

## Application of Integrated Research Methods in Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage Disciplines

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### Abstract

Decline of the Muslim *Ummah* is generally attributed to the decline of Islamic thought. Whereas, lack of emphasis of the empirical method in the construction of Islamic thought is identified as one of the main causes of the stagnation of Islamic thought. It is therefore argued by scholars that an empirical method should be developed for both natural and social sciences.

In this paper, this argument is further extended even to the disciplines of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage. It is demonstrated that in the past, not only natural sciences but the entire body of knowledge including pure theological and religious sciences were developed on the basis of empirical method.

It is contended that the Qur'an engendered in its followers the spirit of empirical method. It is, therefore, suggested in this paper that empirical method should be revived and applied again for the reconstruction of all branches of disciplines of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage. Islamic thought, thus developed on the basis of Islamic empirical method would infuse a dynamic spirit in the Islamic

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*Ummah* and would help the Islamic *Ummah* to overcome its problems and march towards the path of progress and development.

The crisis of the *Ummah* is not one of capabilities and resources, but rather one of concepts. This conceptual crisis is not a crisis of beliefs, values, or principles, but rather a long-standing *crisis of thought and methodology*... This single development ended all intellectual and scientific growth, and rendered the *Ummah* incapable of keeping up with change, development, and challenges, [Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*.<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

Discussion on the reconstruction of Methodology of Islamic Thought in general in contemporary time is already in progress<sup>2</sup> It has elaborated in detail the First Principles of Islamic Methodology.<sup>3</sup> There are some other principles other than the principles discussed in the First Principles of Islamic Methodology which have not been elaborated but rather are ignored. Hence I prefer to discuss those principles which have been neglected and ignored. If these principles are applied they are confined only to the methodologies of science or social sciences. Therefore, instead of elaborating the First Principles of Islamic Methodology I intend to identify those principles of Islamic methodology which have been neglected.

The revelation of the holy Qur'an brought about a revolution in the methodologies and methods of human thought. It rejected all the speculative and rationalistic methods of Greek philosophers who were chiefly interested in theories, not in facts. They enjoyed theories and were neglectful of facts. 'The Greeks no doubt systematized, generalized, and theorized, but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation and experimental inquiry were altogether alien to the Greek temperament.'<sup>4</sup>

Against this Greek background, the Qur'an laid the foundation of what I call the revelational empirical method of human thought. It was argued by the followers of the Qur'an during the first and the second century of Hijrah that we

should understand rationally the realities of this world, physical and metaphysical. This rational search must be in the light of the Islamic revelation instead of basing on conjecture or imagination. It was further asserted that even our rational inquiry of metaphysical realities must be supported by empirical and experimental evidences. Hence, the old methods of speculation and rationality were rejected as invalid. It was emphasized that to understand the realities and to discover the secrets of Nature or the study of human phenomena, one should follow three things. Firstly, instead of speculation and imagination it was asserted that the thinking should be based and developed in the light of the knowledge which comes from the Islamic revelation. The reason for this was obvious. The Islamic revelation explains hidden secrets behind these physical realities and describes the necessary principles for the development of human personality and society as such. These principles constitute the premises for further thinking and understanding and developing human thought. Secondly, the rational understanding of the Islamic revelation itself was another important aspect. They did not follow the teachings of Islam blindly. They applied all God given faculties of reason and sense-perception for the understanding of the Islamic revelation. Thirdly, it was further argued that all our rational understanding in the light of the Revealed knowledge must be supported by experimental and empirical evidences. For providing empirical and experimental evidences, they emphasized, we need to develop empirical and experimental methods and techniques. Based on this comprehension it was contended that the thought which is not supported by experimental and empirical data would be considered unreliable. Thus the thought developed in each and every field of study became instrumental for the development of the biggest civilization of the world Islamic Civilization—which was comparatively free from crisis, chaos and crimes. But unfortunately, during later periods these principles were either completely ignored or considered the principles of the methodology of science or social sciences. In the development of Islamic thought these principles were ignored. This phenomena continues till date. Even in contemporary Islamic thought they are marginalized. Whereas these three principles were integral to the principles of methodology of

Islamic thought along with those principles which are generally explained as the principles of Islamic *fiqh*.<sup>5</sup> These principles which will be described here in detail as the empirical principles of Islamic thought were the principles of Islamic *fiqh* as well as the principles of Islamic methods of research and Islamic thought in general. I will therefore suggest here that if we want to develop realistic and authentic Islamic thought then the application of these three principles even in the study of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage Disciplines<sup>6</sup> is indispensable. To demonstrate the revelational, rational and empirical nature of Islamic methodology in Islamic research we will at the very beginning elaborate the meaning and scope of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage Disciplines. This will be followed by a brief discussion on the meaning of Islamic research and its objectives. Lastly an exploration into the empirical nature of the methods of Islamic research will be presented.

