into service to provide the foundation, a use for which many have found it ill-suited.³⁸ Due to the impact of foundationalism, suddenly the history of modern theology

changes in focus by looking at answers to three questions. First, what proposals have been made regarding foundations for religious knowledge? Secondly, what are the problems with each of these proposals? And thirdly, in light of the failure to find an adequate foundation, what moves have been made to sidestep the whole issue?

Looking at the history of theology in these terms, Nancey Murphey finds that modern Christian theologians fall roughly into three camps: those whose foundation is *biblical*, those whose foundation is *experimental*, and those who claim that theology *does not belong in the category of knowledge at all*. For the Biblicists, the question always arises: "How do you know that what you take to be revelation really is revelation?" Apologists from Locke to American fundamentalists have turned to miracle and fulfilled prophecies. Karl Barth simply said "don't ask."³⁹

This is not the place to discuss this issue in any detail. What I would like to stress instead is the urgency and the need for interaction and intercommunication with theories and methodologies used in other disciplines that lie beyond the traditional boundaries of one's own. By transplanting these theories it is possible to enlarge or to widen the horizons of one's scholarly insight. When this interaction and intercommunication among the various disciplines of science occurs, there is a noticeable change in the way we put questions, in the academic problem which come to the fore, in the procedure employed to solve the problem and in the methodology which is deemed to be the most useful. It is clear that the new situation requires a new philosophy and above all a new terminology and new language. To my opinion, this is what Rahman wants to emphasize when he tries to compare Islamic religious science with Aristotle's scientific and comprehensive philosophical framework or with rigorous specialist in its modern sense.

Now, what image is projected by an Islamic religious science which is no longer dogmatic, repetitive or scholastic? The last section of this paper will discuss what it might resemble.

IV. The hermeneutical circle of "language", "thought" and "historical" in Islamic religious science

From the perspective of the philosophy of science, any science -- natural, the humanities, social, religious or Islamic -- should be formulated and constructed on "theories" which are based on rigorous methodology. In this sense, theories stand as an intellectual expression which

should not be dogmatic or sacralized. Thus we are concerned only with those theories, ideas, frameworks, formulas, principles, beliefs, paradigms and whatsoever that can be tested, evaluated, examined, criticized and discussed academically. Based on those "previous" theories, scientific research can achieve its progress, growth, and development.

Furthermore, previous theories cannot be taken for granted. Anomalies and inappropriate thinking can always be found to be attached to those theories and ideas. Besides, knowledge and science cannot be produced in a vacuum. It must be subject to historical, social and political influences and tastes. This important consideration springs from the realization that those theories are merely a product of human effort and are therefore bounded, limited and conditioned by historical circumstances. Theories, paradigms, intellectual expressions and philosophical reflections are in general no exception to this historical limitation. Consistently, they are bounded by interest, assumption and context.⁴⁰

In this sense, the possibility of applying the philosophy of science to the current academic discussion in Islamic religious science should be accomplished, especially in view of its being unavoidably interwoven with the sociology of knowledge. These two branches of knowledge are rarely discussed and seldom included within an already established tradition of Islamic religious science. They nevertheless stand as a prerequisite and preliminary discourse for any Muslim scholar who wants to avoid being accused of being defender of a type of Islamic religious science which is merely repetitive, static, sacralized and dogmatic.

In our contemporary academic life, disciplines outside the social sciences, from the study of literature and biology, to the study of physics and religion and ethics, have all come to accept the premises that Karl Mannheim⁴¹ and Max Scheler fought to establish: all aspects of a human's being and knowing are *situated*, thought and action form a unity; and a society's intellectual development cannot be divorced from its concrete historical and social context.⁴²

Taking this formula into consideration, one has to say that all these theories, formulas, principles, laws, frameworks in Islamic religious science are merely a product of human, societal and cultural determinism. In saying this, I do not consider myself as having fallen into the trap of relativism. What I want to emphasize in this context is that any science, including Islamic religious science, is *corrigible* and *falsifiable*.⁴³ Only by realizing this important factor, the possibility of scrutinizing, questioning, testing, arguing, debating the "former" conception or "previous" Mus-

lim's intellectual theories, in all branches of knowledge, is academically guaranteed.

