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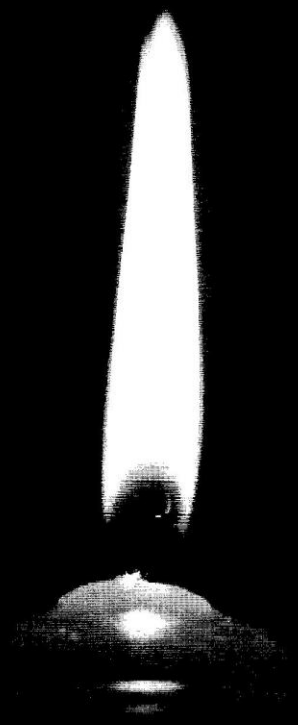

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Religious education in Malaysia

Rosnani Hashim

Historical background

Religion has been thought of as a hindrance to the growth of scientific and critical inquiry since the clash between the church and modern science beginning with the age of Galileo. As such and with the increasing secularization of the West, religion was relegated to the backseat in Western civilization. The notion that there is a conflict between science and religion in the West has been imported to other worldviews/civilizations, including Islam, hence leading to the divide between religious and secular education, something unknown in the early Islamic tradition. The Qur'an is known for challenging minds by encouraging its readers to reflect upon the human body, human personality, and other creations in the universe, and especially the natural world which is a precursor to empirical science. Therefore the Islamic faith is not regarded as a hindrance but rather a catalyst for scientific development as testified by Islamic history. In this sense a holistic and integrated Islamic religious education is of "this" world and also of the "other" and is thus a necessity.

Religion is also thought to divide people; witness the many conflicts that have arisen between people of different ethnicity and faith, especially in multi-ethnic and multi-faith societies. It is also thought of as not being conducive to a liberal democracy and pluralistic society. This has been a principal reason for its exclusion from the school curriculum in most democratic nations. In this chapter, the robustness of religious education in a multi-faith and multi-ethnic society will be examined.

Background

Modern Malaysia is a multicultural, multi-faith, and multi-ethnic society. The population in 2008 stood at 27.73 million with 65 percent Malays and other indigenous (*Bumiputera*) groups, 26 percent Chinese, 8 percent Indians, and 1 percent others.[1] They comprised 60.4 percent Muslims (primarily Malays), 19.2 percent Buddhists, 9.1 percent Christians, 6.3 percent Hindus, 2.6 percent Confucianists/Taoists/other traditional Chinese religions, and 2.4 percent others. The Malays are primarily Muslims, the Chinese primarily Buddhists, and the Indians primarily Hindus. Thus, religion seems to run parallel to ethnicity. Prior to the British colonial period, Malaysia was basically a Malay land; hence the term Malaya, and Islam was the major faith after the founding of

the Malaccan Sultanate in the early 1400s. The Malay states were ruled by their respective sultans who were Muslims. During the British colonial period, beginning in 1874 with the Pangkor Treaty, the secularization of the state was instituted, whereby the sultans were marginalized to protect only Malay customs and Islamic religious affairs, while civil administration was under the charge of British resident advisers.

Religious education in Malaysia, in particular of the Muslim faith, has a very long tradition—as evident from the founding of the Terengganu Inscription Stone (Batu Bersurat) in the thirteenth century, or the finding of the Muslim gravestone in Tanjung Inggeris, Kedah,* in the ninth century. Being a faith that has a holy book, the Qur'an and its laws, and the *Shari'ah* derived from it through man's *ijtihad*, it was natural for its followers to study the book and its laws. Thus, from the beginning Islamic traditional education has been held in mosques or as a private enterprise in the homes of teachers, aristocrats, or the sultan until the *pondok* was established in the eighteenth century as the natural extension of the mosque. The *pondok* are small huts surrounding the mosque and the teacher's house. The *pondok* bears the closest resemblance to a public or community school. Muslim education in Malaysia during the early period emphasized reading and understanding the Qur'an in Arabic and also religious knowledge. It was the tradition that the Malay language was only acquired after Qur'anic literacy was attained and the letter of instruction was *Jawi* (using Arabic scripts). Many famous scholars, all of whom obtained their education in Mecca, emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

There have been other religious schools; the most notable among them were the Christian Missionary Schools which were later managed by the colonial government in roughly the same manner that the English schools were managed. These schools were first set up by Christian missionaries such as the Catholic Order of the Christian Brothers which founded St. Xavier Institution, St. Paul Institution, St. Francis Institution, and St. Michael Institution. The Anglican Church of England established St. George's Girls and St. Mark Schools in Penang, while the American Methodist Episcopal Mission set up Anglo-Chinese or Methodist Schools.[2] Since most of the English schools were established by missionaries, the Bible was an important and integral textbook.