### **Meaning and Scope of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage Disciplines**

At the very outset one should know that to distinguish present day Islamic Studies or Theology Disciplines from the study of Islam in contemporary context we are using the term Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage Disciplines. Revealed Knowledge Disciplines; therefore, refer to the study of different aspects of Islam in the context of past, present and future. It implies that we are not only intending to study the basic sources of Islam, the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) but also the legacy of Islam. In Islamic Studies Disciplines, Islam was considered something related to the past. In other words Islam was studied in modern universities as a part of history or a religion in a limited sense as a private and personal matter which is solely confined to moral and spiritual dimensions of human life. It has nothing to do with the whole life of man, individual and collective. Thus the ideology of secularism, which not only divides life into religious and secular domains but also does not accept the spiritual foundation of life, became dominant. Whereas Islam as *Iqbal* puts it, is not a

departmental affair; it is neither mere thought, nor mere feeling, nor mere action; it is an expression of the whole man. It is a scheme of life for the development of civilization, a civilization free from crisis and crimes, which guarantees peace, prosperity, progress and development.. For the development of this kind of civilization we need to study the world-view of Islam and its different aspects. Islam is therefore studied here in Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage Disciplines from civilizational perspective. The scope of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage Disciplines includes whole life of man.

### **Meaning and Objective of Islamic Research**

Rafiuddin defines Islamic research as follows:

Islam as brought to us by the last of the Prophets, Muhammad (ﷺ) consists of the sacred teachings embodied in the Qur'an and Hadith. Islamic research will, therefore, have to be defined as research that is centred around the contents of these sacred books and is carried out with the object of making these contents more easily intelligible to others.<sup>7</sup>

According to him, the Islamic research calls for a deep insight into the teachings of Islam, an insight which can result only from a sincere faith in Islam amounting to a passionate love for it and continued and willing submission to its religious and moral discipline. It is not possible unless a man enters into the spirit of the sacred books, and develops by his constant obedience to the Prophet (ﷺ). Since the Islamic research is advanced as a response of Islam to the intellectual challenges of the age to its rational foundations, it performs a double function. Firstly, it refutes directly or indirectly the wrong philosophical ideas that have become prevalent at the time and have begun to have an adverse effect on the faith of Muslims. Secondly, it affirms the truth of Islam and defends Islamic belief and ideas by making use of all the right philosophical ideas that are available at the time.<sup>8</sup> For Ansari, the Islamic research should aim at the working out of the entire

Islamic system of life as applied to the conditions of our own times in a way which may be convincing to the modern mind. He further maintains that besides the understanding of the past the Islamic research intends to construct the future. Its aim is not only to know upto what extent and how Islam shaped in the past, but should also to know how it can be perfectly and successfully applied to the present conditions. We also want to know how to persuade others to study the Islamic system.<sup>9</sup> Sayyid Qutb argues that no renaissance of Islamic life can be achieved unless the Islamic theory of life is not elaborated intellectually and philosophically. He asserts that if Islam stands for the construction of life, then the elaboration of the theory of life will act as an inner motivation for establishing Islamic system of life and will give coherence to all the social, religious and civil legislation. He further contends that social justice for example is an integral part of this Islamic life; it cannot be realized unless this form of life is first realized, and it cannot have any guaranteed permanence unless this form of life is built up on solid foundations. Thus, the aim of Islamic research is a renaissance of our religious faith; we must cleanse it of all accretions, such as alterations and arbitrary interpretations and ambiguities. So, primarily, the aim of Islamic research is to understand and elaborate different aspects of Islamic life and to show how these aspects are in a practical sense materialized. He, therefore, suggests that Muslim researcher first must rid himself of the ways of Western thought and choose the ways of native Islamic thought in order to ensure pure results, rather than hybrid. We seek to build up a characteristically Islamic theory of life and to renew that form of life now.<sup>10</sup> Qutb asserts that the Islamic research is not developed in isolation. For him all but right kind of intellectual development is a common heritage of all the people of the world. As long as the aim of Islamic research is the building up of Islamic theory of life without being isolated from other, it also aims to making a distinction between things we may profitably accept and those that we may profitably reject out of what other traditions possess. Thus Islamic research completes its objective of building up an Islamic society. The sacred sources of Islam and its related sciences in Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage Disciplines are under taken for further