When we eventually come to the problem of historicity of knowledge, it is unfortunate that Muslims and non-Muslim scholars who want to develop their discourse in Islamic religious science are psychologically hindered and even intimidated by the problem of "reductionism" and "non-reductionism,"⁴⁴ a problem which actually originates from the discourse of religious studies. To some extent, there is some psychological and institutional burden involved in enlarging and developing the domain, the scope and the methodology of Islamic religious science due to this issue. The Muslim scholars who belong to the activist camp in particular and the Islamicists who cling to the tradition of Islamic religious science in its old paradigm feel much anxiety about whether they are doing Islamic studies or something else. Based on that argument, classical Islamicists would prefer to stick on its philological approach which is much more "textual" oriented rather than "contextual" in nature.

From my point of view, this is not the appropriate place to raise the issue of reductionism and non-reductionism, since from the beginning Fazlur Rahman himself has initially preserved as "normative Islam" in his rigorous framework or as the "hard core" in the Lakatosian framework which should be protected in its positive heuristic. This "normative" or "hard core" Islam is similar to what has been designated as the proper object of study in the phenomenological approach to religion.⁴⁵

The new image of Islamic religious science, after being introduced and correlated with the discourse of philosophy and the sociology of knowledge, must furthermore take into consideration a three dimensional approach to Islamic religion which is *linguistic-historical*, *theological-philosophical* and *socio-anthropological* at the same time. Much has been written on what these approaches consist of and how they should be carried out.⁴⁶ It would merely be repetitious to explain them here. What I am interested in discussing is the problem of the relationship, or interrelationship if you like, between the study of Islamic religious science which is based on a "text," using the *linguistic* and *philological* approach, that which is derived from thought, ideas, norms, concepts, doctrines using the *theological* and *philosophical* approach, and that which focuses primarily on the social interaction within a cultural and historical "context" using a *sociological*, *anthropological*, and *psychological* approach.

Should the frame of relationship between these three academic approaches be *parallel*, *linear* or *circular*? Based on my previous exami-

nation, it is my belief that the shape of the relationship between those three academic traditions is of too great importance to simply allow ourselves to admit the validity of every single academic tradition in its autonomous domain.

The advocate of the "linear" model will prefer to assign a primacy, if not in fact exclusivity, to his own academic tradition. If a scholar comes from the socio-anthropological tradition, he would say that his approach is much more important than any other. So would the scholar coming from philological, historical, theological and philosophical approaches. She or he will work in a closed system. He or she will not care about the work or researches done from another angle and perspective, beyond his or her own tradition.

The one who adopts a "parallel" model is typified by the Islamic scholar who has received academic training in the philological, philosophical and socio-anthropological traditions. Nevertheless, he or she does not have sufficient academic insight to blend the academic training and scholarship of each tradition into one unified and single analysis. The difference between the linear and parallel is that in the former scholars only have one tradition of academic training, whereas in the latter scholars have various types of academic training but are unable to gain insight into interweaving them into one unified tool of analysis.

With the "circular" model, on the other hand, any Islamic scholars who follow it will fully realize and take into serious consideration all three of these multi-dimensional approaches to Islamic religious science as one unified entity, along with its implications and its consequences. Unifying all three approaches into one unified and integrated academic insight will make a scholar more alert to the socio-anthropological dimension of Islamic religiosity, while at the same time alert him to its philosophical and phenomenological aspect of it. Last but not least, he will consider as well the linguistic and philological problems of the Islamic tradition.

Thus a critical Islamic religious science, as Fazlur Rahman and Mohamed Arkoun and their colleagues, all of whom have similar concerns, envision it, can only be systematically constructed within the model of "circular" movement of the three dimensional approaches in which every dimension can interact and intercommunicate with each other. Each approach interacts closely and is rigorously connected with its counterparts. No approach or discipline can stand entirely by itself. This dynamic movement is hermeneutical in its very essence.

