

The Dilemma of the “Reform” School, and Its Escalating Crisis, in Its Attempt to Patch Up the Reality of Secularism That Disbelieves in Islam!

(Translated)

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The war of ideas and minds waged against Islamic thought and culture took a dangerous turn toward the end of the last century, when the West realized that Islamic principles were unyielding and unbreakable. Consequently, attempts to deconstruct Islamic concepts accelerated thereby starting a Western endeavor to re-impose secular outcomes, framing them as “Islamic” outcomes, in order to counter the Islamic thought that had regained its vitality and efficacy.

Among the most dangerous of these innovative tools of deconstruction were those philosophically and secularly termed the “Islamization of Knowledge” and the “Renewal of Islamic Thought.” Through these means, an epistemological landmine was planted, and an intellectual and cultural dilemma was embedded within the field of Islamic knowledge and the arena of intellectual conflict with Islam. This process produced minds among the very sons of Islam that were distorted by its effects; it spawned an intellectual movement and a school of thought founded upon its philosophy, as well as a political praxis, dubbed “reformist,” that operated strictly according to its outcomes.

The raw, bitter truth is that we now stand before an intellectual and cultural current, and a political movement, that seeks to “reform” secular disbelief, using the very tools of secular thought, and from within the secular paradigm itself. Upon this movement, three grave calamities have converged: attempting to reform that which is inherently unreformable; preserving what must be changed; and engaging in thought according to the rules of secular disbelief, and from within the secular cage, solely to reproduce secular disbelief in all its forms: as a comprehensive system, as specific regimes, and as a mode of thought and reasoning. Here stands the vortex of this intellectual current and political movement, which is persistent and ongoing, deployed time and again to recycle a bankrupt, failed secular system under the guise of reform.

This study examines the approach known as the “Islamization of Knowledge” and the renewal of Islamic thought, as well as the reformist movements that have emerged from and are grounded in these concepts; furthermore, it sheds light on specific examples drawn from this epistemological school, which currently finds itself in a state of crisis.

Firstly, Regarding Methodology and Approach:

The concept of “reform” in Muslim lands originated, and evolved primarily as a tool of Western secular cultural invasion. Its seeds were sown by a Western Orientalist movement that sought to undermine the foundations of Islamic way of life, distort the precepts of the true Shariah, implant the seeds of secular thought, and pave the way for the adoption of Western secular culture and civilization, under the guise of reform. Among the tactics employed by this invasion, which was masked as reform, was the Western Orientalist school’s co-option of a select faction of Muslim and Christian figures. These individuals served as the vanguard for dismantling the Islamic way of life, sowing confusion within Islamic thought and culture, and propagating Orientalist polemics that cast aspersions upon Islam, while sugarcoating the toxic ideologies of Western secularism.

The first noxious shoots to sprout from these seeds of Orientalism, and from the secularist invasion of Muslim lands and minds, included such figures as the Azharite scholar

Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, Al-Afghani and his disciple Muhammad Abduh, and Rashid Rida. Their entire intellectual and political endeavor was focused on the secularization of Muslim life by drawing upon the intellectual and political frameworks, as well as the civilization and modernity, of the secular West, pursued under the rubric of “reforming” the deteriorating conditions of the Muslim World. Amidst the tragic failure and devastating civilizational bankruptcy of the secular system, both in its native lands and, particularly, within the lands of the Muslims, are the winds of change blowing on the basis of Islam, guiding people toward its project in both concept and method. Given the presence of an aware, sincere vanguard carrying the pure, unadulterated project of Islam, the situation has shifted. It has moved from a state of “soft” cultural invasion, facilitated and instrumented by regimes acting as proxies for colonialism, to an intense civilizational war: a fierce, ruthless battle of ideas and minds. This battle confronts the resurgence and intellectual supremacy of Islamic thought using insidious, cunning tactics that retain the banner of “reform” while infusing it with contents that are far more covert, toxic, destructive, and subversive.

