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Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of Man through the training of Man's spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses. Education should therefore cater for the growth of man in all its aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively and motivate all these aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection. The ultimate aim of Muslim education lies in the realization of complete submission to Allah on the level of the individual, the community and humanity at large.

In order to achieve the ultimate aims and objectives of education, knowledge be classified into the following two categories:

- a) Given 'perennial knowledge' based on the Divine revelation presented in the Qur'ān and Sunnah and all that can be derived from them with emphasis on the Arabic language as the key to the understanding of both.
- b) 'Acquired knowledge' including social, natural and applied science susceptible to quantitative growth and multiplication, limited variations and cross-cultural borrowings as long as consistency with the Sharī'ah as the source of values is maintained.

There must be a core knowledge drawn from both with major emphasis on the first, specially on the Sharī'ah, which must be made obligatory to all Muslims at all levels of the educational system from the highest to the lowest, graduated to conform to the standards of each level. This, along with the compulsory teaching of Arabic, should form the major section of the core curriculum. These two alone can sustain Islamic civilisation and preserve the identity of the Muslims.

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To Our Readers and Contributors

Muslim Education Quarterly is a review of Muslim education in the modern world both in Muslim majority and Muslim minority countries. It is intended as a means of communication for scholars dedicated to the task of making education Islamic in character by substituting Islamic concepts for secularist concepts of knowledge at present prevalent in all branches of knowledge, by getting curricula and textbooks revised or rewritten accordingly and by proposing concrete strategies for revising teacher education including teaching methodology. It is also expected to act as an open forum for exchange of ideas between such thinkers and others including non-Muslims who might hold contrary views.

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2. Only original articles will be considered for publication. Articles are accepted on the understanding that they have not been published or submitted for publication elsewhere.
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4. Articles should be submitted in English and accompanied by a summary of 150-200 words in which the main issues are highlighted.
5. Abbreviations in the text should be avoided, e.g., the expression 'personal and social education' is preferable to 'PSE'. Initial capitals should be avoided except in the case of proper nouns, e.g., 'the University of Cambridge' but 'the British universities', 'Chesterton Community College' but 'most community colleges'.
6. All pages, tables and illustrations should be clearly numbered.
7. Footnotes should be indicated by raised numbers in the text where appropriate. The notes themselves should be listed in full at the end of the articles following the usual conventions, e.g., author's name should appear first, followed by the year of publication, titles of books and journals should be underlined or in italics, titles of chapters within books or periodical articles in double inverted commas, book reference accompanied with place and publishers.
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EDUCATIONAL DUALISM IN MALAYSIA: PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS TOWARD INTEGRATION

Rosnani Hashim

The existence of two educational systems—the traditional, religious and the secular, national—that run parallel to one another, thereby creating an educational dualism is a common phenomenon in the Muslim world including Malaysia. The problem of educational dualism is the most urgent issue facing the Muslim world so much so that it has been called a 'crisis' in Muslim education.¹ This dualism is still alive and strong, and most probably will linger on so long as there are authorities concerned who view the Islamic religious educational system as the sole most important source of religious and Arabic language teachers. Ismail al-Faruqi, a well-known Muslim scholar, asserts that it is this kind of educational system that is responsible for breeding Muslims who possess contradicting *weltanschauung* or worldview. He argues that there can be no revival of the Muslim *ummah* (Community) unless the dualistic education system is integrated and infused with the spirit of Islam.²

The Malaysian national education system is a legacy of British colonial education begun in the early 19th century. The British explicitly aimed to provide liberal, secular education to the native Malays with religious education confined to voluntary classes.³ This educational policy continued until Independence (1957) which saw the beginning of the reduction of secular practices from the national education system. Although the Razak Report in 1956 recommended the provision of religious instruction in assisted schools having at least 15 Muslim students at public expenses, it was not fully implemented because of problem of finance. The Rahman Talib Report (1960) and the Education Ordinance (1961) rectified the situation by clarifying the authority responsible for financing Islamic religious instruction in both primary and secondary education.⁴ Although Islamic religious knowledge, as the subject was known, was included in the curriculum as a result of the Ordinance, its scope was narrow, confined mainly to worship and human being's relationship to God. The teaching methodology was focused on digesting information and memorisation and not on internalisation as manifested through one's actions and contribution to the good of society.