The *pondok* was later transformed into more formal, modern schools called the madrasah, where learning was more regulated with fixed schedules and classes as a consequence of the influence of the Egyptian reform movement. There was minimal Islamic religious instruction or even none offered in the Malay vernacular or the English schools. The pathetic condition of Islamic religious instruction in the Malay schools was well documented in the Barnes Report chaired by L. J. Barnes, a sociologist from Oxford University who was commissioned by the British colonial government to "inquire into the adequacy or otherwise of the educational facilities available for the Malays."[3] This took place in 1949, that is, after the defeat of the Japanese during the Second World War. Barnes argued that the lack of Islamic religious instruction in schools had led Malay parents to seek an alternative by having instruction in the afternoon, which was very tiresome given the hot and humid weather conditions. To solve this, the Committee proposed that the period of *Jawi*[4] lessons be dropped and religious instruction be taught instead. It also suggested that *Jawi* be taught as part of Islamic religious instruction, while the other "secular" subjects used the Romanized alphabet to facilitate non-Malays in learning the Malay language. However, the Barnes Report did not receive a favorable response from the non-Malays for its assimilationist stance.

Today Islamic religious instruction is not only taught in the public or national schools, but it is compulsory for all Muslim students at primary and secondary levels. In fact, today there are various agencies that offer Islamic religious instruction, namely, 1) the National schools; 2) the National Religious Secondary Schools; 3) the State Religious Schools; 4) the *Rakyat* (community)

Religious Schools; and 5) the private integrated schools. All religious schools offer an Islamic religious study track at the upper secondary level in preparation for specializing in higher Islamic studies that can be done at three local universities or abroad at the Middle East, American, British, or European institutions. Meanwhile, all the mission or English schools became conforming schools or government-aided schools as of 1961 and completely subscribed to the national curriculum. Although they have changed their names to National Type Secondary School (S.M.J.K.), their names as Christian or Catholic High Schools remain in use. As a result of the Aziz Commission (1971) where teachers were absorbed as government servants and their appointment and deployment was determined by the Teachers' Service Commission, the helms of many of these schools were handed over from the Brothers or Priests to the lay principals in the 1980s. Currently, there are 227 such schools in Peninsular Malaysia and 235 in East Malaysia. Of these, 338 are primary and 124 are secondary schools.[5] Though the school land is owned by the Catholic Church, much of the school funding is received from the government.

The constitutional context

Islamic religious instruction was introduced in the public schools only after Independence in 1957 following the spirit of the newly formulated Malayan Constitution and the Education Act 1961. The Constitution which was later amended to take into consideration the formation of Malaysia, which added Singapore and the two North Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak, is a very important document in providing a source of the law of the country and also in its development after independence especially in inter-ethnic, inter-cultural, and interfaith matters and the survival of the nation. The Malaysian Constitution guarantees upon independence that Malay-Muslims and the indigenous citizens of Sabah and Sarawak obtained from colonial masters the recognition of their right as the original owners of the land (Article 153), an acknowledgment of Islam as the official religion of the state (Article 3 (1)), recognition of the Malay language as the national language (Article 152 (1)), and the special position of the Malay rulers for their sacrifices in giving up the civil administration of their states to pave the way for the birth of the Federation of Malaya in 1948 (Article 3 (2)). It is also true that the Constitution reinforced the separation of civil administration from religious affairs and Malay customs administration which continued to be held by each respective sultan of the various states with the exception of Malacca, Penang, Sabah, and Sarawak as stated in Article 3 (2) of the Constitution:[6]

> (2) In every State other than States not having a Ruler the position of the Ruler as the Head of the religion of Islam in his State in the manner and to the extent acknowledged and declared by the Constitution, all rights, privileges, prerogatives and powers enjoyed by him as Head of that religion, are unaffected and unimpaired; but in any acts, observance or ceremonies with respect to which the Conference of Rulers has agreed that they should extend to the Federation as a whole each of the other Rulers shall in his capacity of Head of the religion of Islam authorize the Yang di-pertuan Agong to represent him.
>
> (3) The Constitution of the States of Malacca, Penang, Sabah and Sarawak shall each make provision for conferring on the Yang di-Pertuan Agong shall be Head of the religion of Islam in that State.