research from the perspective of constructing society on Islamic lines in time and space context. Like Qutb, Mawdudi also suggests that contemporary Muslim researchers should produce pure Islamic thought that can revive the Muslim Ummah to lead the world of today. He further asserts that if Islam is to lead the world then Muslim researchers must produce such works which are more authentic than the works of the westerners. For him the aim of Islamic research is a fresh interpretation of the Divine texts. He observed:

The world has changed beyond recognition. The conditions prevailing in the world, its views, trends and theories have entirely changed. The social problems and issues have taken many a turns, but our religious leaders are still living in the same old conditions five or six centuries back. If their leadership fails to guide them in the ever new intellectual, academic and practical issues and problems, then it is quite natural that their followers will discard their leadership.<sup>11</sup>

In short, the revival of Islam, revitalization of Islamic civilization, building up a dynamic Islamic personality, achieving prosperity and comprehensive and balanced development of Islamic *Ummah* vis-a-vis mankind should be considered as some of the objectives of Islamic research.

### **Empirical Nature of Methodology of Islamic Research**

So far we have understood clearly that the main objective of Islamic research is to understand the sacred sources of Islam—the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) so that we can construct human society on the path of peace, prosperity and development as a whole. It is now important for us to understand the true nature of Islamic research methodology. The Islamic research methodology is derived from the teaching of the Qur'an itself. In other words, the source of Islamic methodology of research is the Holy Qur'an. The study of the Qur'an from this point of view reveals to us that the Qur'an not only elaborates the principles of Methodology of Islamic Thought, such as the First Principles of Islamic Methodology or the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, as generally understood rather it explains and provides certain other principles which are not

discussed and debated yet in detail. Nevertheless, some scholars have given only casual reference to them. These principles deal with analytical, experimental and empirical aspects of methodology of Islamic research. Another important aim of Islamic research is to study the sciences and disciplines related to the Qur'an and Sunnah. It is also made clear earlier that the Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage Disciplines include both the basic sources of Islam, the Qur'an and Sunnah and its related sciences. In all these areas of research these three principles are also applied in a systematic manner. In this paper, our purpose is to study and see how these analytical, experimental and empirical principles are integral to the Islamic methodology of research other than the general principles of Islamic methodology of thought.

We observe that other than Islam, in all other traditions, people generally intend to study the physical and non-physical phenomena based on religious dogmas or philosophical speculations. For example, for the understanding of metaphysical dimensions philosophers follow the rational or speculative method. And for the study of physical phenomena, scientists adopt empirical method of observation and experimentation. In this way they follow different methods for the study of different aspects of life. In contemporary times most of our Islamic scholars have also endorsed the same division of certain extent. They think that for the study of physical phenomena, we should follow the so-called empirical or scientific method and for the understanding of religious metaphysical realities, we should depend on rational method. They only point out that these rational and empirical methods must be guided by the Islamic revelation. But the Qur'anic approach for the study of both metaphysical and physical phenomena is different from other traditions. It is empirical as we have argued earlier in our introduction. The Qur'an suggests that to develop the intellectual vision of non-temporal flux of things which trains us for an intellectual vision of the non-temporal.<sup>12</sup> Throughout history, different people have followed different methods and they claimed that they reach the truth. However, the study of the Qur'an reveals that their claims are lacking rational and empirical evidences. For example, in Western tradition the nature of philosophical

inquiry which aims at discovering the reality underlying the physical phenomena of the universe is different from the nature of the methodology of Islamic research. In this field all those who do not look at the revelation in order to know what such reality is, have to depend on speculative method. In this speculative method of inquiry, the soundness of the conclusion at which a person arrives totally depends, however, on the soundness of the method of philosophical inquiry that is adopted. If the method is sound, so would the conclusion be; and vice versa. In their speculative search, they do not provide empirical evidences. In other words empirical method is not integral in their philosophical inquiry. Some others, for example polytheists, follow the method which is based on superstition. Whereas the method of the gnostic and ascetic hermits is based merely on conjecture. The speculative method is nothing less than conjecture. This conjecture is supported by the crutches of logical reasoning and phoney rationalism, and they give it the imposing title of philosophical inquiry. Then we come across scientists. In their own field, they resort to scientific methods of inquiry, but as soon as they enter the realm of the metaphysical, they abandon this method and proceed with guesswork and conjecture.