On the other hand, the religious school system that had evolved from Qur'anic classes, pondok and madrasah education, initially provided a specialised curriculum concerned with '*ulūm al-sharī'ah*' or revealed sciences.

After the Second World War a few madrasahs such as Madrasah Masyhor al-Islamiah in Pulau Pinang began to teach *'ulūm 'aqliyyah* or acquired sciences such as general science, mathematics and geography. The inclusion of acquired sciences was the result of the activities of the Progressive Group (Kaum Muda) who was influenced by the Islāh movement of Jamaluddin Afghani and Abduh. However, after Independence, the religious school system began to introduce more acquired sciences with the introduction of Lower Certificate of Education (SRP) and Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM) examinations. These public examinations, the SRP and the SPM, were introduced into the religious school system around 1967 as a result of complaints from many quarters that the country was wasting large quantities of human resources through failure of graduates from these schools to obtain employment or to continue with higher education.⁵ Although the SRP and SPM became a part of the religious school systems upon the insistence of the government as a condition for financial assistance and for the sake of students' vocational future, the subjects taught were still confined to religion and arts. No emphasis on natural sciences or commerce was given.

This educational dualism bears negative consequences for Muslims. Both systems of education produce half-baked Muslims who do not possess the integrated Islamic personality. It is even worse when graduates of both systems who subscribe to opposing worldviews, cannot see eye to eye on social, economic and political problems. Careerwise, because of the nature of modern professions which require knowledge of science, mathematics, English and commerce—fields least commanded by students from the Islamic school system, their scope of careers is also limited. There is fear that graduates from the religious system are lagging because components of higher order thinking such as analysis, interpretation, synthesis and coherency, which are all important aspects of the Islamic concept of knowledge are not emphasised.⁶ As a result the position of leadership in society which graduates of the Islamic school system once held begins to slip to western-educated professionals and the religious school graduates could not contribute significantly to solving societal problems. Modern Muslim professionals who have been secularised in the process of acquiring their education, begin to hold prestigious positions in society. Being influential in society, these secularised Muslims perpetuate their secularised and false ideas of knowledge, thereby creating confusion in the *ummah*.⁷ However, there are occasions where some western educated Muslim professionals who desire to play an active role in Islamic activities are hindered because of their inadequate knowledge and understanding of the religion.

As a consequence of this educational dualism, Muslim parents who are concerned over religious values and at the same time desire modern education for their children for its utility, face a great dilemma. Their dilemma especially in the choice of school and the type of education for their children would not be probably understood by parents of other religions such as Hinduism and Confucianism because of the nature of Islam which has doctrines and a legal system that requires an educational set up for its transmission and continuity. Islam does not separate the Mosque from the State. Similar to the other

religions, Islam has an ethical system but it is more comprehensive, encompassing the whole spectrum of life. These parents desire a strong Islamic educational program and at the same time the benefit of modern education but both systems discussed above fail to provide it.

Considering the disastrous consequences of educational dualism, these systems ought to be integrated taking into account the advantages of both systems. Looking at the educational reforms that took place in the country in the 1970s and 1980s, the prospect for integration seemed bright. The Cabinet Committee Report of 1979 chaired by Dr. Mahathir, the then Minister of Education, played a major role in educational reform in the country. An important result of this report was the review of primary school curriculum and the birth of the New Primary School Curriculum (KBSR). The KBSR makes moral and religious values an important dimension in primary education besides emphasis on the mastery of the three basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic.

Another important reform which was introduced by Anwar Ibrahim, the former Minister of Education was the formulation of the National Education Philosophy (NEP) in 1987. The NEP insisted on a holistic education based on belief in and devotion to God, a balanced and harmonious individual development intellectually, spiritually, physically and emotionally and having excellent moral character. The NEP outlines the characteristics of a Malaysian citizen as one who: (a) has a firm belief in and obedience to God; (b) is knowledgeable and skilful; (c) possesses high moral standard; (d) is responsible to his self, society, religion and nation; (e) contributes to the well-being of society, race, religion and nation, and (f) has a balanced personality.⁸

The NEP was translated into action through the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools or better known as KBSM, implemented in 1989. KBSM emphasises an integrated approach to education giving much weight to moral values as evident from the catch phrase "integration of values across the curriculum." It outlines the importance of inculcating sixteen universal values agreed upon by all religious groups in the nation.⁹