Thus, in the face of secular cultural failure and Western civilizational bankruptcy, and confronted by Islamic thought’s reclamation of its dominance and intellectual ascendancy, the West has adopted distortion, falsification, and fabrication as its primary tools in this war of ideas and minds, in lieu of direct attacks upon Islam. This entails distorting Islamic concepts and recasting them to align with Western secularism, while simultaneously coating secular concepts with an “Islamic veneer,” through falsification and fabrication to render them palatable once again.

Consequently, the West has devised a new approach to its secular cultural invasion, an innovative instrument for its civilizational and cultural warfare, coining terms such as the “Islamization of Knowledge” and the “Renewal of Islamic Thought.” These are merely glittering slogans designed to dismantle psychological barriers, thereby facilitating the infiltration of toxic secular concepts. The term first emerged within the intellectual sphere during the 1980s. It subsequently evolved into an intellectual current, a new reformist school of thought, and a “second wave” of secular reform.

In essence, it represents an alternative methodology and approach to reform, specifically, a form of “secular cultural invasion,” achieved through the “Islamization of secularism.” This entails a blatant epistemological fabrication: the false assertion that the conceptual underpinnings of Western secular thought actually find their epistemological roots within Islamic thought and culture. In reality, however, this constitutes a process of intellectual deception and misguidance directed at the Islamic Ummah, which is a renewed attempt to culturally invade them with Western secularism, while simultaneously marketing this endeavor as an act of Ijtihad (Shariah deduction of rulings from texts), renewal, and the generation of a contemporary Islamic intellectual framework capable of addressing the issues, emergent challenges, and current crises of the modern age.

To Begin by Deconstructing the Concept:

The project of the “Islamization of Knowledge” implicitly presupposes the existence of a body of knowledge to be Islamized; inevitably, the discussion here does not concern Islamic knowledge, for in that case, any talk of “Islamization” would be entirely futile. Instead, the subject at hand is undeniably a form of knowledge originating from outside the roots of Islam. Given that the Western secular paradigm along with its attendant culture currently reigns supreme and dominates our lives, the specific knowledge targeted for Islamization is, precisely, that of Western secularism. In this context, “Islamization” constitutes a Western project, a deliberate strategy, aimed at rehabilitating and recycling its own bankrupt and failed secular product. Fundamentally and exclusively, the Islamization of knowledge signifies the preservation of the secular cultural core, merely cloaking it in an Islamic terminological veneer that exerts absolutely no influence upon its underlying substance or content. One of the participants in the project of the “Islamization of Knowledge,” was Taha Jabir al-Alwani, former President of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in Washington, and former Chairman of the Fiqh Council of North America, who died in 2016.

He ascribes, in a study titled "Islamic Thought: An Approach to Reform. An Introduction to the Structures of Discourse in Islamic Thought," to the methodology and approach employed in the Islamization of Knowledge. He identifies the true nature of the project: that its ultimate goal is to breathe new life into the concepts of Western secular philosophy and thought, which have become decrepit, by infusing them with knowledge drawn from Islamic culture and intellectual tradition. The objective is to rehabilitate and market these concepts within the Islamic intellectual and cultural sphere presenting them as innovations, creations, and renewals of Islamic thought in order to escape the current state of decline and to rectify deteriorating conditions.

Taha Jabir al-Alwani states on Page 2: *"The reform of Islamic thought and the Islamization of knowledge constitute the central issue for which the IIIT has taken responsibility and awareness of which it seeks to spread based on its belief that it is a matter of particular urgency at the present time. The IIIT likewise believes that the dual issue of intellectual reform and the Islamization of knowledge are among the most important foundations of the contemporary, integrated Islamic civilizational enterprise being proposed as an alternative to the Western civilizational enterprise. In relating to this latter enterprise in virtually all of its aspects, the Islamic nation has suffered severe hardship given the West's antipathy to the Islamic nation's creed, its disregard for our nation's psychological and social makeup, and the way in which it has bypassed our nation's civilizational and historical character."*