The Qur'an brands this kind of intellectual quest as essentially fallacious. In sharp contrast to these fallacious methods, the Qur'an lays down an altogether different method to guide men in their quest of reality or the study of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage Disciplines. It suggests that people should proceed to consider the phenomena which from a part of man's observation or experience of the universe; to systematize all the phenomena seem to testify to the reality underlying the phenomena or the contents of the sacred sources of religious guidance. If one finds sufficient grounds to affirm the truth propounded by the sacred sources based on his observational reflections then there is no reason to reject the truth revealed by the sacred sources.

Not only does the Qur'an urge people, over and over again, to follow this method of observation of phenomena, but by frequently drawing attention to the physical phenomena and then showing how right conclusion can be derived from

them it also seems to train them to follow this method. One can find in the Qur'an several references to a couple of physical phenomena. According to the Qur'an, the study of Nature and History helps to grasp the real spirit of Islam as seen at its best. The Qur'an sees signs of the Ultimate Reality in the 'sun', the 'moon', 'the lengthening out of shadow', 'the alternation of day and night', 'variety of human colour and tongues', 'the alternation of the days of success and reverse among people', — in fact in the whole of nature as revealed to the sense-perception of man. From this Iqbal concludes that it is the duty of a Muslim 'to reflect on these signs and not to pass by them "as if he is deaf and blind", for he 'who does not see these signs in this life will remain blind to the realities of the life to come.<sup>13</sup> The earlier scholars such as Ibn-i-Hazam, therefore, emphasizes sense-perception as a source of knowledge; and Ibn-i-Taymiyyah shows that induction is the only form of reliable argument. 'Thus arose the method of observation and experiment in the Muslim world'. Iqbal contends that 'it is a mistake to suppose that the experimental method is a European discovery... Europe has been rather slow to recognize the Islamic origin of her scientific method.<sup>14</sup> Roger Bacon, who is considered in western tradition the founder of scientific method, received his scientific training in Muslim universities of Spain, Iqbal quotes from Briffault's *Making of Humanity* the following observations:

Neither Roger Bacon nor his later namesake has any title to be credited with having introduced the experimental method. Roger Bacon was no more than one of the apostles of Muslim science and method to Christian Europe... Discussion as to who was the originator of the experimental method... are part of the colossal misrepresentation of the origins of European civilization. The experimental method of Arabs was by Bacon's time widespread and eagerly cultivated throughout Europe. 'What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of inquiry, of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of Mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs'.<sup>15</sup>

The following observation of Sayyid Qutb further confirms the point of view of Iqbal. He says:

It is well-nigh sufficient to know that the experimental method on which the entire edifice of industrial civilization of modern Europe is erected originally was born in Islamic institutions. The principles of this method were derived from the intellectual trend which was based on the worldview of Islam. Its spirit and essence, its resources and treasures all were the result of the same worldview. On the basis of this method European renaissance took place which was continued, developed, and refined. Whereas in the Islamic world, first it was consistently slowed down and later it was renounced. The reason was that the Islamic world due to some internal and external factors and Christian and Jewish threats and their conspiracies gradually drifted away from the basics of their faith and belief. Whereas Europe, who learnt this method from Islamic world, succeeded to break the relation of this method from the theoretical bases of Islam. Europe not only revolted against the Church because of its unjust exploitation of the people in the name of God but it also broke the relation of this method of research with God.<sup>16</sup>

According to Naquib Al-Attas:

Islam too has made very significant contributions to Western civilization in the sphere of knowledge and in the inculcation of the rational and scientific spirit, but the knowledge and the rational and scientific spirit have been recast and remoulded to fit the ; crucible of Western culture so that they have become fused and amalgamated with all the other elements that form the character and personality of Western civilization.<sup>17</sup>

The empirical and experimental spirit of Muslim scholars and scientists was first demonstrated in the religious sciences. Osman Bakar argues that Muslims did not begin to cultivate the natural sciences in earnest until the third century of the Islamic era after the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) [the ninth century of the common era]. But when they did so they were already in possession of a scientific attitude and a scientific frame of mind, which they had inherited from the religious sciences.