These three major steps by the Ministry of Education, in particular the NEP, provide an essential foundation for integration of the two systems. A close study of the philosophies of education formulated by the Advisory Council for the Co-ordination of Islamic Education (LEPAI), the Education Division of the Selangor State Religious Department (JAIS), and Kelantan Islamic Foundation (YIK), reveals their close resemblance with the NEP.¹⁰ The difference lies only in a few phrases. For instance, JAIS and YIK emphasise education as an effort to produce a Muslim while the NEP emphasises "individual." JAIS and LEPAI emphasise that education be based on the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and belief in God. LEPAI added to the NEP statement "contribution to the nation and society," the phrase "as *Khalifah* Allah (vicegerent of God)." Although the NEP does not contain such phrases mentioned above, its spirit is not contradictory to the Islamic philosophy of education. The target group of the NEP is wider, going beyond the Muslim populace. The phrase "belief in Allah" is not meaningful to non-Muslims and

Islam does not compel others to itself.¹¹ Moreover, it is not proper that the role of vicegerency be borne by non-believers. However a clear statement on the aim of Islamic education in producing individuals who are '*abd* and *khalifah*' could be observed in the aim of Islamic Education curriculum of KBSM.¹² Although the words '*abd*, *khalifah*' and Allah could not be found explicitly in the NEP, their implicit meaning is present especially in the roles that are prescribed for the individual. Although the NEP delineates the essential characteristics of Malaysian citizens, these characteristics are also those prescribed for *al-insān al-kāmil* in the Islamic tradition.

In general there are a lot of similarities between the philosophies of the two systems. Their aims of education are meeting a point of convergence. Both systems emphasise the need to produce a morally excellent human being, who is balanced and harmonious intellectually, physically, emotionally and spiritually, through an integrated approach. Both stress the importance of knowledge and skills in an effort to contribute to the family, society, nation and religion. The NEP delineates aims of education that parallel the aims of education in Islam especially the explicit expression of belief in God and the integration of values in all subjects, which can be viewed to eliminate secular values from the National system. This is important because the greatest objection against the national system is its "secular" nature. The concern of the National education system with moral excellence resembles another strong parallel to Islamic education. Although the NEP does not explicitly state the goal of servanthship and vicegerency—two important goals of Islamic education, it does contain these implicitly. The convergence of educational goals, the compatibility of philosophies and their great resemblance to the Islamic philosophy of education provide a strong ground for the integration of the systems and the eradication of this educational dualism.

Another important supporting factor for integration lies in the contents of education. The curriculum of the national and the religious school systems have almost merged after the educational reform of the 1980s. To achieve the goal of a morally excellent individual, the time period allocated for Islamic Education has been increased and at the same time moral education has been introduced for non-Muslim pupils in both primary and secondary levels of the national system. More importantly, under the KBSM the inculcation of universal sacred values leading to excellent moral character is emphasised across the curriculum. This means that the responsibility of moulding students having good values and conduct is not restricted to religious or moral education teachers only. Every teacher has an important role to play in this prime mission of the school—something that has almost been forgotten.

The Islamic education component of the KBSM is giving importance to the practical aspect of the religion besides its theoretical aspect. It has begun to employ teaching methods that are more challenging to the minds in lieu of total dependence on the traditional method which stresses memorisation. The approach to the Qur'ān stresses comprehension and internalisation instead of mere memorisation. Great Muslim thinkers such as Al-Ghazzali are exposed to serve as motivators and role models. In fact Arabic language is being

introduced in a few of the national secondary schools through the Arabic Stream Classes

The content of social sciences and natural sciences in the secondary religious school system resembles that of the national schools. The secondary school curriculum formulated by LEPAI, JAIS and Terengganu Religious Department is similar to the KBSM. The difference lies in Arabic language which is taught more extensively in the religious schools system. The KBSM ought to be welcomed in the effort toward integration because of its flexibility. The KBSM provides an additional elective of Islamic Education to the existing ones such as the humanities, the technical and vocational, and the natural science. This is a major innovation because it allows students who go through the national system to specialise in Islamic studies in higher education—something that was impossible before unless one enrolled in the National Religious Secondary School (SMKA), the *rakyat* (People) or the state religious schools. This major improvement also enables a delay in the choice of specialisation which prior to this had to be made at the end of primary education through the choice of a national or religious secondary school. However this educational opportunity is not widespread yet and is only limited to students enrolled in the few Arabic Stream Classes. Also, the time allocated for Arabic language in these classes compared to that offered by religious schools is not adequate for specialisation in Islamic and Arabic studies in higher education. Similarly, it is doubtful whether the acquired sciences taught provide any space to strengthening of the faith or whether the major focus is still on utility.