The position of Islam as the official religion of the state is clearly stated in Article 3:

> (1) Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation.

The freedom of religion is clearly enunciated in Article 11:

> (1) Every person has the right to profess and practice his religion and, subject to Clause (4), to propagate it.
>
> (2) No person shall be compelled to pay any tax the proceeds of which are specially allocated in whole or in part for the purposes of a religion other than his own.
>
> (3) Every religious group has the right:
>
> (a) to manage its own religious affairs;
>
> (b) to establish and maintain institutions for religious or charitable purposes; and
>
> (c) to acquire and own property and hold and administer it in accordance with law.

Concerning education, the Constitution prohibits any form of discrimination on the ground of religion as articulated in Article 12:

> (1) Without prejudice to the generality of Article 8, there shall be no discrimination against any citizen on the grounds only of religion, race, descent or place of birth
>
> (a) in the administration of any educational institution maintained by a public authority, and, in particular, the admission of pupils or students or the payment of fees; or
>
> (b) in providing out of the funds of a public authority financial aid for the maintenance or education of pupils or students in any educational institution (whether or not maintained by a public authority and whether within or outside the Federation).

It also asserts that every religious group can provide religious education for its children:

> (2) Every religious group has the right to establish and maintain institutions for the education of children in its own religion, and there shall be no discrimination on the ground only of religion in any law relating to such institutions or in the administration of any such law.

The special position of Islam is evident from the fact that the state may control or prohibit the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among Muslims:

> (4) State law and in respect of the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan, federal law may control or restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the religion of Islam.

The Federation or the state is allowed to assist in establishing and maintaining Islamic institutions such as Islamic schools, with financial assistance as stated in Article 12 (2):

> but it shall be lawful for the Federation or a State to establish or maintain or assist in establishing or maintaining Islamic institutions or provide or assist in providing instruction in the religion of Islam and incur such expenditure as may be necessary for the purpose.

It is illegal to offer religious instruction to somebody under 18 years, or to take part in any religious ceremony or act of worship other than one's own. This is clearly stated in Article 12:

> (3) No person shall be required to receive instruction in or take part in any ceremony or act of worship of a religion other than his own.
>
> (4) For the purposes of Clause (3) the religion of a person under the age of eighteen years shall be decided by his parent or guardian.

Thus it is evident from the Constitution that the Islamic faith is the preferred faith in Malaysia due to the history of the land, and it is clear that the drafters of the constitutions understood the indigenous peoples' sensitivities and respected the rights of the sultans.

The legal context

The Razak Report of 1956 paved the way for the teaching of Islamic religious instruction in the public schools with support from the government bursary after Independence. It also provided for religious education of non-Muslim students but at their own expense. However, the Razak Report did not specify which agency of the government should bear the cost. It was only after the Rahman Talib Report of 1960 that this problem was resolved. The Education Act of 1961, which was based on both Reports, spelled this out clearly in Section 36 (1): "where in a school in receipt of grant-in-aid there are fifteen or more pupils professing the Islamic religion, such pupils shall be instructed in the tenets of that religion by religious teachers approved by the State Authority."[7] Thus it was incumbent upon all types of national or public schools—English, Chinese, Tamil and Malay—to provide Islamic religious education for Muslim students for two hours per week.

In Section 37 (1–4), the responsibilities of the expenses were clearly laid down to be borne by the state and federal governments for primary schools and Parliament for secondary schools. Meanwhile, Section 38 allows for the instruction of pupils of schools in receipt of grant-in-aid for the instruction of a religion other than Islam provided "(a) no such provision shall be defrayed from monies provided by Parliament; (b) no pupil shall attend instruction in a religion other than that which he professes, except with the written consent of his parent."

All the above provisions are retained in the amended Education Act 1996 under Chapter 10, Sections 50 and 51, with the minimum number of Muslim pupils reduced from 15 to five for the provision of Islamic religious instruction.[8] The Education Act of 1996 added Section 52 which allows for the Minister of Education or the state government to provide financial assistance to Islamic educational institutions not established by them as they deem fit. Probably this was in anticipation that, with the establishment and recognition of private higher education institutions and branch campuses of foreign universities, there arises the possibility of only a small number of Muslim students in those institutions.