Only within this framework, can the notion of the corrigibility and falsifiability of Islamic religious science be well and deeply understood, and the competitive paradigms and theories become possible. Furthermore, the context of discovery in Islamic research and science can flourish and be given priority, while the context of justification can be reduced to the lowest degree possible. Within that academic network, Islamic religious science in Muslim tradition will not merely "reproduce" prevailing paradigms, but will criticize and perhaps even overthrow them. Such reformation and reconstruction are often only dysfunctional in the short run, causing revolutions and social upheavals, though they often become socially functional in the long run.⁴⁷ Anomalies and inconsistencies embodied in every theory and methodology in Islamic religious science can be easily detected and the ongoing investigative tradition and continuing research tradition using an interdisciplinary approach be meaningfully maintained.⁴⁸

Notes

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¹Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, 1st ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966). The second edition appeared in 1979. This book discusses almost every branch of Islamic religious science and includes such chapter headings as the Qur'ān, Muḥammad, ḥadīth (Muslim tradition), the structure of law (*Fiqh*), dialectical theology (*Kalām*), The *Shari'a*, the philosophical movement (*Fal-afah*), sufi doctrine and its organization, sectarian development, education, pre-modern and modern development.

²Fazlur Rahman, *Islam & Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago & London: the University of Chicago Press, 1982). In the prefatory note, Rahman acknowledges that he began writing this book in 1977 and completed it in 1978.

³*Ibid.*, 37, 38, 150, and 151.

⁴*Ibid.*, 141. For further clarification of the terms "normative" and "historical" Islam, see Fazlur Rahman "Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies: Review Essay" in Richard C. Martin, ed., *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1985), 189-202, especially 196.

⁵Fazlur Rahman, *Islam & Modernity*, 147.

⁶*Ibid.*, 38, Cf. 150-1.

⁷Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, first edition 1959 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987).

⁸Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 23-34; 92-110.

⁹Imre Lakatos "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 132-138.

¹⁰It is not my aim to delve into the traditional discussion whether there is a radical difference between the human and natural sciences. However, in the case of the discussion at issue, which is in some sense a discussion about a logical distinction, there is no need for specially mentioning them. I think it is very difficult to maintain that the humanities, social sciences, and of course, Islamic religious sciences are incapable of producing knowledge. What is more, I disagree with the view that the natural and the human sciences have nothing in common. For further exploration, see Eberhard Herrmann, *Scientific Theory and Religious Belief: An Essay on the Rationality of Views of Life* (Kempfen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1995), 84-87.

¹¹Fazlur Rahman, *Islam & Modernity*, 147. Critical response comes from Sayyed Hossein Nasr in his works *Knowledge and the Sacred* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), and *Traditional Islam in the Modern World*, first published 1987 (London: Kegan Paul International Ltd., 1994), especially chapter 5 and 6, 75-113.

¹²Fazlur Rahman, *Islam & Modernity*, 151-162. It is unfortunate that Rahman does not clarify in detail how this giant project should be accomplished. Nevertheless, mentioning the "social sciences," besides philosophy, ethics and theology, as one among the many methods useful in reconstructing Islamic religious science is an indication of progress.

¹³Charles J. Adams, "Islamic Religious Tradition," in *The Study of the Middle East: Research and Scholarship in the Humanities and the Social Sciences*, ed. Leonard Binder (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976), 87. For Richard C. Martin, see his Introductory Essay "Islam and Religious Studies" in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, ed. Richard C. Martin (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1985), 1-18, and his "Understanding the Qur'ān in Text and Context," *History of Religions* 21, 4 (1982): 361-384, especially 384.

¹⁴Charles J. Adams, "Foreword," in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, viii.

