

BRINGING HIGHER EDUCATION TO A GREATER HEIGHT:
A Festschrift in Honour

of
**ABDULHAMID
ABUSULAYMAN**



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Abusulayman**

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An Educational-Social Reformist

Hazizan Md Noon

Professor Emeritus Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman is the main figure behind the initiation and establishment of Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Sciences (KIRKHS) in 1990. KIRKHS since then has been the biggest faculty in the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), my workplace for about 39 years since I joined it as an Assistant Lecturer in 1984.

Honouring the Contribution of Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman

In the education realm, the focus of his work was to reform the mindset of people through educational services. He had registered his dissatisfaction over the way Muslims think which has largely contributed to their backwardness in almost all aspects of life. He emphasised the need to reposition the proper function of reason in the educational process; the need to combine it to understand revelation; and the role of the appropriate ecosystem in nurturing Muslim intellectuals.

In short, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman underscored the need to develop the right way of thinking through the education system.

AbdulHamid AbuSulayman was critical of the prevailing orientations in education which were either focusing only on nurturing religious individuals in the narrow sense; or making them liberally modern in thinking. To him, this will only further perpetuates dualism in the education system which results in backwardness among Muslims. Reform in the education system was, hence, necessary to bring about the needed change and progress in society.

The worldview of Muslims must thus be changed by teaching them about the impact of a proper Islamic worldview as manifested in the tremendous achievements of past Muslim civilisation, and the need to have the right understanding of Islam. Teaching the right understanding of Islam is important to gain the right Islamic worldview, necessitating the integration of both revelation and reason. This led him to design curricula which expose students to Islamic civilisation regardless of their specialisations. Similarly, Islamic education must also encompass the study of principles which are contextualised to other disciplines of knowledge. The integration of both is important to avoid dualistic thinking, detrimental to the development of quality Muslims and society.

Dr AbdulHamid AbuSulayman's thoughts, ideas and legacy are living with us, helping to guide us, and in fact, he has merged both the theory into practice, he acted on what he believed in and Alhamdulillah we could see the University, IIUM, as one of the outcomes of this great man. His trademarks include the establishment of KIRKHS as one of the monumental milestones in his ten-year period of administration from 1988 to 1998.

Following the demise of Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, countless events, programmes and activities, ranging from specific spiritual and religious gatherings like *tahlil* sessions to international memorial webinars, workshops and discourses on his thoughts and contributions, have been organised in honour and memory of his immense contributions.

In one of such webinars, the moderator has profoundly remarked about the departure of Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman when he says:

"AbuSulayman did not leave us but he's still living with us. His thought, his ideas and his legacy is living with us, helping to guide us, and in fact, he has merged both the theory into practice, he acted on what he believed in and Alhamdulillah we could see the University, IIUM, as one of the outcomes of this great man".

I believed that by 'outcomes' could be referred to the significant imprints that bore Dr. AbdulHamid's trademarks including the establishment of KIRKHS as one of the monumental milestones in his ten-year period of administration from 1988 to 1998. In this context, it was only natural to see numerous proposals and suggestions put forward by various quarters to record appreciation and thanks for his invaluable contributions, one of which was a proposal to name the Kulliyah after his name.

The initial idea or proposal to name KIRKHS after Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman might have cropped up in the minds of many including the then his deputy and subsequently his successor Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Mohd Kamal Hassan. Subsequently, there have been numerous suggestions on the new name for the Kulliyah. I have heard about some of them from different sources including those mentioned during several of Kulliyah's programmes and departmental meetings. I was privileged to be part of such a historic process associated with this great figure which ended up with the Kulliyah being named as AbdulHamid AbuSulaiman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences or AHAS KIRKHS..

Indeed, the second Rector of the IIUM, Professor Emeritus Dr AbdulHamid AbuSulayman has contributed enormously to the development of the

University and the Kulliyyah during and after his time at the University. I pray that Allah S.W.T will shower his mercy upon AHAS soul and place him among the *salihun*. As a token of my humble appreciation of his great contribution and services, I would like to humbly ask the Almighty Allah to dedicate any Divine blessing arising from my modest reading of *Surah Yasiin* and the *du'a* that I led during KIRKHS on the 8th Spiritual Enhancement Series held on September 23rd, 2021 to his soul.