If LEPAI newly formulated curriculum which resembles KBSM is implemented fully in the religious schools then it implies that the religious system will also be capable of producing professionals such as scientists, medical doctors, engineers and accountants besides religious teachers and jurists. However, only a handful of the *rakyat* and state religious schools in addition to the National Religious Secondary Schools of the Ministry of Education could afford to offer the natural science elective. LEPAI admits that it does not have the legal power to enforce its curriculum on the *rakyat* religious school. However, the problems that arise are not due to theory or the philosophy but rather to implementation.

A third factor that could bring about integration relates to teaching methodology. The KBSM is attempting to rectify the weaknesses of the old curriculum which was found to be too subject-centred and traditional. The present curriculum is giving more attention to the individual and emphasises the inquiry and discovery methods, the Socratic method, discussion, project and group works. KBSM aims to produce individuals who are critical-minded and highly creative—features essential not only for a scientific and technological society but also in *ijtihad* to solve the more pressing social problems especially from the Islamic perspective. Both systems do not utilise fully the methods of direct observation, travelling and experience—methods emphasised in the Qur'ān.¹³ Although these methods require longer periods,

they leave a deeper impact and produce positive attitude towards acquiring knowledge and schooling.

In addition to the above factors, there are several other arguments that show the importance of ending this educational dualism. First, the religious school system is weak financially although it currently receives aid from state and/or federal government. This situation hinders the development of those schools especially in providing basic educational facility and getting enough teachers. It would simply be difficult for these schools to launch science and technical programs in upper secondary. They are always confronted with the problems of unqualified teachers and a high turnover rate.

Secondly, as an educational system, the religious school system does not subscribe to its own philosophy that education be an ongoing effort. The religious school system only begins formally and full time at the secondary level. Primary education is provided for a few hours daily in a few states as a supplement to national primary education. This cultivates the notion of dualism in the Muslim children's minds. They develop the idea that the national school is for the acquired ('*aqliyyah*) sciences and the religious school for the revealed (*naqliyyah*) sciences. The children are taught to look down upon the religious school and to regard it as less important because their life in the mundane affairs do not depend on it. As a result of this deficiency in primary education, secondary school students in religious schools are given intensive Arabic so that they could command the language within a short period. This vacuum has also led Islamic organisations and movements, whose members have lost confidence in the effectiveness of the national system and who desire a truly Islamic education, to establish their own primary schools. Although competition could be regarded as healthy, these private schools suffer from the weaknesses that once were associated with traditional institutions or *madrasah* such as lack of qualified teachers with a high turnover rate and poor educational facilities. In fact an unhealthy social situation has arisen which was not true before and that is the elitism of these schools since only the rich could afford it.

The discontinuity in education could be overcome by having State Religious Departments establish an alternative formal primary school system but that will require a gigantic financial effort. At the same time this step does not augur well for national unity especially if all Malays attend religious schools and the Chinese and Indians attend their respective national-type schools. Then what will happen to the national primary schools? Therefore it will be more appropriate that the national primary school curriculum be modified to cater to the needs of all Malaysians.

A third argument that presses for integration is the weakness of educational administration of religious schools—both *rakyat* and state. Educational administrators at the state level do not have professional qualifications except for teaching experience as former religious teachers. There is no expert in educational psychology, pedagogy, curriculum, philosophy, administration and so on. Thus educational innovations are hard to come by with these agencies being reactive rather than proactive to national

education programs. Moreover the attitudes of these administrators who still emphasise *'ulūm al-shari'ah* heavily in the religious schools is not consistent with the Islamic philosophy of education which is holistic and does emphasise the *'ulūm 'aqliyyah* especially in fulfilling the individual's role of *khalifah*.

Finally, the integration of these educational systems is vital from the perspective of national unity. Schools having pupils of only a single race such as religious schools, national-type Chinese and Tamil primary schools, fully residential schools and other private schools do not allow for interaction and do not foster understanding between pupils of different cultures and religions—something encouraged in Islam.¹⁴ In fact, depending on the teachers, these schools tend to nurture ethnic suspicion and chauvinism. All these schools should be unified under the national education system with the provision that pupils be allowed to acquire the vital ingredients offered in the system before.

