

Islamization of Contemporary Knowledge and reform of Education and Curriculum

Ssekamanya Siraje Abdallah

&

Rosnani Hashim

INSTED, IIUM

Islamisation as..

- *Da'wah* – the inculcation of faith
- The ultimate realization of
 - *Al-'ubudiyyah*
 - *Al-Khilafah*

Brief history

- Decline of the culture of learning – abandonment of acquired sciences and narrow focus on religious sciences (esp. after the fall of Baghdad)
- Western colonization (18th century onwards) – Western education as a competitor to traditional Islamic education
- Pan-Islamic and *Islah* reform movement - Afghani and Abduh, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, and (in the Malay world) Za'ba, Hj Karim Amrullah, Mahmud Yunus
- Calls for “modernization” of Muslim education

Dualistic education systems and the Desacralization of Knowledge

- Parallel systems of education (traditional religious and liberal, secular Western) – two contradicting philosophies of education and methods of teaching
 - Two different kinds of Muslims with opposing worldviews
 - Western educated Muslim elite given better treatment by the political masters
- => Problems in politics, law, economics, etc.

After Independence of Muslim states...

- Political leadership handed to the Western educated elites
- National education systems following western models
- Traditional Islamic learning in separate independent systems (Qur'an schools, madrasah, pondok, pesantren, etc.)
- First World Conference of Muslim Education (FWMCE) in 1977 - to identify the problem of the Muslim world and propose a solution

First World Conference of Muslim Education (FWMCE)

- Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas – *Islam and Secularism, The Concept of Education in Islam and Aims and Objectives of Muslim Education*
 - Ismail Raji al-Faruqi – *Islamization of Knowledge*
- => Need to reform education in Muslim lands to rid it of secular humanist foundations and base it a firm foundation of *tawhid*

Proposed Solutions or Reforms

- **‘Surface reform of the curriculum’**: Ending the educational dualism, offering both acquired and the traditional Islamic sciences to students at all levels of education
- **‘Epistemological reform’**: an integrated curriculum with Islamization of knowledge, leading students to acknowledge their Creator, to know and fulfill their roles as *‘abd* and *khalifah*, and to explore the ‘signs’ of Allah in the Open Book to create new sciences and to utilize these in the service of Allah, humanity and other creatures

Cont..

- a new philosophy of education
- revision of the curriculum which is the mechanism to translate the philosophy
- establishment of Islamic educational institutions i.e. schools and universities with a reformed concept
- establishment of Islamic universities i.e. university which holds the unity of knowledge and the revival of the Muslim scientists essential

New Institutions

- IIUM and ISTAC in Malaysia
- IIU Islamabad
- IUIU Uganda
- IIU Niger
- IIIT,
- The Islamic Academy, UK
- Darul Ihsan University Dhaka,
- IAIN, later Universitas Islam Negeri in Indonesia
- New Academic journals: Muslim Ed Quarterly, AJISS, al-Shajarah, Intellectual Discourse, MAAS (scientific journal)

Malaysian Experience

- Integrated curriculum in the public schools (1980s)
- National Education Philosophy: “Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further *developing the potential of individuals* in a *holistic* and *integrated* manner, so as to produce individuals who are *intellectually, spiritually, emotionally* and *physically* balanced and harmonious, based on a firm *belief in and devotion to God.*”

Cont..

- SMKAs (National Religious Secondary Schools) were established in 1977,
- Integrated SMKAs and SAN (State Religious Schools) in 1989,
- Arabic Language classes in Public Secondary Schools,
- SBPI (Integrated Fully Residential Schools) in 2000s
- SABKs (Government Assisted Religious Schools) after 2003

Two conceptions of IoK

	Al-Attas	Al-Faruqi
Problem specification	Erroneous knowledge Loss of Adab False Leader / Community	Educational dualism Loss of Islamic vision Crisis of ummatic identity
Root causes	Secularism	Secularism & social life
Reform focal	Individual soul & knowledge	Society / Ummah
Premise	Knowledge is value-bound	Knowledge is value-bound
Structure and essence of religious experience	Worldview	Tawhid
Epistemological schema Source of knowledge	Intuition Reason Sense-perception The Qur'an & sunnah	Faith Reason Sense perception The Qur'an & sunnah
Approach	Islamization of language Concept isolation and infusion	Islamization of Human knowledge 12 step plan
Goal	Good man	Islamized textbook
Social manifestation	Adabic order	Ummatic order