Thus, the project ultimately reveals its ugly Western, secular face even while it remains swathed in the various cloaks of "Islamization." As Taha Jabir al-Alwani, founder of the Washington-based Institute of Islamic Thought, states on Page 47: *"the Ummah is unable to put Islamic values to use in a process of intellectual production... we believe that it has no choice but to make the task of reforming Islamic thought and the Islamization of knowledge its most fundamental priority. The purpose behind such an approach is to achieve contemporary Islamic authenticity, thereby enabling the Ummah to present the civilizational witness which God intended it to. It would draw inspiration from its own roots even as it digests and assimilates modernity and its ways. This civilizational witness, moreover, needs to be presented in the form of a contemporary enterprise which is unified, integral and liberated and which rests upon sound thinking. It must be free of crises and have a clear method free of error and distortions along with a constructive, healthy culture, and a civilization which bears witness to the truth."*

And on Page 2, Al-Alwani states, *"As we see it, the issue of reforming Islamic thought and the Islamization of knowledge has not received the attention it merits; despite its critical significance, it has not become a matter of concern to Muslims in their daily lives. It is also our belief that the causes which underlie the failure to lend this vital issue the required attention have not been carefully studied with the intent of identifying areas of inadequacy and correcting the practical steps being taken. There have, from time to time, been serious attempts in this direction. However, they have not gone beyond individual efforts to the institutional realm."*

In essence, the reformist project centers on the Islamization of knowledge and the renewal of Islamic thought. Its objective is to assimilate Western secularism, specifically "Modernity," which the adherents of Islam had previously rejected and cast aside, by infusing it with an Islamic flavor to render it palatable once again. This process is encapsulated by the phrase coined by the founder of the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Washington: *"draw inspiration from its own roots even as it digests and assimilates modernity and its ways."*

Amidst the "war of ideas and minds" declared by the West toward the end of the last century, new methods and mechanisms for intellectual deception were devised. These strategies hinged on the concept of critiquing secularism from within, utilizing its own internal logic and rules, in an effort to reconstruct its crumbling edifice, and to subsequently replicate this approach within the Muslim World by establishing schools of thought founded upon this very premise.

Consequently, the reformists, proponents of the school of the Islamization of knowledge and the renewal of Islamic thought, were promoted as critics of Western secular thought. Yet, their critique constituted neither a refutation of secularism, nor a definitive break with it. Instead, it was, in reality, a continuation of, and an emulation of, a specific intellectual current that had emerged within Western philosophy and secular thought. This Western current critiqued secularism from within the secular framework itself, in an attempt to remedy its inherent flaws and crises following its acute and aberrant epistemological drift, which had ultimately culminated in a state of absolute nihilism, utterly devoid of values and ethics.

Indeed, the foundational critique of secularism was, in its inception, an exclusively Western phenomenon spearheaded by the Frankfurt School. This movement represents a Western, secular, philosophical, and cultural current established in Germany in the early twentieth century, emerging in the wake of the trauma of World War I and the abject failure of Western secularism to resolve the human question. This failure was starkly manifested in the West's precipitous descent into a savagery that surpassed even that of beasts, during the barbarity of World War I. Specifically, this movement took root at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt am Main (today known as Goethe University Frankfurt) in 1923. Subsequently, critical theories regarding secular modernity and its destructive consequences proliferated throughout both Britain and America.

The Frankfurt School did not aim to abolish secularism. Instead, it subjected it to rigorous internal critique, utilizing secularism's own tools and methodologies, while simultaneously acknowledging its philosophical and intellectual merit. However, the School faulted secularism for the arid, mechanistic, and materialistic rationalism, into which the secular intellect had ultimately devolved, once it had completely divested itself of human and moral values. The objective of this critique was to attempt to remedy secularism's inherent deficiencies, failures, and the intellectual bankruptcy of the material and technical sciences, in resolving the human dilemma and existential quandary. This was to be achieved by infusing the secular system with human and moral values, thereby breathing life into its lifeless husk, in an effort to transcend its limitations, failures, and its cultural and civilizational insolvency.