Integration will not be easy and we should be aware of the potential problems. We should not fall into the same trap that other attempts at integration elsewhere such as in India and Egypt had fallen into. First, there will be shortage of Arabic language teachers and the number of students who will be interested to specialise in Arabic and Islamic studies because of its weak economic returns. This problem can be overcome by the Ministry of Education by providing incentives and reinforcements in the form of scholarship to do Arabic and Islamic Studies to students after their 'O' Levels, and establish twin programs with universities in the Middle East—steps the Ministry had successfully taken before to overcome shortage of Malay professionals in the sciences. The Public Service Department (JPA) should also adopt an open policy in accepting graduates with backgrounds in Islamic and Arabic Studies as administrators as it does to graduates from the social sciences and humanities.

The importance of drawing a segment of students to do Arabic and Islamic studies is urgent. LEPAP and States Religious Departments are worried that if Islamic education is placed under the wing of the Ministry of Education or the Federal Government, it will be neglected and the curriculum will get diluted (especially the Arabic and Religious components) and ultimately there will be no takers for these studies. This has happened at the National Religious Secondary School (SMKA) where 90 percent of its graduates specialises in professional fields with high economic returns such as engineering, accounting and medicine. Consequently, the Ministry still has to rely upon the religious schools to provide it with teachers of Islamic Education and Arabic language. Therefore, it is quite natural that this matter be given serious consideration in our effort toward integration.

The second and greatest hurdle toward integration of the dualistic educational system is the constitutional provision that places religion under state authority and education under federal authority. As a result of its unique position at the intersection of these legal powers, Islamic religious education and Muslim human resources have been neglected. We suggest that Islamic Education be placed under the federal government and run by the Ministry of Education for the reasons discussed above.

We are optimistic that these impediments will be overcome and integration of these dualistic systems will be a reality. When that happens, then only can we claim that our educational system subscribes to the Islamic philosophy of education and reflects it without neglecting the interests of the large number of non-Muslims in the nation.

Notes

- 1 See S.A. Ashraf and S.S. Hussain (eds.), *Crisis in Muslim Education* (Jeddah: King Abdul Aziz University, 1979).
- 2 Ismail al-Faruqi, *Islamization of Knowledge* (Washington D.C.: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1983).
- 3 *Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council to enquire into the state of Education in the Colony* (Woolley Report), 1870, in Wong, Francis H.K. and Gwee Yee Hean (eds.), *Official Reports on Education in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States 1870-1939* (Singapore: Pan Pacific Book Distributors (S) Pte. Ltd., 1972), 14.
- 4 *Report of the Education Review Committee 1960*, para. 283-297.
- 5 Harun Din and Sobri Salamon (eds.) *Masalah Pendidikan Islam di Malaysia* [The problems of Islamic Education in Malaysia] (Kuala Lumpur: PBMTT, 1980).
- 6 W. M. Nor W. Daud, *The Concept of Knowledge in Islam and Its Implications for Education in a Developing Country* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1989), 107.
- 7 For more detailed discussion on the effect of secularism on the Muslim mind and personality, see S.M. Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: Muslim Youth Movement Malaysia, 1978).
- 8 *Pukal Latihan KBSM Falsafah Pendidikan Negara* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and KPM, 1992), 8-9.
- 9 The sixteen values are compassion, self reliance, humility, respect, love, justice, freedom, courage, cleanliness of body and mind, honesty, diligence, co-operation, moderation, gratitude, rationality and public spiritedness. See Curriculum Development Centre, *The Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools* (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Education, 1989), 7.
- 10 These philosophies were obtained from papers presented by JAIS and YIK at the Seminar on Development of Islamic Education, Kuala Lumpur, 3 September 1992. For the philosophy of LEPAI, see *Draf Kertas Konsep dan Kurikulum Sekolah Menengah Agama di Bawah Penyelarasan "LEPAI"* (Kuala Lumpur: Bahagian Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Jabatan Perdana Menteri, 1992), 3.
- 11 Al-Qur'ān 2:256 states "Let there be no compulsion in religion; Truth stands out clear from error." See also Chapter *Al-Kafirun* of the Qur'ān.
- 12 *Sukatan Pelajaran Sekolah Menengah: Pendidikan Islam* [Secondary School Syllabus: Islamic Education] (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1988), 2.
- 13 For example, Al-Qur'ān 5:34; 29:20-22; 6:11; 23:12-14.
- 14 Al-Qur'ān 49:13 states "O Mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you."