Meanwhile, the *Rakyat* Religious Schools continued to grow through registration with the State Religious Department without any specific regulations from the Ministry of Education, which also accredited its teachers. This means that the schools or madrasah have to subscribe to the curriculum prescribed by the State Religious Departments which were oriented to admission into Al-Azhar University in Egypt. However, since 2003, most of these schools have been persuaded to become government-aided religious schools (S.A.B.K.), which required them to register with the Private Education Department of the Ministry of Education, and in return they have to offer the National Curriculum in addition to the traditional Islamic sciences. In exchange for government aid, these schools can expect better facilities and trained teachers. Being government aided, it will facilitate the Ministry of Education to monitor and supervise their school activities to ensure that they are not manipulated by unwanted extreme political or religious elements.

The state and religious autonomy

Legally, the state sanctions the teaching of Islamic religious instruction, since constitutionally Islam is the official religion of the state and the king is supposed to protect and uphold its status.

Islamic religious education is compulsory for all Muslims and is taught in the national schools from Year One in the primary level to Form Five, the final year of the secondary level. So the state provides for teacher remuneration, teacher preparation programs, and curricula and syllabi. The state does not forbid religious instruction by other religious groups in their respective worship houses for their children and members of the faith, but the cost of this has to be borne by the communities themselves, that is, the expenses for teachers, their training and instructional materials, etc. In lieu of their own religious education, the government in 1983 adopted the teaching of moral education for non-Muslim children in the public or national schools from Year One to Secondary Five. This was based on the recommendation of the Cabinet Committee Report, or the Mahathir Report, in 1979. The assessments for both Islamic education and moral education are set up by the Malaysian Examination Council of the Ministry of Education. The curricula and syllabi are designed by the Curriculum Development Division. Despite being offered in the National Curriculum, some Muslim citizens are not satisfied with the hours or amount of Islamic religious education provided in the national schools. Consequently, there has been considerable growth of private Islamic schools that offer additional components of Islamic studies and longer hours in addition to the National Curriculum.

Despite the absence of religious education in the national school system for faiths other than Islam, the Malaysian Examination Council offers examinations for Bible knowledge. This means that Christian students could study their holy book privately or in community churches and take official examinations as needs arise. In addition, some schools set up religious societies such as the Buddhist society in Chung Ling and Han Chiang High schools in Penang.[9] Similarly, there are Buddhist societies in local higher institutions such as Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia, and Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Religious education in private schools

There is not much difference today between teaching religious education in the public schools and in the private schools as far as the official religion is concerned because the curriculum is regulated by the Private Education Department. The only concern is that some of the Islamic religious schools, whether madrasah or *pondok*, are not financially sound because the school authority only depends on school fees which are nominal. Religious communities are free to create private schools but they have to use the curricula prescribed by the Ministry of Education. This goes for all religious affiliations, including the Muslim communities. Every private school is required to register with the Department of Private Education of the Ministry of Education, which supervises and monitors such schools with respect to curriculum, building safety, and school tuition fees. But the curriculum does allow for teaching Bible knowledge for Christians, which is a popular examination paper for those from East Malaysia.

Curriculum reform in the 1980s

The public or national schools offer Islamic religious instruction based on the Muslim denomination of Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah, which is in contrast to the Shi'ah since the Muslims in Malaysia are predominantly Sunnis. The Islamic religious education curriculum is comprised of the following components: 1) al-Qur'an recitation, memorization, translation, and meaning; 2) Hadith (Tradition of the Prophet) in various aspects of life; 3) Belief (*aqidah*) specifically, the six articles of faith (God, the Prophets, the Holy Book, the Angels, the Hereafter, and Predestination) and the five pillars of faith, that is, the kalimah shahadah, prayer, fasting in Ramadhan, zakat, hajj, ibadah (i.e. worship rituals such as prayer, fasting in ramadhan); Sirah (History of the Prophet—his birth,

his marriage and family, his mission and his death); Islamic history; Islamic worldview; and Islamic ethics and etiquettes. In Islamic ethics, students are taught how to conduct themselves in accordance with their environment—from their self to their family, the community, the nation, and the international community—and universal Islamic values. The depth and breadth of this topic will vary according to levels. For those who desire to specialize in Islamic study, Arabic language becomes a compulsory tool, but others could also learn it to a certain extent. The moral education curriculum is comprised of values for 1) self-development; 2) family; 3) the environment; 4) patriotism; 5) human rights; 6) democracy; and 7) peace and harmony.

