

Divine Creativity and Its Impact on Revitalizing Muslims' Creativity

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Abstract

In the twenty-first century, several skills and competencies have been emphasized by various countries for socio-economic progress. Creative thinking skills are the core skills emphatically stressed. However, the recent intellectual discourses in academia among Muslims and non-Muslims scholars have captured the necessity of creativity in the twenty-first century in order to enhance human skills and competences in all facets of life. Despite the paramount importance of contemporary discourse on creativity, little attention is given to the creative power of God or divine creativity in revitalizing creativity or creative minds among contemporary Muslims. Therefore, the primary objective of this paper is to examine the divine creativity (al-Ibdā' al-Ilāhī) in order to revive the sense of creativity among contemporary Muslims. Two creativities namely divine creativity and human creativity are identified in the paper. The paper argues that divine creativity is essential torchlight in awakening human creativity. The findings of the paper indicate that the western discourse on creativity has isolated God as the Originator of creative ideas. Likewise, the paper clarifies the misconceptions of Muslims about creativity in relation to the concept of Bid'ah. The findings further show that the creative power of God is manifested in the divine creativity (al-Ibdā' al-Ilāhī) as reflected in the Qur'ān. It is therefore suggested that there are many perennial (dalīl naqlī) and philosophic (dalīl ḥaqīqī) evidences to prove the creative power of God through which the Muslims could enhance their creative skills and competences. Effective teaching and learning of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Islamic education integrate and harmonize content with divine creativity for the recognition of the attributes of God as Al-Badī', Al-Bāri, Al-Khāliq etc. as well as for the maximization of positive benefit of the bounties and endowments of God on human beings.

Keywords: creativity, god's creative power, divine creativity, universe, the Holy Qurān

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INTRODUCTION

The advanced development and rapid evolutions of societies in the twenty-first century require increasingly complex modes of thinking and progressive ingenuity for sustaining advancing life. Such an endeavour depends greatly on genuine creativity as a means to meet the increasingly sophisticated challenges of modern societies as well as avoid the vast legacy of human errors. In this, creative thinking skills function with and alongside other important competencies such as intellectual, communication, problem solving, decision making, information and technological skills (Ahmad, 2011). Specifically, creative skill could not be trivialized in relation to other skills that should be acquired for the socio-economic progress of the nations.

However, the role of religion and divine creativity is largely ignored in human creative activities. Undoubtedly, as a scriptural book of guidance, the *Qur'ān* is an embodiment of universality of divine message. In all human endeavors, in the epistle of the divine message, undeniably, nothing is left unexplained. The divine content captures triadic concepts in relation to God. The triadic concepts are: the existence and essence of God (*Wujūd* and *dhāt*), His names and attributes (*'Asmāu* and *sifāt*) and His actions or doings (*A'māl*). It can be claimed that, the creation of the universe is the handiwork of God through His creative power and magnificence.

Nonetheless, the role of religion and divine creativity is given less attention in human activities. Specifically, Islam recognizes the essentiality of creativity among the Muslims. The creative power of God through which Muslims are to reflect on the paramount importance of creativity in addressing socio-economic, political and religious issues within the society is assertively buttressed.

It is buttressed in accordance with the perennial (*dalīl naqlī*) intuitive (*dalīl wijdanī*), and logical (*dalīl 'aqlī*) evidence which must be synthesized for the activation of the creative skills among Muslims. Nonetheless, there is less focus from Muslims to creatively and critically reflect on the need to awaken and activate their ability to reason in regards to examining and observing natural phenomenon as a means to contemplate on the power of God as the Designer and Creator of living and non-living things.

This paper examines the creative power of God as clearly stated in Q2:117. Divine creativity is explicitly discussed as embodied in the glorious *Qur'ān*; as reflected in the creatures of God in the universe as well as it is reflected in human being. In addition, the opinions and interpretations of scholars are elaborated in relation to divine creativity. Finally, the summary and conclusion are made from the Divine Creativity discourse in order to reactivate the

creativity among the Muslims through a meticulous examination of the divine creativity. Prior to further explanation, the meaning of creativity is explicated alongside a critique of western concept of creativity and clarification of Muslims' misconceptions concerning creativity.

MEANING OF CREATIVITY AND CRITIQUE OF WESTERN CONCEPT OF CREATIVITY

The primary focus of this paper is not to discuss western concept of creativity, but to discuss divine creativity in renewing creativity among Muslims. However, it is necessary to glance through the meaning of creativity as well as to indulge in the critique of western concept of creativity in order to explicitly show the shortcomings of western discourse of creativity. In doing so, it will pave way for superiority of divine creativity over negligence of God as the ultimate source of creativity through His creative power as reflected in His creatures.

There is no general acceptable definition of creativity. Different scholars define creativity differently. Literally, creativity is defined as an ability to generate ideas. Technically, it is considered an ability to create or generate new ideas and new interpretations that are meaningful and go beyond traditional ideas and thought (Ahmad, 2011). Human endeavours are not static. Every sphere of life us ub a state of perpetual transformation. Hence, the role of new ideas and new interpretations cannot be trivialized for the progress of humanity in all schemes.

Inferably, new ideas are an integral part of creativity. New ideas are useful for the progress of a particular society. Fundamentally, knowledge is essential for smooth running of the society and creativity is essential for useful knowledge. Hence, since knowledge enable human to distinguish between right and wrong, reasonably creativity helps mankind to solve and address humanity's multifarious problems. Therefore, creativity posits itself as an enabling force for development of original ideas capable of solving man's socio-economic problems. In the context of the rapidly progressive area of engineering wherein creativity is paramount for sustained growth and continued relevance, in the study of Carr and Johnson (1995) we find creativity understood as:

"The generation of ideas and alternatives, and innovation as the transformation of those ideas and alternatives into useful applications that lead to change and improvement. We've found that, in today's business environment, an essential element to an organization's success is adaptability. You must be able to manage at the speed of change, and that takes creativity and innovation".