These very secular tools were subsequently employed by Western secular think tanks to rehabilitate the secular project following its cultural, civilizational, and political failures within the Muslim World—and to market this project through educational curricula, as well as via university coursework, academic theses, and scholarly research. Consequently, a movement has emerged, a current that dominates the scene, claiming to repair the defects of the Muslim intellect in order to rescue it from a state of decadence, stagnation, intellectual lethargy, and blind imitation, and to elevate it to a state of renewal, intellectual advancement, and creative innovation. Yet, it relies on the very same secular tools to achieve the very same objective: the refinement and moralization of Western secular thought, specifically its political dimension, by infusing it with spiritual and ethical values. It is, in essence, a replication of the Frankfurt School, but situated within a Muslim environment, an environment that necessitated drawing those spiritual and ethical values from the specific Islamic heritage of that milieu. In practical terms, it constitutes a secular system and framework; yet, its leader, much like Erdoğan, prays, recites the Quran with a melodious voice, and refrains from adultery, alcohol consumption, and vulgarity. Nevertheless, he governs a Muslim populace using exclusively secular, disbelieving (kufr) laws. He sanctions and codifies riba (interest), gambling, and the corporate capitalist ownership of Muslim wealth; he legalizes adultery, homosexuality, indecency, gender mixing, the unveiling of women, nudity, and depraved art. Furthermore, his military participates in America's Crusader colonialist wars, and he remains fully integrated into Western security councils and the Western-dominated United Nations. Moreover, he offers no aid to the oppressed Muslims of Gaza, nor to their brethren in Burma and East Turkestan, in strict compliance with the Western-imposed international order.

Thus, this "reformist" current critiques secularism, often quite vehemently, yet it does so not with the intent of refuting, dismantling, or breaking entirely with secularism, but rather by its own claim to "Islamize" it. This approach is further reinforced through its indoctrination via

the toxic secular educational curricula prevalent throughout the Muslim world. Consequently, this movement establishes nothing that is non-secular; and, most certainly, it establishes nothing that is truly Islamic. Instead, it is a secularism veiled in an Islamic headscarf. A headscarf that served merely as a veil to conceal the true nature of its secular, disbelieving (kufr) essence.

Secondly, the Framing and Modelling:

According to this philosophy and by virtue of their engagement in the project of "Islamization of Knowledge" and the renewal of Islamic thought through secular mechanisms, individualistic reformist models fall into two types. The first type comprises those acting out of good intentions, a faction suffering from severe cultural and intellectual distortion, having been intensively indoctrinated with the concepts of the "Islamization of Knowledge" philosophy through concentrated education in this field, in Western secular culture, and even in so-called "Islamic Studies" that are themselves tainted with the toxins of Western secular culture. The second type consists of a malicious faction, deeply immersed in the Western project and its civilizational war against Islam and its Ummah, acting as paid agents. Regardless of the category, the ultimate result and outcome remain the same: both parties serve as weapons in the hands of the West within the war of ideas and minds, a war aimed at re-secularizing the children of Islam by hollowing out their Islam and Iman, and by indoctrinating them with toxic secular concepts.

These models view Islam through the lens of Western secular thought and the principles of its philosophy. Thus, their perspective on Islam is a philosophical, secular one, not a perspective grounded in Islamic fundamentals (usul), jurisprudence (fiqh), or Shariah law. Their vision regarding the "Islamization of Knowledge" and the renewal of Islamic thought betrays an underlying intellectual defeatism, and a sense of cultural inferiority. This compels them to beg for Islamic knowledge by attempting to "Islamize" a body of knowledge that is, at the very least, non-Islamic. Indeed, how much worse is it when that knowledge is, in fact, secular, disbelieving, and fundamentally antithetical to Islam! Even more shameful is their implicit acceptance of a heinous accusation: that Islam is inadequate to address the issues of the modern age. It reflects a false, underlying charge that Islamic thought and Islamic culture have become intellectually and culturally obsolete. Amidst their own intellectual deficiency, they cast aspersions upon Islam, its thought, and its culture. Yet, had they truly grasped the meaning of intellectual decline, they would have realized that the problem lies within their own minds that have failed to ascend to the intellectual stature of Islam, its thought, and its culture. Only by reaching this level could their intellects be molded in accordance with Islam's Shariah Qawaa'id (Principles), Usool, and criterion and only after having been cleansed of the defilement of secularism, in both its philosophy and its culture. It is then that these minds would mature, yielding a harvest of intellectual giants: Usooliyoon (ulema of the Usool of Fiqh) and eminent fuqaha (jurists) capable of independent reasoning. From the pure spring of Divine Revelation, they would derive a jurisprudence capable of addressing every issue of life, thereby leading the Muslim Ummah, and indeed all of humanity, out of the darkness of the crushing, destructive crises wrought by Western secularism.