He further asserts that the passion for truth and objectivity, the general respect for fully corroborated empirical evidence, and a mind skilled in the classification of things were some of the most outstanding features of early Muslim religious scholarship as can clearly be seen in their studies of jurisprudence and the Prophetic traditions.<sup>18</sup>

In this context the following observations of Naquib al-Attas would further strengthen our point of view. He says:

The representatives of Islamic thought—theologians, philosophers, metaphysicians—have all and individually applied various methods in their investigations without preponderating on anyone particular method. They combined in their investigations, and at the same time in their persons, the empirical and the rational, the deductive and the inductive methods and affirmed no dichotomy between the subjective and the objective, so that they all affected what I would call the *tawhīd* method of knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

All this Qura'nic emphasis on the observation, experimentation, examination, analysis and reflection about physical phenomena is not for the sake of developing correct understanding about this phenomena. Rather, all this focus on physical observation is to understand non-physical realities. In the same way in order to understand the contents of the sacred sources and its related disciplines and subjects, one has to follow the same method of observing the physical and human phenomena. No doubt here a researcher is dealing basically with the knowledge which is by nature conceptual, and it is with this weapon of this conceptual knowledge that he approaches the observable aspect of reality. The one noteworthy feature of the Quran is the emphasis that it lays on this observable aspect of reality. Therefore, Iqbal concludes that:

No doubt, the immediate purpose of the Qur'an in this reflective observation of nature is to awaken in man the consciousness of that of which nature is regarded a symbol. But the point to note is the general empirical attitude of the Qur'an which engendered in its followers a feeling of reverence for the actual and ultimately made them the founders of modern science.<sup>20</sup>

The above statement implies that one of the important aspects of Muslim researchers was basically empirical. They were elaborating the contents of the Qur'an and Sunnah but followed the empirical method. For Iqbal, the Qur'an, recognizes that the empirical attitude is an indispensable stage in the spiritual life of man., attaches equal importance to all the regions of human experiences as yielding knowledge of the ultimate Reality which reveals its symbols both within and without.<sup>21</sup> One indirect way of establishing connections with the reality that confronts us is reflective observation and control of its symbols as they reveal themselves to sense-perception; the other way is direct association with that reality as it reveals itself within. The constant appeal to reason and experience in the Qur'an, and the emphasis that it lays on Nature and History as sources of human knowledge reveal the fact that for the purpose of knowledge all other methods cannot be ignored merely because either they cannot be traced back to sense-perception or they are not relevant for the study of sacred sources with this misunderstanding that they are revealed sources, therefore beyond to rational inquiry and analysis. Indeed, the Qur'an regards both *Anfus (self)* and ' *Afāq*' (world) as sources of knowledge. Knowledge must begin with the concrete.<sup>22</sup> It is the intellectual capture of and power over the concrete that makes it possible for the intellect of man to pass beyond the concrete. The idea here is to interpret the sacred sources with the help of the observational facts. The facts which are created by God cannot go against the basic claims of the sacred sources. Therefore it becomes imperative for a researcher to adopt all possible ways and methods which are helpful for the better understanding of Revealed Knowledge Disciplines. This is the reason that terms like *sama*, *basr*, and *fuad* are mentioned in the Qur'an. In the Qur'an these words are used with deeper meaning. *Basr* (seeing or sight) implies gaining knowledge through personal observation. It enables researcher to have direct experience and observation of the world. *Sama* (listening or hearing) signifies knowledge by way of reading and understanding. Both ancient and modern works on different subjects; and *fuad* means perceiving or arriving at conclusions based on *sama* ' and *basr*. Those who do not utilize fully these faculties do not perceive complete meaning of

anything and those who make use of them are in a position to have complete perception of the matter.

The Qur'an is not a book of science. It makes certain claims. It says that it has revealed Truth about the metaphysical dimensions and prescribed those principles which are indispensable for healthy, balanced and comprehensive development of human societies. No one can dare to ignore them. If they ignore, then they will suffer from crisis, chaos and destruction. After presenting all this, the Qur'an asks to think about this claim in the light of concrete realities and facts which are in your observation and experience.