Based on the above, it is unfortunate that creativity has been restricted to generation of ideas for the improvement of socio-economic development and success. However, the role of divine creativity is neglected as a key player for human creativity in relation to human ideas towards socio-economic improvement for the betterment of humanity. Hence, it is essential to prioritize and integrate the divine creativity in enhancing human creativity for effective maximization of socio-economic prosperities. There are many other definitions apart from the above explanation of creativity. Hence, it is interesting to refer to the following definition of creativity by Meriam Webster (2013):

“Ability to produce something new through imaginative skill, whether a new solution to a problem, a new method or device, or a new artistic objects or form. The term generally refers to a richness of ideas and originality of thinking. Psychological studies of highly creative people have shown that many have a strong interest in apparent disorder, contradiction, and imbalance, which seem to be perceived as challenges. Such individuals may possess an exceptionally deep, broad, and flexible awareness of themselves. Studies also show that intelligence has little correlation with creativity; thus, a highly intelligent person may not be very creative”.

In the above definition, it is clearly stated human ability, imaginative skill, ideas, original thinking and intelligence and creativity are all isolated directly from the Creator and Originator of the imagination, ideas, thinking and intelligence. Therefore, from Islamic perspective, it could be argued that the role of the Creator as the Ultimate Source of human creativity is being neglected in the secular discourse of creativity. Hence, there is no meaningful discourse on the creativity without special reference to God as the main source of creative ideas.

In the contemporary era, modern information technology posits itself as an advocate of for the creativity, creative ideas and competence (Krista, 2003). It is not debatable to say that, competence and skill enhancement are integral part of creative thinking and ideas. Some scholars attempted to make a distinction between competence and skill; however others tend to use the words interchangeably (Lipman, 1991).

Several assumptions and arguments have been forwarded in the western psychological intellectual discourse that in cognitive psychology, creativity should be considered in of an acquired skill rather innate endowment of man.

In contrast, from an Islamic perspective, Islam considers and integrates both the innate disposition of man and his acquired skills as an integral part of his creative ability. For instance, Imam Al-Ghazzālī was of the view that, man's creative ability is of two kinds namely: acquired skills and natural disposition (Imam Al-Ghazali, n.d.). He argued that the former is meaningless in the absence of if the latter as in the case of the rays of the sun are not be beneficial to a blind person. Succinctly, the poetic analogy by Imam Al-Ghazzālī does not literarily indicates that blind cannot benefit from sun but a blind cannot see not only the sun but all useful things that can be useful to him.

Islam considers both acquired and natural dispositions of man in the discourse of creativity. Little wonder then that the focus of western cognitive psychology on creativity is much more focus on acquired skills resulting in the isolation of God as the Endower of the natural disposition. Therefore, from Islamic perspective, God is considered the Originator, Designer and Creator of everything. As a result, Almighty God is responsible for the creative ability of man in piloting the affairs of the earth within the divine rules and systems. From there emanates the concept of God's assistance and blessing "*Barakah*" which is again neglected in the secular discourse. This divine blessing is a contributing factor to the reliability, compatibility, effectiveness, and the positive outcome of innovated ideas.

Previous studies on creativity from the Islamic perspective argued that, the term *tafakkur* as used in the glorious Qur'ān invited man to creatively generate the ideas to address multifarious challenges and difficulties facing mankind (Imam Al-Ghazali, n.d.). It is on this basis the need arises to revive creativity among Muslims with strong recognition of God as the Ultimate Supreme Authority and originator of human creativity, thinking, reasoning and rational ability. As Therefore, it is essential to link creativity with the wonderful creations of God and with His guiding wisdom in the Qur'ān and authentic Prophetic traditions in form of reflecting on the creative power of God. Furthermore, such reflection should serve as an inspirational and driving force for human creativity in the cultivation of a superior society and civilization.

MUSLIM MISCONCEPTION OF CREATIVITY, INNOVATION AND CRITICAL THINKING

During the Prophetic era, the divine message regulated religious and mundane affairs among the companions. However, many Islamic concepts are misconstrued by contemporary Muslims. Among such misconstrued concepts among contemporary Muslims is creativity. Among the critical issues facing contemporary Muslims is the notion of innovation (*bid'ah*).

Instead of making a distinction between innovation in religious matters and mundane affairs; it is generally assumed that innovation is un-Islamic in religious and mundane matters.

Indeed, innovation and creativity in basic fundamental religious matters is pointless given the are clear and concrete evidences in the Qur'ān and Hadīth. For instance, Allah says: "...*This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.*" (Surah Al-Maidah 4: 5, Muhammad Taqiud-Din al-Hilali & Muhammad Muhsin Khan, 2009). Apart from this aforementioned evidence, it is noteworthy to quote another verse which explains the innovation of monasticism by the disciples of Prophet Isa (A.S.) imposed on themselves was not an instruction given by Allah. It is clearly stated thus in the Qur'ān:

".....But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, we did not prescribe for them, but (they sought it) only to please Allah therewith but they did not observe it with right observance. So We gave those among them who believed their (due) reward, but many of them are Fāsikūn (rebellious, disobedient to Allah)"

(Surah Al-Hadid: 27)

Muslim scholars have glaringly elucidated that, the above quoted verse is a clear point of reference to an unacceptable religious innovation in matters of worship. A critical examination of the phrasing of the verse reveals that- the self imposed- monasticism of the disciples of Prophet Isa peace be upon him was a human innovation in religious matters.