This stands in stark contrast to their current state of intellectual capitulation, their ceaseless regurgitation of bankrupt, failed secular theories, and their indulgence in a philosophy of defeat. The secular mind, along with its brand of rationalism, has failed repeatedly and catastrophically to resolve the complex knots and dilemmas of the human condition. Enough, then, of regurgitating its sickly, sterile rationalism. It has become patently obvious that such people have been infected by the virus of secular rationalism. For them, the ultimate arbiter, the supreme authority, is the human intellect itself. They have reduced Islam to a mere set of pre-packaged intellectual molds, crafted to align seamlessly with that human intellect, and they interpret Islamic concepts solely through the lens of secular rationalism. Consequently, this ailing intellect generates its own foundations jurisprudence exegesis upon rationalism, and discourse upon rationalism, manifesting in concepts such as the "Islamization of Knowledge," the "Renewal of Islamic Thought," the elevation of the Maqasid Ash-Shariah (مقاصد الشريعة Objectives of Islamic Law) to the status of a primary

legislative source, “Collective Ijtihad,” “Contemporary Readings” of language and Shariah text, the “The Jurisprudence of Reality (فقه الواقع Fiqh ul-Waqi’a),” and the “Jurisprudence of Balances and Consequences,” among others.

These intellectual models have adopted the foundational premise of secularism, the intellect and rationalism, as their own bedrock and the primary source of their knowledge. This remains true even if they purport to have detached themselves from Modernism and secularism, or even claim to critique them. In reality, however, they remain deeply conditioned by, and actively engaged with, the intellectual axioms of secularism, particularly the axiom that posits the human intellect as the fundamental engine of knowledge generation. This holds true even if, deep down, they inwardly acknowledge the Quran as the supreme reference point, the ultimate Book of divine guidance and rectitude. Yet, intellectually speaking, they are constructing a distinct worldview, one whose true, ultimate authority is, in reality, their own ailing human intellect. Consequently, they fail to derive authentic, Shariah Qawaa'id (principles) capable of governing and regulating their intellectual processes; nor do they undertake istinbaat (استنباط Shariah deduction) to deduce substantive Shariah rulings that serve as a genuine fiqh (فقه jurisprudence) for navigating the complexities of life and its myriad issues. Instead, it proceeds from a toxic, Secular-Orientalist premise: that Islamic thought suffers from acute defects and has become obsolete in its ability to keep pace with the modern era. Consequently, so the argument goes, it is deemed necessary to integrate philosophical and cultural perspectives from outside the tradition to remedy its perceived intellectual deficiencies that are, in reality, merely imagined and alleged through a secular lens. It then imports philosophical, intellectual, and cultural concepts from the Western secular cultural framework, specifically as products of that framework's own distinct intellectual output. In other words, any generation of ideas that occurs is fundamentally secular rationalist in nature, while Islam serves merely to imbue this secular product with a spiritual and moral flavor.

This intellectual framework views the Quran as one of its sources of knowledge, albeit the supreme one, yet places alongside it various secular sources. Foremost among these are the secular human sciences, such as psychology, sociology, pedagogy, which it effectively regards as the practical source for the systems governing life, including constitutions and laws, democracy, human rights, market economics, international law. The role of the Quran, in this view, is merely to imbue these systems with a spiritual and moral veneer.

Thus, according to this flawed and sterile school of thought, “reform” consists solely of refining the Muslim's character, and elevating his spiritual values, through individual acts of worship, all with the aim of refining and disciplining secular life, whilst the Muslim continues to live within that secular framework, submit to its systems for arbitration, and allow those very systems to dictate his method of thinking, emotions, and inclination.

