

Edited by
Zaleha Kamaruddin
Abdul Rashid Moten



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CHAPTER 2



MALAY INTELLIGENTSIA'S QUEST FOR AN ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY AND THE FUTURE OF "ISLAMISATION OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE" IN INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

Mohd. Kamal Hassan

A discussion on the future of the "Islamisation of Human Knowledge" requires a discourse on the origin of the idea of establishing an Islamic university in Malaysia. This is necessary so that the university community and the public would no longer be labouring under different and, at times, conflicting assumptions. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is largely historical, tracing the idea of establishing an Islamic university in Malaysia. The second section is a lengthy discourse on Islamisation of Human Knowledge which is the mission of the International Islamic University Malaysia. It discusses the achievements made in the realisation of the University's mission, the challenges it faces and the strategies to move forward.

The Origin of the Idea of an Islamic University in Malaysia

The present writer participated in the historic Conference in 1977 and was also privileged to have been assigned the task of writing the brief concept paper of the proposed Islamic University during the first meeting on its establishment chaired by the Prime Minister, Dato' Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, at his office in January 1982 (Mohd Kamal Hassan, 2009a: 10-11, 32-34). Admittedly, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, the then Minister of Education of Malaysia in 1977, did attend the Conference, but he never talked about it or indicated that it had any serious impact on his thinking about Muslim education in Malaysia. Perhaps the drastic changes proposed in the resolutions of the Conference were not suitable for a multi-religious Malaysian society or the way things were articulated did not impress him. He expressed that "he was disappointed because he felt the educationalists were conservative: and did not discuss Islamic values and did not focus on the type of education that could contribute to the elevation of the Muslim mindset and enhance the ability of Muslims to become great again" (Syed Salim Agha, 2009: 5).