Likewise, the Prophetic narration has given stern warning against innovation in religious matters. The supporting argument in line with the above verse and prophetic teachings are explicated by the submission of Imam Mālik (d.159AH) when he said: "Whoever innovates anything in religious affairs, such a person assumes that the Messenger (peace be upon him) has betrayed the divine message-given to him" (Abu Ishaq Ash-Shatibi, n.d.).

Doubtless, development in mundane matters is impossible without innovative ability. This, Islam does not disagree with. However, any innovation in the mundane affairs should not contravene with the fundamental tenets or precepts of Islam, specifically; it should not deny the existence of God (Faraj' Izud-Din, 1988).

The faith-based approach of Islam and its emphasis on intellectualism portrays it universalistic and dynamic in all human endeavours. Fundamentally, the concept of creativity, innovation and critical thinking portrays Islam as a dynamic religion as reflected in a number of Qur'ānic verses (Abdul 'Aziz

Muhammad Kamal, 1990). Basically, the expansion of Islamic tenets or precepts is possible by making the triadic components (creativity, innovation and critical thinking) instrumental in relation to the basic fundamental principles of Islam. It is total compliance with positive functionality of human mind. The triadic components are essential for human understanding and comprehension of the divine creativity.

The above basis, from the Islamic perspective, it is important to posit that, innovation and creativity are closely related to technical terms. In Islam, God is the Maker and Creator of the universe, the creative power of God cannot be denied. Hence, Islam agrees the creativity is instrumental in the implementation and application of Islamic precepts in mundane affairs. Likewise, critical thinking in addressing multifarious socio-economic challenges is integrally interrelated with innovation (Clabaugh, 2008). That the usage of the terms *bid'a* as well as *ijtihad* used narrow-mindedly and short-sightedly in traditional Islamic thought has led to the unreasonable marginalization of generating new ideas as well as considering creative ideas as heresy (Umar Faruq Abd-Allah, 2006).

In order to envision a better future for Muslims as well as to address the problems and challenges facing them, it is essential to take a bold intellectual step towards the understanding of creativity from a broader spectrum. An inference must be made to Allah's attribute as the Maker and Creator whose creative power could not be denied in the reflection of the universe. Functional religious dynamism and diversification is paramount for the activation of creative minds among the Muslims. To this end, the notable, Sherman Jackson asserted that the promotion of intellectual learning activities is vital for instilling a critical consciousness among Muslims (Sherman, 2002).

From the socio-cultural perspective innovation, implies an introduction of a new code which does not comply with existing and known customary values and codes among persons of similar culture. Additionally, heretical innovation has no linkage with the lifestyle of the people of the past. However, the Islamic cultural usage of the term innovation in the context of theological discourse is considered as heresy. This heretical declaration of innovation in religious theological discourse is often based on the hadith of the Prophet: "... *It is unto you regarding the innovation because all unprecedented affairs are innovation and every innovation is mischievous*" (Muslim, n.d.).

Muslim scholars have understood the above hadith as is categorically repudiating innovation in religious affairs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was not inimical to creative and innovative thoughts, ideas and practices as acknowledged through his interactions with his compatriot. However, the

hadīth was a stern warning against creative and innovative ideas and practices that contrary to fundamental Islamic legal principles. One way to prove the above claimed fact is by referring to another hadīth that states: Whoever introduces an innovative good act in Islam will be earning its reward and rewards of those who act upon it until the Day” (Muslim, n.d.). Examining the context of this hadīth, encourages positive useful social innovations.

Based on the above opinion, the benefit of creative and innovative ideas from the Islamic perspective is to enable Muslims go beyond the literal meaning of Islamic connotations. In order to avoid literal connotations of Islamic legal tenets, an expert in Islamic legal principles, Imam al-Shātibī lamented that, it is misconstrued among some people that Muslims could not have a opinions different from the early Muslims as well as considering new development as a heresy on the basis of arguing that all innovative ideas and practices are inimical according to the Prophetic tradition (Abu Is’haq al-Sahtibi). However, there was an element of innovation and creativity in the dynamic approach of the erudite Muslim scholars whereby they adapted from other civilizations in order to suit the Islamic worldview in line with the articulations embodied in the Qur’ān and Sunnah as well as the consensus of Muslim scholars.

For instance, the Arabic numerals were originally from the Sanskrit was creatively modified to incorporate zero (Toby, 2003). It was this creativity that enabled the Muslim scholars during the classical period to innovatively and creatively develop an intellectual civilization on the basis of knowledge, science and technology. Additionally, trigonometry and geometry originating from the Greeks was creatively utilized by Muslim scholars in advancement of their intellectual civilization (Toby, 2003).

The above elucidation has been systematically neglected among some Muslims as an attempt to foster and develop creative minds whose contributions to the world’s civilization could be meaningful especially on the basis of divine creativity. To this end, the above evidences regarding the of linguistic and technical usage of the term innovation as well as the Qur’ānic and prophetic proofs on the creativity assist, in reviving creativity from the view-lens of divine creativity from the perspective of divine creativity.

THE CREATIVE POWER OF GOD AND CREATIVITY IN UNDERSTANDING THE EXISTENCE OF CREATOR

The intellectual activity of contemporary Muslims portrays the myopic assumption of non-Muslims as regard to their lack of creativity. This is interesting given that the medieval Islamic civilization between the ninth and fourteenth centuries produced countless numbers of creative minds

(Chamberlain, 1994). The spirit of creativity that existed during the classical Islamic civilization was derived from the strength of divine creativity. For instance, the concept of *ijtihad* was considered a mechanism for the creative adaptation and expansion of Islamic law in order to creatively solve multifarious problems (Jamal Badi and Mustapha Tajdin, 2004).