And in the earth there are signs for those who are sure; and in your own souls[too]; will you not then see? [51: 20-21]

Do they consider the spiritual dimension of the heavens and the earth and whatever things Allah has created? [7: 185 ]

Tell them: 'Observe carefully all that is in the heavens and the earth.' But no signs and warnings can avail those who are bent on not believing[ 10: 101]

Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and day there are signs for men who understand. [ 3: 190]

Do they not look at the Camels, how they are made? And at the Sky, how it is raised high? And at the Mountains, how they are fixed firm? And at the earth, how it is spread out? [88: 17-20]

Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends down from the cloud, then gives life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all [kinds of] animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds made

subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people who understand. [ 16: 164]

As we mentioned earlier, the Qur'an commands us to observe nature and human societies and reflect on what we observe and see whatever is claimed in the Qur'an is true or not. Reflection, in turn, involves using existing information and moving toward fresh knowledge. The Qur'an even differ in the meaning of observation and experience with the existing concept of observation. See the following Quranic verse:

They have hearts with which they do not understand, and they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear; they are as cattle, nay, they are in worse errors; these are the heedless ones. [ 7 : 179 ]

Here Mawdudi's observation is worth mentioning. Commenting on this kind of verse he says:

This verse aims at arousing people from their apathy to God's signs spread throughout the universe. For everything in the heavens and the earth is not only an object of existence, but also a sign that points to the reality. All those who observe different things as though they were merely objects of existence, fail to observe them in a manner becoming of human being. Their observation is rather one characteristic of brutes. Were one to observe a tree or a mountain and see nothing beyond them, one would be engaging in an activity common to both animals and human beings. Animals also know the uses to which they can put those natural objects. What distinguishes man from animals in this respect is that man has been endowed with senses as well as with a rational mind. It does not behave man, therefore, to just observe things and exert himself to merely knowing how he could make use of them.

Man is rather expected to go beyond observation and embark, by dint of his rational faculty, on a quest for reality. In his quest, he will be helped by the natural phenomena which in fact are signs of that reality.<sup>23</sup>

The Quran gives concrete examples of its empirical evidences in favour of metaphysical claims. For example, see the following verses of the Quran:

To Him is your return. That is Allah's promise that will certainly come true. Surely it is He Who brings about the creation of all and He will repeat it so that He may justly reward those who believe and do righteous deeds; and that those who disbelieve may have a draught of boiling water and suffer a painful chastisement for their denying the truth.  
[10: 4 ]

He it is Who gave the sun radiance and the moon light, and detennined the stages [for the waxing and waning of the moon] that you may learn the calculation of years and the reckoning of time. Allah has created all this with a rightful purpose [ rather than out of play]. He expounds His signs for the people who know [ 10: 5 ].

*Surely in the alternation of the night and the day and in all that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth there are signs for the people who seek to avoid (error of outlook and conduct).*  
[10: 6].

The above mentioned verses from chapter 10 , Yunus , number 4 and 5 clearly show that they are dealing with the metaphysical claims of the Qur'an but you will see in verse number 6 which is italicized here demanding empirical and experimental observation of the physical phenomena. Commenting on verse number 6 Mawdudi provides the following commentary:

This provides yet another argument in support of the doctrine of the

Hereafter. The argument is derived from the orderly nature of the universe. This vast — universe the handiwork of God—is spread out before our eyes. It is full of signs of God’s power and wisdom such as those which underlie the sun and the moon and the alternation of night and day. Even a superficial glance at the universe is enough to convince one that the Creator of this enormous universe is not at all like a child who creates something to play with and after enjoying it for a while whimsically destroys it. For it is quite evident that every act of the Creator is characterized by order and wisdom, and that a strong purposiveness underlies everything, even a speck of dust. Now, since the Creator is All-Wise—as is evident from his creation—it is absurd to assume that He Who has also invested man with reason, moral consciousness and free-will, will not call man to account for his conduct; that He will altogether disregard the need for retribution arising from man’s responsibility which in turn stems from his inherent rational and moral endowments.<sup>24</sup>

All the above discussion shows that the Qur’an gives importance to observational facts for the argument of metaphysical claims. One can see this kind of examples throughout the Qur’an. It is not without any reason. The only solid reason is that the metaphysical truth is testified by the observational evidences. This is necessary for all areas of studies. Thus, the research methodology applied by Muslim researcher must be deeply rooted in empirical premises. Islam is not claiming some thing as truth with out any factual and observable evidences. It does not believe in falsehood. It brings truth for the betterment of people. It is up to them to accept and benefit from the truth of Islam or deny it and declare their unscientific and prejudiced attitude.