One of the important reforms in Islamic religious education occurred in the 1980s with the formulation of the New Curriculum for Primary School in 1983, the formulation of the National Philosophy of Education in 1987, and the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School in 1989. The National Philosophy of Education formulated in 1987 desecularized the public schools by incorporating belief in God as a foundation for education in the country. It emphasizes excellent moral values as one of the outcomes of education. The philosophy states that:

> [e]ducation 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. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the society and the nation at large.[10]

This philosophy aims to inculcate universal moral values across the curriculum and to reassert teachers' important role in developing students' moral and spiritual growth alongside their physical and intellectual growth and not to leave this responsibility to the religious or moral teachers alone. Integration means that students are taught the natural sciences, the social sciences and humanities, and other acquired knowledge in addition to the religious sciences. Consequently, the practical aspects of moral and religious growth are observed closely, especially for Islamic religious education whereby schools provide facilities and space for worship so that students will not miss their mid-afternoon and evening daily obligatory prayers. In addition, *doa* (supplication) for wellness, health, learning, and guidance is sometimes recited in school assemblies and classrooms. The Muslim code of dressing began to be observed upon encouragement by the school. In a subtle way the landscape of the national schools began to incline towards an Islamic ethos. Although values related to ethics are universal and are readily accepted, some other values, for example the way of dressing and some types of food, are not. Theoretically, schools are not supposed to compel students and their parents but rather encourage choice through rational persuasion.

Issues regarding religion and education in Malaysia

In general, Malaysians have accepted the status of Islam as the official religion in Malaysia and thus the preferred position of Islamic religious education in the public school system for Muslims, while moral education is provided for non-Muslims. They have also accepted the financial assistance offered to Islamic private schools as similar assistance is given to National-type Chinese and Tamil Primary and Conforming secondary schools, although these schools are more ethnic than religious-based. However, with the coming of globalization, where every local group becomes more conscious of its values and identity in the effort to preserve it as an attempt to oppose Western cultures and values, the issues of religion and education have become more important. The problem

sometimes lies in the interpretation of religious injunctions and values and insensitivities to the practices of other faiths. This is evident from several recent incidents that occurred in the national schools:

1 Conflict between the parents of two Muslim pupils in a national primary school and its Muslim school principal who forbade them to wear Muslim *serban* (headgear) in school[11] on the grounds that it was against school regulations.[12]
2 Conflict between the parents of six Hindu students and their school authority who forced them to shave their beard and moustache despite their parents writing to inform the school that they were keeping their facial hair because of a religious (Thaipusam) vow.[13]
3 Conflict between parents and the school authority of S.M.K. Seremban Jaya in January 2008, which authorized sex or gender segregation in the schools—in classes, canteens, and even the stairways and entrances.[14] Apparently the school principal was overzealous in his attempt to discipline his charges, especially unruly boys. Some argued that there are many "little Napoleons" in schools who formulate their own rules and make national schools look like religious schools.[15] This is not true only for this school, but for several others, such as S.M.K. Tansau and Penampang Sabah.[16]
4 Conflict between parents and the school authority of S.M.K. Seksyen 4 in Kota Damansara over the disqualification of students in sports due to wearing shorts.[17] Parents asked if the Ministry could clarify the dress code in non-religious schools. None of them were informed that the school had a rule that runners must wear track-bottoms or long pants.

With respect to moral education for non-Muslims, there have been some groups who argue against it. They would prefer to teach religious education rather than advance secular morality. Sadhana Visionary Academy (S.V.A.) has made an attempt to develop a secondary Hindu school that combines secular values and Hindu values. This school is modeled after the success of the American Home-Schooling model that is currently established in Malaysia by the Grace Assembly Church. The church was able to meet the need for Christian education and secular education for its congregation and has been in operation unhindered for over 20 years.[18]

Similarly there are some Christian groups, particularly in East Malaysia, who are beginning to plead that Christian religious education be included in the national school curriculum. The Consumer Association of Sabah and Labuan (Cash) hopes that the State Education Department will respect the wishes of non-Muslim parents who want their children to be allowed to learn their own religions during school hours. It was argued that this was not only in line with the principle of Rukun Negara (national ideology) of belief in God, but would also help in the correct upbringing of students, particularly since fights and gangsterism are now becoming commonplace in schools.[19]