Natural creation as well as human innovative thinking is integral to understand the existence of God. It is therefore, it is important to use creative mind in understanding the content of the divine message. For instance, the oxygen that man breathes is essential for his survival but it is invisible and cannot be touched or felt (Sheikh Salman al-Oadah, 2012). If human beings have not experienced something, imaginative creativity might be difficult. Hence, when man engages his mind contemplating of God's and will clearly understand that God is the Originator, Creator and Designer of the universe. This is illustrated in the Qur'an retelling of the part of the story of Prophet Ibrāhīm AS :

“And (remember) when Ibrāhīm (Abraham) said to his father 'Azār: Do you take idols as ālihah (gods)? Verily, I see you and your people in manifest error. Thus did we show Ibrāhīm (Abraham) the kingdom of the heavens and the earth that he be one of those who have Faith with certainty. When the night covered him over with darkness he saw a star. He said: “This is my lord.” But when it set, he said: “I like not those that set.” When he saw the moon rising up, he said: “This is my lord. But when it set, he said; unless my lord guides me, I shall surely be among the people who went astray. When he saw the sun rising up, he said: “This is my lord. This is greater.” But when it set, he said: “O my people! I am indeed free from all that you join as partners (in worship with Allah). Verily, I have turned me face towards Him, Who has created the heavens and the earth Hanīf (Islamic Monotheism i.e. worshipping none but Allah Alone), and I am not of Al-Mushrikūn (see v.2; 105)”

(Surah, Al-An'am: 74-79)

From the above verse, it is clear that Prophet Ibrāhīm peace be upon him was very critical about the natural phenomenon like the star, moon and sun while searching for the existence of the Supreme Creator. It could be inferred that Prophet Ibrāhīm peace be upon him was exercising creative thought by questioning the legitimacy of the thinking patterns of his people who were idol worshippers. Undeniably, Prophet Ibrāhīm peace be upon him was exceptional in meditation, critical and creative thinking skills is identifying God through the contemplation of His creation a process of creative thinking or logical thinking.

Prophet Ibrāhīm peace be upon him exercises original thinking when providing that idols and natural phenomenon could not be regarded as Creator and Originator of the universe. He generated new ideas as well as alternative proofs for the existence of God as contrary to the prevalence of idol worship. Undeniably, the imaginative thinking of Prophet Ibrāhīm peace be upon him led to the transformation and improvement of humanity on the basis of experiential ideas about the existence of the Creator.

In Islam, the limitation of human imagination is its inability to comprehend the essence of God. In the Islamic perspective human imagination and creativity are focused on the corporeal world. Although, the human potential and creativity contributed to the development of modern science and technology, God appears to have been ignored as the Sole-Endower of human creative potential. In several Qur'ānic verses, the Almighty God has instructed human beings to utilize their minds and skills to advance human endeavours in all spheres.

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE DIVINE CREATIVITY IN THE HOLY BOOK & THE INTERPRETATIONS OF SCHOLARS

The Qur'ān is an inspiring force and the fundamental basis of creativity. It affirms the different names of Allah among which. God is the Creator. Hence, the creative power is inherent in God. It is clearly stated that: "And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them" (Surah 7 Al-A'araf: 180). Among the divine attributes is God as Originator as illustrated in the verse: "*The Originator of the heavens and earth. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it: Be!- and it is*" (Sural 2 Al-Baqarah: 117).

The implication of the Qur'ānic verse (Q2:117) that points to the creative power of God is that, the creation and existence of the universe was not a prototype of its like copied from somewhere (Abū Is'hāq Ahmad bin Ibrāhīm Ath-Tha'labī An-Naysabūrī, 1422). This is the uniqueness of the creative power of God as the Maker and Originator of the universe (Abdul Rahman bin Abī Bakar As-Suyūtī, 2003). It is worth noting that, the Qur'ānic passage (2:11) has explicitly demonstrated that Allah is the primal origin (*badī'*) of the heavens and earth Muhammad Rashīd bin Ali Ridha, 1990). Apart from the usage of the *badī'*, there are many other words that refer to Allah as the Creator and Originator of universe. Another Qur'ānic verse further reiterated the creative power of God that:

"All praise and thanks are Allah's, the (only) Originator (or the only Creator) of the heavens and the earth, Who made the angels with wings, two or three or four: He increases in creation what He wills. Verily, Allah is Able to do all things. Whatever of mercy (i.e.

of good), Allah may grant to mankind, none can withhold it, and whatever He may withhold, none can grant it thereafter. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise”

(Surah 35, Fatir: 1-2)

The creative power of God is manifest in His creatures and it has been indicated that Allah is undoubtedly the designer of the heavens and earth. He is the supreme creator:

“Allah it is He Who has created the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them in Six Days. Then He rose over (Istawa), the Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty). You (mankind) have none, besides Him, as a wali (protector or helper) or an intercessor. Will you not then remember (or receive admonition). He manages and regulates (every) affair from the heavens to the earth; then it (affair) will go up to Him, in one Day, the space whereof is a thousand years of your reckoning (i.e. reckoning of our present world's time). That is He: The All-Knower of the unseen and the seen, the All-Mighty, the Merciful”

(Surah 32, As-Sajdah:4-6)

Likewise, Allah is referred to as *al-Khāliq* which means that Allah is the Creator all living things and non-living beings (Nashwani Muhammad Nibil, 2001). The creative power of God is superior because Allah does not imitate from someone or from somewhere. The divine creativity is ultimately paramount and inclusive with a command from the Supreme God (Markaz al-Turath li Abhath al-Hasib al-Ali, 2000). In relation to the creative power of God, another related word to *bada'* is *ja'ala* i.e. making. Hence, Allah is the Maker of all things, form and shapes. The forms and shapes of the natural objects like the sun moon, stars, light, darkness etc. are not in isolation from God's creation. The creative power of God in relation to the human soul, is that He perfected it as indicated by the use of *Sawwa* (Abu Hassan maqāti bin sulayman bin Bashīr Al-Azdī Bilwalāi Al- Balkhī, 2003).