Evaluation of the reforms

- To a certain extent, Malaysia is successful in implementing the integrated curriculum or integrating the system. This due to the political will.
- But this is not the case with many other Muslim countries, where most of the efforts have been done by the private institutions.
- IIUM is the premier Islamic university globally at the moment.
- Has IIUM succeeded in this mission of Islamization? Has it succeeded in exporting the ideas of integration, Islamization, internationalization and comprehensive excellence to other Muslim countries through its students or the activities of its academic staff?

IOK Achievements in IIUM

1. The recognition given to Islamization as one of the core vision and mission of the institution & niche
2. Quality Muslim scholars from Malaysia and abroad. Opportunity for intellectual discourses between IRK & HS
3. The curriculum of IIUM - IOK has been made the primary features in all programme learning outcomes, course contents and evaluation methods – recognized niche.

Cont..

4. a lot of research and publications on the conceptualization of IOK and its methodologies has been generated in IIUM
5. succeeded in fostering Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwwah) and respect for cultural diversity.

Study of IIUM graduates

- i. Graduates have made a major impact in their workplaces in different countries.
- ii. A study of 159 graduates and alumni of IIUM : 53 were Malaysians .
- iii. 71% chose to study in IIUM for its *Islamicity* and mission of integration
- iv. 52% agreed and 28% strongly agreed that IIUM has been important in giving a proper understanding of the Islamic Worldview

Cont..

- iii. 52% agreed and 28% strongly agreed - IIUM important in giving an integrated education of both the *Shari'ah* and 'Aqli sciences;
- iv. 85% - understanding of the unity of knowledge and its relation to faith and life was better after studying in IIUM. In fact 30% felt very much so.
- v. 72% - their life as a Muslim has been transformed to the better as a result of studying in IIUM.

Thus in a sense the education offered in IIUM has been effective

Challenges/ Where do we go from here?

1. Many IIUM lecturers are still unclear about the Islamization agenda.
2. a majority of IIUM scholars are not proficient in Islamic traditional sciences and the Arabic Language, both of which are crucial for effective IOK.

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3. Need to emphasize Islamization of human beings (personality) – Prof. M. Kamal Hassan..
4. one of the greatest barriers against IOK is the lack of textbooks with the Islamic perspective or worldview in various disciplines
5. local economic conditions such as employability and the job market
6. the commitment to this mission depends very much on the commitment of the Highest Management of the university itself Rector, Deans & Directors

Suggestion that IIUM offers survey courses (addition to UNGS)

- Islamic Philosophy and History, and
- Western Philosophy and History;
- Readings of the Qur'an and hadith as reference
- Selected classic works of great Muslim scholars: al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, al-Mawardi, Ibn Tufayl etc. in which students can elect to take one work of interest to study.
- Produce anthologies as suggested by Al-Faruqi

Addition

- Al-Attas recommends the inclusion of several new disciplines "to ensure logical continuity and cohesion in the successive educational progression from the religious sciences to the rational, intellectual and philosophical sciences and *vice-versa*."
- These disciplines include
 - (a) comparative religion from an Islamic perspective;
 - (b) Western culture and civilization as a means for understanding Islam in relation to other cultures and civilizations;
 - (c) linguistic sciences that extend to Islamic languages other than Arabic; and
 - (d) Islamic history--its thought, culture and civilization, the development of its sciences, its philosophy of science, and Islam as world history.

Further Curriculum Reforms:

- Ensure understanding on the history and philosophy of knowledge of the particular discipline -epistemology.
- Examine the classification of knowledge of scholars of the past eg al-Farabi, al-Ghazali, and the present to provide for the philosophical foundation of our curricula.
- Note that: Some disciplines - require a complete overhaul eg social and human sciences; while others only require - a realignment eg. natural and applied sciences The needs an overhaul especially those based after Darwinian theory of evolution and survival of the fittest . The auxiliary knowledge or instrumental knowledge –language, ICT. These are tools. The values depend very much on the user like the use of the knife.

Wallahu a'lam

Shukran