These reformists do not view secularism, nor the doctrine of separating Islam from life and politics, nor its democratic system, human rights, freedoms, market economy, or even its colonialist legacy as disbelief (kufr). Instead, they perceive it as a human rationalistic ijihad, a human culture, and a human civilization, something permissible for them just as it is for others, albeit one containing certain flaws, as is the case with any human undertaking. Thus, in their flawed understanding, they practically regard secularism as merely a domain of industry and science even if, in theory, they verbally acknowledge it as a form of culture, for they fail to grasp that culture for the Muslim is Deen. Consequently, they remain in a state of total intellectual and cultural blindness regarding the very core of secularism's doctrine of disbelief (kufr): its systematic exclusion of Islam from the sphere of life.

The leading figures of the “Islamization of Knowledge” project, include Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (USA), one of the earliest theorists in the 1980s to advocate for the Islamization of knowledge and the renewal of Islamic thought, who studied philosophy at the American University of Beirut, then at Indiana University in the U.S., and earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Harvard University. Other key theorists are Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (Malaysia), who studied at McGill University in Canada, one of the foremost Western

institutions for religious studies, before obtaining his Ph.D. in Philosophy and Islamic Thought from the University of London, as well as Taha Abdurrahman (Morocco), Muhammad Amara (Egypt), and Taha Jabir al-Alwani (USA). They all share a common bond. They all subscribe to the same underlying vision, that of secularism, holding that religion is inherently inadequate to resolve the complex challenges of life, even if they theoretically claim for it a position of intellectual supremacy. Accordingly, in their view, it becomes imperative to acquire secular forms of knowledge pertaining to societal issues and systems of life, specifically the secular humanities and social sciences, after refining them by infusing them with Islamic spiritual and moral values. This endeavor falls under the framing of the project for the Islamization of Knowledge and the renewal of Islamic thought, aiming to pave the way toward a renaissance and to emerge from the crisis of decline.

It represents a futile and desperate attempt to synthesize two contradictory cultural systems: the roots of the first is divine Revelation (وحي Wahy), while that of the second is a human-derived, positivist foundation that stands in opposition and hostility to Revelation. It is, in essence, an act of cultural fabrication, a strained and artificial endeavor by its proponents to reconcile irreconcilable opposites: specifically, by attempting to blend certain Islamic spiritual and moral values with secular, materialistic systems whose underlying secular philosophy vehemently rejects the very Islamic nature of those values.

Among the contemporary disciples of this school of thought is Dr. Nayef Bin Nahar Al-Shammari from Qatar. He stands as an exemplary student, almost a carbon copy, of the movement's primary theorists and mentors, Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. He echoes many of their ideas regarding the "Islamization" of Western knowledge, specifically within the realm of the "social sciences." In his book, "Interactive Localization in Social Sciences", he argues for *"the necessity of localizing the social sciences to align with local cultural and social contexts, rather than blindly imitating Western models."* Here, "localization" is understood in a cultural sense, meaning the integration of these disciplines into the socio-political cultural framework of the sons of Muslims, serving as a core component of their education and intellectual formation, as well as a foundational source for their systems of life.

Regarding democracy, he posits that "Western democracy," with its emphasis on human rights and individual liberties, has neglected "collective rights" and "social justice," a failure that has resulted in "social disparities" and "societal fragmentation." Consequently, he advocates for the development of an "Islamic democratic model" that prioritizes and incorporates "social justice," "equality," and "collective responsibility." He does not fault democracy for the disbelief (kufr) inherent in its philosophy; on the contrary, he views it as a system of ruling governance for our lives, one in which certain neglected aspects must be activated to refine democracy using the tools of secular thought. Subsequently, it is to be repackaged and marketed anew under the banner of "Islamic Democracy," a form that has been remolded through the machinery of the Islamization of knowledge and the laboratory for the renewal of Islamic thought!

These represent but a few examples of the school of thought dedicated to the "Islamization of Knowledge," the renewal of Islamic thought, and the subsequent reform built upon them. These models, however, were actually products of the secularist school, a movement that took root in Muslim lands following their colonialization, and which engineered educational curricula in accordance with the secularist philosophy of divorcing Islam from the affairs of daily life. These mindsets and intellectual paradigms were shaped to serve as integral components of the Western secular project, rather than as forces opposing it; for it would be inconceivable for the secularist school to cultivate Islamic mentalities, that stand in direct antithesis to it, mentalities that would seek to dismantle and obliterate its underlying philosophy, its way of life, and its very mode of existence!