Other words related to *bada'* is *fatara* and *baraa*. The former refers to Allah as the Most Powerful who created things out of nothing while the later implies that there are no previous resources or materials used by Allah to create things. For instance, the Holy Qur'ān says: “All praise and thanks are Allah's, the (only) Originator for the (only) Creator of the heavens and the earth, Who made the angels messengers with wings, two or three or four, He increases in creation what He wills. Verily, Allah is able to do all things (Surah Fatir: 1).

Furthermore, the creation of Prophet 'Ādam and Prophet Isa peace be upon them without father was not copied or imitated from anywhere; He is the Originator and Maker of everything (Imām 'Abī Abdullah Sufyān bin Sa'īd bin Masrūq Ath-thawrī Al-Kūfī (777-161A.H). The above explication is significant because it elaborates that Allah is the Creator, Designer and Maker of the Universe (Haji Muhammad Umar, 2004). Therefore, the divine and creative power of God must be contextualized for Muslims to revive their creativity.

Sheikh Ibn 'Uthaymīn is of the opinion that the existence of heavens and earth were not based on previous design. This highlights the divine creative power (Sheikh Muhammad bin Sālih Uthaymīn, n.d.). Sheikh Ibn 'Uthaymīn asserted that denying the creative power of God is maintained that has no influence over man. Similarly, in his Tafsīr, Sheikh Abī Hātim Ar-Razī was of the opinion that, heavens and earth show the aesthetic and beautiful creation which nothing (Al-Imām Al-Hāfiz 'Abū Muhammad Abdulrahman bin Abī Hātim Ar-Razī (d.327). The cosmos and all natural phenomena are an indication of the divine power of God as reflected in the Glorious Qur'ān (EL-Fandy, Muhammad Jamaluddin, 1994).

Additionally, the divine innovativeness is manifest in the creation of the heavens and earth which are limitless in length and width. The verse clarified the ambiguities of the divine Creative power of God whereby some fallacious and heretical beliefs tend to deny the magnificence of Almighty God (EL-Fandy, Muhammad Jamaluddin, 1994). Furthermore, in line with the explanation and interpretation of the above scholars, Fayaq Muhammad explained that (Fayaq Muhammad, 1999) the word *Badi'* could be linguistically interpreted, *Mujahid* explained that invention into religious matters is considered as innovation as it was shown in the hadīth narrated by Imam Muslim that: "Indeed every invention is innovation" (Muslim, n.d.).

In this regard, Al-Qurtubī asserted that, innovation should not be generalized because it is of two kinds namely the technical and *sharī'ah* meaning and the linguistic meaning of innovation (Abū Abdullah Muhammad bin Ahmad Abī Bakr bin Farh Al-Ansārī Al-khazrajī Shamsud-Dīn Al-Qurtubī, 1964). The *sharī'ah* meaning relates to the Prophetic tradition that states every invention is innovation and every innovation is misleading" whereas the linguistic meaning of innovation relates to the submission of the leaders of believers, 'Umar bin al-Khattāb when he witnessed people praying *tarāwih* in congregation, then he said, this is a good innovative idea. This means that, none have done it before and inferably, this is a praiseworthy creative innovation as attested by Umar bin al-Khattāb.

Furthermore, the Prophet was not an innovator of religious precepts; but was the last instalment of a series of revelations according to Ibrahim Ahmad Shuki (1992) as explained in the Qur'an: "*Say (O Muhammad), I am not a new thing among the Messengers nor do I know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow that which is revealed to me, and I am but a plain Warner*" (Soorah Al-Ahqaf: 9).

Based on the above verse, it could be reasonably argued that, the heretical beliefs and practices among the Arab were a blameworthy innovation, no direct link with the past. Unlike the Prophet's message which is a continuity of the divine message. The Prophet (peace be upon him) attempted to revive a creative and critical mind among the Arabs especially his companions. In a recent study, it is argued that one of the ways used by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to instill creative and critical thinking skills unto his disciples was through question and answer method. This approach encourages the ability to analyze and synthesize religious concept with real life situation (Ahmad, 2011).

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE DIVINE CREATIVITY IN THE UNIVERSE

In the early 1900, Albert Einstein propounded General Theory of Relativity (GTR) which argued that universe does not exist without a beginning. Many scientists then considered this a proof that could not be scientifically proven (Kennefick, 2007). However, many cosmologists and astrophysicists have argued that, the finding of Albert Einstein undeniable proof that demonstrates the existence of beginning of the universe, the findings of Hubble expanded Albert Einstein's General Relativity Theory (GRT) and showed that the universe was expanding (Kennefick, 2007).

It is worrisome that, some strongly uphold the stance that all creatures on the surface of earth are here by chance. However, a deep reflection on the existence and creations show that the universe could not exist by chance but that a Creator must be responsible for its existence. This has been testified to in the Glorious Book, Qu'rān, which stated that:

"And in your creation and what He scattered (through the earth) of moving (living) creatures are signs for people who have faith with certainty"

(Surah Al-Jathiyah:4)

In the universe as a whole, the wonderful creations pinpoint to the magnificence of God as the Only Creator and Originator of things. In such contemplation human beings understand the signs of Allah through His

creativity. Allah alludes that: *“And says to His Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him: Allah (Alone) created the heavens and earth with truth (and none shared Him in their creation). Verily! Therein is surely a sign for those who believe”* (Soorah al-Ankabut:44).