Now look at the following verses of the Qur’an and see how the Qur’an is emphasizing on the need of observation and experience of human phenomena of the present and the past.

Say: Travel on the earth and see how He made the first creation. [29:20]

Have they not traveled in the land so that they should have hearts with which to understand. [22: 46 ]

We indeed sent Moses with Our signs, saying: 'Lead your people out of darkness into the light, and admonish them by narrating to them anecdotes from the annals of Allah. Verily in it there are great signs for everyone who is patient and gives thanks [to Allah].[14:5]

Thus historical events provide both data and evidence. This evidence in the words of the Qur'an are described as *ayāt* (signs). The major events of history provide ample evidences with the help of which a researcher can know the evil results of following false doctrine, and, thus, learn an instructive lesson from the past. These historical evidences are found everywhere. Not only in history but in the multifarious phenomena of existence there are plenty of signs. However, neither everyone can derive the right conclusions from these historical signs nor one can benefit from multifarious signs of phenomena. It is only people who possess certain qualities who can fully appreciate those evidences and, thus, benefit from them. Those who will be able to benefit are those [i] who liberate themselves from prejudices and seek knowledge with the help of the natural endowments bestowed upon them by God, and [ii] those who are keen not to fall into error and who earnestly seek to adhere to the right way.<sup>25</sup>

Iqbal considers history as another source of knowledge other than source of major evidences. He observes: History or, in the language of the Qur'an, 'the days of God', is the third source of human knowledge according to the Qur'an. It is one of the most essential teachings of the Qur'an that nations are collectively judged, and suffer for their misdeeds here and now. In order to establish this proposition, the Qur'an constantly cite historical instances, and urges upon the reader to reflect on the past and the present experience of mankind.

### Conclusion

Abdul Hamid Ahmad AbuSulayman is one of those contemporary Islamic scholars who genuinely raised the issue of the reconstruction of methodology of Islamic thought and the application of empirical method. He contends that in the past, 'Muslim scholars particularly in Islamic jurisprudence followed deductive method. However, in physical sciences they were empirical and experimental, and applied both induction and deduction. However, social sciences were absent because Muslim scholars did not pay serious attention to study man and his social nature and reality as a separate subject or discipline. As a result of this, there was no development of systematization of induction and investigation. They did not demonstrate empiricism in the study of human phenomena.

Lack of rigorous application of empiricism through both deduction and induction and other methods of scientific research in the field of the social sciences resulted in grave errors and misunderstandings. The lack of an empirical approach affected Muslim social studies and the growth of the Islamic social system. In this background, now Muslim scholars need to develop a new framework for Muslim social thought, one that is based on a systematic and objective investigation of the social aspects of human life. The inductive and deductive methods must be rigorously applied to Muslim social studies'. Finally, he observed the following:

Unless Islamic social sciences and humanities are genuinely established along with their textual bases through empiricism, and unless both induction and deduction are applied in these fields, *ijtihād* must, for all practical purposes, continue to be considered as closed, and Muslim thought will lack dynamism and productivity.<sup>26</sup>

However, I have demonstrated and established in this paper that we need to apply not only in natural and human sciences the analytical, rational, historical, experimental and empirical methods but also in Revealed Knowledge Disciplines which are mainly dealing with metaphysical and conceptual abstract ideas. And

this is forcefully emphasized in the Holy Qur'an. Without responding to the call of the Qur'an in the area of methodology and research methods we can not produce dynamic and energetic Islamic thought. The revival of Islam and revitalization of Islamic civilization greatly depends upon the empirical attitude of Islamic scholars of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage towards their studies.

The above discussion reveals the fact that all the abilities and faculties of knowledge are given by God to man. It also contends that whatever methods of research he has developed based on his faculties are also taught by God. Man has not discovered anything by himself. What man can do based on the guidance of God is to systematize and institutionalize them. To discover and identify anything without the help of God is beyond the capabilities of man. It is neither possible for him to discover the secrets of nature nor to overcome the forces of nature. Man, therefore, requires the help of God at each and every stage of the development of his thought and the growth of his civilization. And this is evident from the present day chaos and crisis in human life which is the result of man's arrogance and negligence of God's guidance.

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