It is, therefore, an act of intellectual folly, a cultural recklessness often cloaked in the guise of "thinking the best of others" to view the rigorous substance of thought through the lens of mere sentimentality, or to regard these models as building blocks within the edifice of

Islamic construction. On the contrary, they function as instruments of demolition. Its proponents' personal virtue or malice holds no bearing on the matter, just as their ignorance offers them no valid Shariah excuse, nor does our misplaced benevolence toward them, or our credulity in believing their claims, offer us any Shariah excuse. For the issue at hand is fundamentally one of unadulterated Islam and absolute Iman, an Iman that cannot tolerate even the weight of an atom's dust of disbelief (kufr). Indeed, the matter stands, with absolute certainty, in the terrifying context of the Great Quake (الزلزلة Az-Zalzalah). Allah (swt) said, ﴿فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ۖ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ۗ﴾ **“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it”** [TMQ Surah Az-Zalzalah, 99: 7-8].

In Conclusion:

The adherents of Islam are in dire need of intellectual shocks and a cultural jolt to awaken what has lain dormant in their thought, and to alert them to the true nature of their Deen of Islam and the vital core of their Iman. For the grave danger inherent in the project of the “School of the Islamization of Knowledge” and the intellectual renewal and reform movements proceeding according to its methodology and path is that, it is, in reality, a process of secularization that is profoundly subtle and complex. It insidiously infiltrates the minds of Muslims even reaching their deepest recesses relying on an abundance of the “honey” of Islamic cultural vocabulary and an overwhelming fluidity of emotive, intellectual Islamic discourse. Yet, beneath this veneer, it employs toxic, concentrated, and intensely subtle secularist principles designed to manipulate the very processes of perception and understanding. It is according to these secularist principles rather than the vocabulary and cultural information of Islam that mindsets are constructed and patterns of thought are engineered!

This school of thought has vested supreme authority in the human intellect as the sole generator of knowledge. Consequently, there is no room within its framework for the Usuli ('alim of the fundamentals of fiqh) or mujtahid (one who deduces Shariah rulings of fiqh). Instead, it regards the established fundamentals of jurisprudence (usul ul fiqh) and Shariah rulings (fiqh) as mere stagnation, ossification, and a rigid adherence to an obsolete past. For them, the entire enterprise is confined to the domain of the rationalistic thinker and the philosopher, a stance accompanied, in practice, by a veneration of the intellect at the expense of Divine Revelation, even if its proponents theoretically pay lip service to the supremacy of the Qur'an and Revelation.

Thus, “renewal” in the eyes of this group is neither a matter of ijtihad (Shariah deduction) regarding contemporary developments, nor the istinbaat (deduction) of Shariah rulings that address the issues of our age and the crises of our time, crises born of Islam's absence from our daily lives and the suspension of the ruling governance of the Shariah Law of our Lord, Allah (swt). Yet, the so-called “renewal” of the reformist school along with the “Islamization of knowledge” and the “revival of Islamic thought” amounts to nothing more than clothing the patched, torn rags of Western secularism, in the garb of Islam. Its true purpose is to rehabilitate and instrumentalize this secularism for the sake of the cultural, civilizational, and political occupation, that has weighed heavily upon our chests for over a century, an occupation entrenched within the colonialist protectorates euphemistically termed “nation-states.”

It is a wretched, desperate attempt to “reform” disbelief (kufr) notwithstanding the fact that it is among the self-evident axioms of Islam and Iman that disbelief (kufr) must be utterly rejected, uprooted, and eliminated; it is neither to be appeased nor coexisted with. It is utterly impossible for Islam and the disbelief (kufr) of secularism to coexist on the same ground; likewise, it is impossible for them to reside simultaneously within the heart of a single man. How, then, could they ever reside within the heart of a Muslim?! Allah (swt) said, ﴿قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ ۝ ١ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ۝ ٢ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبُدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ۝ ٣ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ ۝ ٤ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبُدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ۝ ٥ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ﴾ **“Say, O Prophet, “O you disbelievers! I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship. I will never worship what you worship, nor will you ever worship what I worship. You have your way, and I have my Way”** [TMQ Surah Al-Kafirun 109: 1-6].