Also, it is said that:

“See you not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another” (Surah Nuh: 15). And: *“Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one united piece, then We parted them? And We have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?”*

(Surah Al-Ambiyah: 30)

In the above quoted verses, Allah praises Himself for His creative ability as reflected in the heavens and earth, Jarīr at-Tabarī explicitly explained that, ‘Ibn ‘Abbās posited that, the reason for separation of the heavens and earth is for the heavens to send down rain while the earth will germinate the vegetable (Abu Ja’far Muhammad bin Jarīr At-Tabarī, 224-310). Every innovated without a predecessor is considered as a creative idea. It is also interestingly noted further in another Qur’ānic passage where Allah states:

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and The Parable of His Light is as (if there were) a niche and within it a lamp: the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a brilliant star, lit from blessed tree, an olive neither of the east (i.e. neither it get sun-rays only in the morning) nor of the west (i.e. nor it gets sun-rays only in the afternoon but it is exposed to the sun all day long), whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself), though no fire touched it. Light upon Light! Allah sets forth parables for mankind, and Allah is All-Knower of everything

(Surah an-Nur:35)

The above verse glaringly illustrates the divine creativity through the parable of light with the lamp in the glass. From this, one may infer that the only Qur’ān is expressing creative ideas for the generation and distribution of electricity for the benefit of humanity. There are many creatures of God upon which Qur’ān has invited man to reflect as a means to acknowledging the power of God as the Originator of the Universe. For instance, Allah has provided protective ceiling in the sky which is clearly stated in the Qur’ān:

“We have made the heaven a roof, safe well-guarded. Yet they turn away from its signs (i.e. sun, moon, winds, clouds etc).”

(Soorah al-Anbiyaa: 32)

The protective ceiling in the form of earth's atmosphere of earth is a creative power of God that is often ignored by many. Allah used the Ozone layer to protect the Earth from the harmful rays of the sun other planets in the solar system do not possess this quality in their atmosphere (EL-Fandy Muhammad Jamaluddin, 1994). As astronomers have submitted that, the moon is indeed very similar to the earth; however, it does not possess a protective ceiling like earth.

Muslims should revitalize their creative mind through the meticulous examination or investigation of divine creativity. In line with this submission, it is important to recall that, the space scientist and astronomers have found out that, in the universe, there are billions of galaxies with billions of stars in each galaxy many of which have different planets (EL-Fandy Muhammad Jamaluddin, 1994). Allah has directed human beings to ponder over His creative power where it is stated:

"The creation of the heavens and the earth is indeed greater than the creation of mankind, yet, most of mankind know not"

(Surah Al-Ghaafir: 57)

Fundamentally, the universe is an inspiring factor for the justification of divine creativity as embodied in the Qur'ān. The Holy Qur'ān affirms that, Allah is the Lord of the Universe (Shafi- Abdus-Salam Mahmud, 1993). He is the Lord of the universe, but not only man's universe but the universe of Jinn, angels and other natural phenomenon. It is not reasonable to say that, the universe is by chance. The western '*big bang theory*' used to explain the evolution of the universe is undoubtedly contradictory to the Greek philosophy from western science is derived (Brentjes, 2003).

Islam provides the divine proofs to substantiate the reasoning evidence in order to establish and justify the existence of God. According to the Qur'ān God is the Originator of the heavens and earth which signifies the creative power of Almighty God (Sural Al-Baqarah: 117). In addition, Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said that: The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to supplication thus: "*Oh God! I am requesting you that all praises are reserved for you, there none but you, the Endower, the Originator of the heavens and earth, the Possessor of the mighty and Honour*" (Abu Daud, 1495). From here, one may assert that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is re-establishing the creative power of God (Al-Bar Muhammad, 1999). In line with this, Muslims should utilize the divine creativity in addressing multifarious issues in their society for their religious and socio-economic aspirations.

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE DIVINE CREATIVITY IN HUMAN BEINGS

Undoubtedly, human organs signify various signs of God which point to the fact that, Almighty God created man with wisdom. The secular notion of human creation ascribed the creation of man to animal, which directly or indirectly denounces the existence of God (Iskafi Muhammad bin Abdullah, 1991). Man does not metamorphosis from monkey to human as posited in some western studies; rather, man is the son of Prophet Adam created by Allah (Haqilhsan, 1986). The Qur'ān has gloriously mentioned about the creation of man and he has been endowed with knowledge and wisdom to acknowledge the existence of God (Atiyah Hassan Hamid, 1987). For instance, Allah says:

“... Who made everything He has created good and He began the creation of man from clay. Then He made His offspring from semen of despised water (male and female sexual discharge). Then He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him the soul (created by Allah for that person); and He gave you hearing (ears), sight (eyes) and hearts. Little is the thanks you give”

(Surah as-Sajdah: 7-9)

It has been further reiterated in many other studies that, the Qur'ān has explicitly explained the developmental stages in human creation thus indicating the divine creativity of Almighty God (Tabarah, 'Afif Abdul Fattah, 1988). The composition of human body is more sophisticated than all technologies. Such complex cannot have come by chance (Al-Qazzal, 1995). The creation of human beings shows the divine creativity. Indeed, none has the ability to create other than God. However, human beings are endowed with the faculty of reasoning to invent existing materials. Man cannot create (Sa'dud-Din Muhammad, 2009). Similarly, human beings with their complex structure could not exist without a Creator that God, the creative designer and maker of man (Iskafi Muhammad bin Abdullah, 1991). Hence, for creative progress within the society, the divine manual namely, the Qur'ān has extensively elaborated various aspects of human endeavours through which man's relationship with the environment will be meaningful (Ansari, Muhammad Fazlur-Rahman, 2001).