¹⁵Mohamed Arkoun writes in French, but some of his books have been translated into Arabic and English. See his *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions to Uncommon Answers*, tr. Robert D. Lee (Boulder, Colo, Westview Press, 1994); idem, *Tārīkhīyyat al-Fikr al-'Arabi*, tr. Hāshim Ṣāliḥ (Beirut: Markaz al-Inmā' al-Qawmī, 1986), idem, *al-Fikr al-Islāmī: Qirā'ah 'Ilmiyyah*, tr. Hāshim Ṣāliḥ (Beirut: Markaz al-Inmā' al-Qawmī, 1987); idem, *Ayna Huwa al-Fikr al-Islāmī al-Mu'āṣir*, tr. Hāshim Ṣāliḥ (London & Beirut: Dār al-Saqī, 1993); idem, *al-Islām: al-Akhlaq wa al-Siyāsah*, tr. Hāshim Ṣāliḥ (Beirut: Markaz al-Inmā' al-Qawmī, 1990).

¹⁶Mohamed Arkoun, "The Topicality of the Problem of the Person in Islamic Thought," *International Social Science Journal*, August 1988, 407-21, especially

420-1. The italics are mine. See also his article "The Unity of Man in Islamic Thought" where he states: "Even more serious is the break with the modernity produced in the West since the 16th century and incessantly enriched and renewed, while *Islamic thinking became bogged down in scholastic repetition of a few "truths" transmitted by "orthodox" schools* with no relation to the rich discussions and research of the classical period," *Diogenes* 140 (1987): 68. See also Robert D. Lee, *Overcoming Tradition and Modernity: The Search for Islamic Authenticity* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), 149 and 162-3.

¹⁷Muhammad 'Abid al-Jābirī, *Bunyat al-'Aql al-'Arabi al-Islāmi: Dirāsah Tahliyyah Naqdiyyah li Nuzūm al-Ma'rifah fī al-Thaqāfah al-'Arabiyyah* (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Wahdah al-'Arabiyyah, 1986); idem, *Al-Aql al-Siyāsī al-'Arabi* (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Wahdah al-'Arabiyyah, 1990); and idem, *Takwīn al-'Aql al-'Arabi* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī'ah, 1988).

¹⁸Nasr Hāmid Abū Zayd, *Maḥmūd al-Naṣṣ: Dirāsah fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-'Ammah li al-Kitāb, 1990); and idem, *Naqd al-Khiṭāb al-Dīnī* (Cairo: Sīnā li al-Nashr, 1993).

¹⁹Muhammad Shaḥrūr, *al-Kitāb wa al-Qur'ān: Qirā'ah Mu'aṣirah* (Damascus: al-Ahālī, 1990).

²⁰'Abdullah Aḥmad al-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990).

²¹It seems that almost all branches of academic discourse have taken advantage of the stimulating discussion in the philosophy of science. Biology, philosophy, geology, economy, sociology, politics, history, and theology take into account the positive impact of rigorous epistemological discussion in the philosophy of science. For further discussion, see Garry Gutting, ed., *Paradigms and Revolutions: Appraisals and Application of Thomas Kuhn's Philosophy of Science* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980).

²²For a detailed discussion on the difference between these two traditions in the philosophy of science, see Gerard Radnizky, *Contemporary Schools of Metascience*, (Stockholm: Berilingska Boktryckerei, 1970).

²³Alan F. Chalmers, *What is This Thing Called Science?* 2nd ed. (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1982); Richard Boyd, Philip Gasper, and J.D. Trout, eds., *The Philosophy of Science*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997); Larry Laudan, *Progress and Its Problems: Towards a Theory of Scientific Growth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); Harold I. Brown, *Perception, Theory, and Commitment: the New Philosophy of Science* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1977); Holmes Rolston, III, *Science and Religion: A Critical Survey* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966); Ian G. Barbour, *Issues in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966); Daniel L. Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).

²⁴Eberhard Hermann, *Scientific Theory*, 63.

²⁵For a more detailed discussion of Kuhn's concept of paradigm see Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*. Pro-

ceedings of the International Colloquium in the Philosophy of Science, London 1965, volume 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

²⁶Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 23-34.