Moreover, different animals and plants with their rich colours are signs that pinpoint to the creative power of God (Safiah Osman, 2009). Such beauty and testimony of the divine is also present through reflection over the creation of animals. To this effect the Qur'ān asks: *“Do they not look at the camels, how they are created?”* Soorah Al-Ghathiyah: 17). And *“Do they not see the birds above them, spreading out their wings and folding them in? None*

upholds them except the most Gracious (Allah). Verily, He is the All-Seer of everything” (Soorah Al-Mulk:19).

DIVINE CREATIVITY AND MEDITATION IN IMPLEMENTING PROPHET MUHAMMAD’S CREATIVE IDEAS

Nowadays, several soft skills have been emphatically stressed to bring about betterment in all facets of human endeavours. Of such essential skills are creative skills, critical thinking skills, and communication skills others (Harvard Business School, 2003). Since creativity is related to the generation of useful ideas that could be brought about positive progress in social, economic, political, religious and cultural affairs, Islam plays an essential role toward the enhancement of creative thinking skills on the basis of divine creativity.

The Holy *Qur’ān* is an embodiment of creativity. There are many names of Prophets mentioned in the divine scriptural guidance and each of the Prophets was creative to deliver the content of the message. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was the most superior messenger of Allah, and the many afflictions, inflections, predicaments and challenges he faced offer rich content as to creative ways to address social and spiritual problems or challenges. In this context, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was the most creative of all the messengers and human.

The creative ability of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reflected in his political strength in establishing an Islamic community and his religious and political leadership of Muslims. The extent of the creative ability of the Prophet has been acknowledged by many scholars including western scholars like Hart who posited that the Prophet (peace be upon him) harmonized between religious and political leadership (Hart, 1992). It is important to mention that, the initial political creativity of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reflected in his strategy for conflict resolution among various tribes. This is seen in the event of deciding on who should return the Black stone to its place. He used his creativity and wisdom by spreading his cloak on the floor to put the stone on so that a representative from each tribe could carry each corner, thus preventing any conflict over the matter.

Several concepts and religious tenets are expounded in the glorious *Qur’ān*, but it was the Prophetic creativity that expatiated on those concepts and tenets. For instance, the concept of *Zakat* and its beneficiaries are mentioned in several places in the *Qur’ān*, but the fundamental principles are explicitly and creatively elucidated by the Prophet (peace be upon him). There are many other economic concepts such as: *Sadaqah*, *Waqf*, *mudharabah* and which are indications of creative ideas expounded to bring about social justice and equal distribution of wealth.

This economic strategy brought about harmony and unity and more importantly the welfare of the Muslims was improved. In addition, the economic creative idea of the Prophet (peace be upon him) can be seen from the establishment of a new market in Madinah which was a strategy to establish Muslims market instead of continuing with the existing market under the control of the Jews. When the market was established by the Prophet (peace be upon him), it was declared:

“This market is for you, it is disallowed to be narrowed down. Likewise, it is not allowed to collect any tax from it (market)”.
(Gullen, 2005)

Furthermore, the charismatic personality, personal idiosyncrasy, character and creative ideas of the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought about many positive changes among the Muslims and humanity in general. The social changes effected by the Prophet (peace be upon him) might be due to his creative ideas, spiritual enhancement and emphasis on the harmonization between spiritual and intellectual development among his followers.

Additionally, the most vital social change was the eradication of prevalent inimical or anti-social behaviours and vices among the Arabs. The transformation and revolutionary agenda of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was successful as a result of his creativity through the establishment of an Islamic state and implementation of the divine message (*SharīḤah*). The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not restrict creative ideas to himself but he also encouraged creativity among his disciples. For instance, it has been notably mentioned in a recent study of (Adibah Mohamad, *et al.* (2012):

“Historians generally agree that changes in areas such as social security, family structure, slavery and the rights of women improved not only in Arab society, but also the world over. For example, Islam rejected hierarchy, and adopted a formula of the career open to the talents. All these would not have happened if it was not due to the creative and innovative approach that had been taken by Prophet Muhammad pbuh. In the history of Islam there were two records which showed how Prophet Muhammad pbuh encouraged creativity. In those records two persons took the initiative to create something new. They created the wordings of zikr by themselves which the Prophet had never taught them. When the Prophet heard those zikr the Prophet commended them. In the first occasion, a man had created the verses of zikr “Allahu akbar kabiran, alhamdulillah kathiran, wasubhanallahu bukratan wasasila.” In the second occasion

another man created the zikr "Alhamdulillah hamdan kasiran thoyyiban mubarkanfih."

From the above, it is clear that, the Prophet (peace be upon him) encouraged creativity among his companions. Similarly, the agreement of the Prophet (peace be upon him) means that the companions were encouraged to be creative by using the words of *Zikr*. Apart from this, there are many other occasions where the Prophet (peace be upon him) encouraged his disciples to be creative. Hence, there is need to infuse creativity into the content of Islamic revealed knowledge.

IMPLICATION OF DIVINE CREATIVITY AND PROPHETIC CREATIVITY ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ISLAMIC REVEALED KNOWLEDGE

The fore going explanation has explicitly elaborated on the divine creativity as an attempt to revive human creativity in order to face the contemporary challenges through the production of creative ideas on the basis of divine guidance (Ja'unmjudin Mahmud, 1993). This is elucidated as an attempt to foster the teaching and learning of revealed knowledge.