²⁷Lakatos, "Falsification," 133-34

²⁸*Ibid.*, 135.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 118.

³⁰Larry Laudan, *Progress and its Problems*, 81.

³¹Lakatos, "Falsification," 132-38.

³²*Ibid.*

³³Mohamed Arkoun uses the phrase "*taqdis al-afkar al-diniyyah*" (the sacralization of religious thought) in Islamic discourse due to the unfalsifiability or incorrigibility of Islamic religious science. See his *al-Islam: al-Akhlaq wa al-Siyasah*, tr. Hāshim Ṣāliḥ (Beirut : Markaz al-Inma' al-Qawmi, 1990), 172-3. Cf. Naṣr Hāmid Abu Zayd, *Naql al-Khitab al-Dini*, chapter 3, 185-224.

³⁴Fazlur Rahman, "Approaches to Islam," 196. The italics are mine. It appears as though the only branch of social science commonly used in the scientific study of religion that Charles J. Adams emphasizes is anthropology. He seemingly does not recommend or favor any other branch of social science, like politics, sociology, economics etc. Adams' opinion is diametrically opposed to Mohamed Arkoun's suggestion.

³⁵See Mohamed Arkoun, *Al-Fikr al-Islami*, 267-271; and his *Tarikhyyat al-Fikr*, 24-29.

³⁶Mohamed Arkoun, "The Topicality of the problem," 420-1; and his *al-Fikr al-Islami*, 87-112. The italics are mine. See also Robert D. Lee, *Overcoming Tradition and Modernity*, 158, 161.; and Issa J. Boullata, *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 80 and 84.

³⁷However, this theory is questioned by many philosophers of science. They quickly concluded that foundationalism will not work in science. If one begins with incorrigible sense-data, the logical gulf between the foundation and the next level of the structure (knowledge of material objects) is too broad to span. Because of this discrepancy, many leave behind this theory and arrive at holism. For further exploration see Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1979) 155-164; 180-1.

³⁸Nancey Murphy, "What has Theology to Learn from Scientific Methodology," in *Science and Theology: Questions at the Interface*, ed. Murray Rae, Hilary Regan, John Stenhouse (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 102.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁰Robert D. Amico, *Historicism and Knowledge* (New York & London: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, Inc., 1989), xi-xii.

⁴¹Brian Longhurst, *Karl Mannheim and the Contemporary Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 25-29.

⁴²E. Doyle McCarthy, *Knowledge as Culture : The New Sociology of Knowledge* (London and New York : Routledge, 1996), 107.

⁴³Cf. Farid Esack, *Qur'ān, Liberation: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity Against Oppression* (Oxford: Oneword Publications, 1997), 49-81, and 259

⁴⁴Charles J. Adams, "Islamic Religious," 45-6, and Daniel L. Pals, *Seven Theories*, 279.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 49-54, especially 52. Cf. Ninian Smart, *Dimension of the Sacred: An Anatomy of the World's Beliefs* (London : Fontana Press, 1997), 7-8.

⁴⁶Charles J. Adams, "Islamic Religious Tradition," 41-54. Cf. Richard C. Martin "Islam and Religious Studies: An Introductory Essay," in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, 1-18. For a sympathetic critique of philological approaches used by classical Islamicist in Islamic studies see Mohamed Arkoun, *al-Fikr al-Islāmī*, 245-283, especially 263, 271.

⁴⁷The risks inherent in Muslim academic life are exemplified by the case of Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd in Egypt, well known in the field of literary criticism in general and in Qur'anic studies in particular. For further information see Stefan Wild, "Preface," in *The Qur'an As Text*, ed. Stefan Wild (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), ix-xi.

⁴⁸I Wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Eric L. Ormsby (Institute of Islamic Studies) and Prof. R. Philip Buckley (Department of Philosophy) for the many valuable remarks they made during my post-doctoral research at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, I am also very grateful to Steve Milleur for his proof-reading.

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