The uniqueness of the Qur'ān is reflected in the intellectual challenges it poses among which is to produce a book similar to the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān explains that Allah taught Prophet 'Ādam AS the names of different things which subsequently enabled him to acquire the ability to learn and teach others. Allah clearly states:

"And He taught Adam all the names (of everything), then He showed them to the angels and said, "Tell Me the names of those if you are truthful"

(Surah al-Baqarah: 31)

From the above quoted verse, it could be inferred that, knowledge is a prerequisite for an innovative and creative thinking skills. Allah was making an attempt to test creative ability of 'Ādam and angels, Prophet 'Ādam peace be upon him was intelligent to mention different names taught him by Allah, and he was creative to utilize different objective for his benefit and benefit of his environment.

In line with what was taught to 'Ādam peace be upon him, the first emphasis made in the divine message to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was also knowledge. The importance of knowledge as reflected in the first five verses descended unto emphatically stressed on the significance of

knowledge. The content of the book taught to the Prophet was the *Qur'ān*. Hadīth is a complementary note to the divine message. There are many other aspects of knowledge emanating from the fundamental sources of knowledge such as: *Tafsīr* (*Qur'ānic* interpretation), *'Usul al Tafsīr*, *Tawhid Fiqh*, *'Usul Fiqh, Nahw, Sarf, Balaghah* and many others.

It has been explained previously that, the vitality of the divine creativity and meditation of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in activating his creative ideas should not be neglected. Ironically, Islamic revealed knowledge and Islamic education as a discipline does not adequately encourage creativity and innovation compared to the attention given to the infusion of creativity in other disciplines despite this, some Muslim scholars have responded that creativity is explicitly expounded in the *Qur'ān*.

However, there is need for further explanation on the theory and principles of creativity and innovation from the light of divine creativity and innovation and Prophetic creative ideas in order to revive man's creative faculty. In doing so, multifarious socio-economic and religious problems will be addressed in order to promote peaceful co-existence and improvement of Muslim welfare.

Therefore, it is important to submit that essentiality of infusing creativity into the teaching and learning of Islamic revealed knowledge in order to make its content relevant to all facets of human endeavours. The traditional teaching and learning of Islamic education is deficient because it gives less attention to the integration of creativity into content delivery. Therefore, there could triadic approach towards infusing creativity into the content of Islamic revealed knowledge, the instruction materials such as the use of technology and the role of teachers cannot be underrated in its implementation.

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS FROM THE PAPER

The paper emphatically stressed on the paramount importance of essential skills that need to be fostered among contemporary Muslims. Of such skills are: problem solving, communication, and critical and creative thinking skills. Likewise, the paper has explicated the meaning of creativity in which the western perspective to creativity neglected the divine creative power as an attempt to expatiate the concept of creativity. Likewise, the paper further argued that some Muslims have misconstrued the concept of creativity, innovation and critical thinking. The concept of *Bid'ah* should not only be restricted to a narrow-minded and negative interpretation but can also be interpreted positively and open-mindedly in order to bring about betterment of the mundane affairs of humanity in general.

It has interestingly noted that, creativity is an integral important concept for imaginative thinking skills. In this regard *Qur'ānic* verses and the Sunnah are helpful in understanding that for all phenomenons in this universe, there must be a Creator. Several *Qur'ānic* verses that attested to the fact that, there are many elements of creativity in many *Qur'ānic* verses and Sunnah. Furthermore, the universe as it appears is an important indication of divine creativity.

Man is not created for fun. He is endowed with the faculty of thought and imagination on order to search for creative solutions to the challenges he faces in his attempt to fulfil his responsibility as vicegerent. Further still, the divine and prophetic creativity could be used in fostering creativity in the teaching and learning of Islamic revealed knowledge among the Muslims.

The compartmentalization of various arguments in positioning the importance of divine creativity towards the revival of the creativity among Muslims has been lucidly expatiated. The illustration below shows the detailed and comprehensive explanation of divine creative and its impact on the revamping of human creativity especially Muslims:

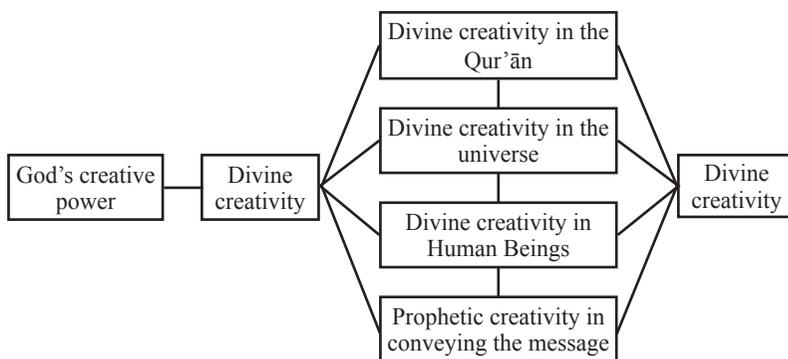


Fig 1.1: An Illustration of God’s Creative Power, Divine Creativity and Four Components of Divine Creativity in Revival Human Creativity

CONCLUSION

This paper has elaborated on the essentiality of divine creativity which is considered a distinctive element missing in the western discourse on creativity. It has been further expounded that there are a number of the *Qur'ānic* verses that explicitly explain the importance of creativity. Specifically, it has been noted that Prophet Ibrāhīm peace be upon him was creative when searching for the existence of the Supreme God. He was able to come up with new ideas that clarify the fallacious beliefs of his people. Likewise, the paper

argued that the strategy of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in conveying the message and more importantly the establishment of an Islamic state in Madinah was through creative ideas. It is explicitly shown that divine creativity in the Qur'ān, in the universe, in human beings and the creativity and meditation of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) should be compartmentalized toward reviving of creativity among Muslims. It is therefore recommended that for effective teaching and learning of Islamic revealed knowledge and Islamic education, divine creativity should be integrated and harmonized within its curriculum and methods of instruction.

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