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a brief review of religious education in Malaysia. It is clear that Malaysia is a dynamic Muslim country if the education system is used as the yardstick, because Islamic religious education is given strong support by the government. Islamic religious education is not just for the sacred but also for the mundane when efforts are made to translate its social, political, and economic theories into practice as testified by the existence of Islamic banking, Islamic insurance and business systems, and Islamic educational, medical, and social services. Although scholars such as W. Feinberg have expressed concern as to how religious education might not serve modern liberal democracies that require "the need for autonomy and critical reflection,"

and the "requirement for tolerance, mutual recognition, and respect for differences demanded by pluralism,"[20] this has not been the case in Malaysia. The recent events are only incidental and not the norm. With the exception of these minor incidents, the various faiths have been living peacefully for at least a century and the school system has successfully inculcated the ethics of mutual respect. This is because religious education is provided within the national system of education and not left to private enterprises. It is the goal of Islamic or other religious education to foster moral and spiritual excellence among all its followers and students regardless of ethnicity and faith. Schooling based on ethnicity plays a more divisive role than religious education. All of Feinberg's arguments in his work can be mapped for racially segregated primary schooling in Malaysia that hinders the tolerance, mutual recognition, and respect for differences needed for a diverse society. That said, we do recognize Feinberg's concern to the extent that practices of religious instuction may not develop critical reflective skills and attitudes of respect for differences that democracy requires, especially if religion is intertwined with ethnicity.

Another related issue is the teaching of moral education based on critical reasoning alone, without any roots in the student's traditions. What this will give rise to is secular morality which also has problems as illustrated by the setback of the value clarification movement and other approaches such as Kohlberg's stages of moral development. Teaching secular morality is in a way inconsistent with the demand of one of the pillars of Rukun Negara (National Ideology), which is belief in God, and also the National Education Philosophy.[21]

What would be essential for pluralism is for the public schools to offer religious education to any religious group that requests it. H. Rosnani has deliberated on this matter publicly when she discussed the need for a single education system for primary schools in Malaysia, which would devote its morning session to the national curriculum and the afternoon session for moral, spiritual, language, and cultural needs of each faith and race. At least these students will study together for three-quarters of the school period and the next quarter within the same faith to study its mother tongue, culture, values, and faith or traditions.[22] This could avoid the divisiveness that Parker-Jenkins, Hartas, and Irving associated with faith-based schools run privately in isolation of other pupils from a different faith as experienced in the United Kingdom today.[23] In this way the public schools are able to accommodate all the differences due to pluralism. But this would require single session schools and therefore the need for the government to build more schools. School leaders should be cautious and not overzealous when dealing with religious matters in order not to tread on others' toes and turn national schools into religious schools. What is most important is the enculturation of shared values. Religion can be tricky and experience informs us that many of the conflicts in the world arise due to religious intolerance. Thus, the teaching of religion should also be cultivated with reason and philosophical inquiry, which will open up students' minds to understand and accept differences in perspectives.

Notes

1 Malaysia, Department of Statistics, 2008.
2 See H. Rosnani, *Educational Dualism in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1996).
3 Federation of Malaya, *Report of the Committee on Malaya Education 1951*, L. J. Barnes, chairman (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1951), 13.
4 *Jawi* is the written script of the Malay language which utilizes Arabic alphabets plus five other locally invented letters to adapt to the Malay sound.
5 See *Berita NECF* (National Evangelical Christian Fellowship), November–December 2008, 11.
6 See the Malaysian Constitution at <http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/malaysia.pdf> (accessed January 10, 2011).
7 *Education Act, 1961* (Kuala Lumpur: International Law Book Services, 1987).

8 *Akta Pendidikan 1996 (Akta 550) and Education Act 1996 (Act 550)* (Kuala Lumpur: International Law Book Services, 1996).
9 See the website of Chung Ling High School <www.clhs.edu.my>, accessed January 14, 2011.
10 Malaysia, Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Centre, *The Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School* (Kuala Lumpur, 1989), v.
11 The *serban* is the cloth that is folded in a circle around the *kufiyeh* or skull cap worn by males on their head.
12 Punjabis were allowed to put on the turban as it was a religious edict, but it was not compulsory for Muslim males—only encouraged.
13 *The Star*, "Schools must not divide," February 2, 2008.
14 *The Star*, January 12, 2008.
15 *The Star*, "School segregation: Put on mat those going against policy," January 14, 2008.
16 *The Star*, "Sabah school told to stop it," January 24, 2008.
17 *The Star*, "Clarify dress code in school," January 30, 2008.
18 See Progress on the Creation of Sadhana Visionary Academy as of July 2009, S.V.A. <www.myhindupage.org/index.php/sva-introduction>, accessed January 12, 2011.
19 The *Daily Express*, Kota Kinabalu, "Cash backs call on religious studies," July 25, 2005.
20 W. Feinberg, *For Goodness Sake: Religious Schools and Education for Democratic Citizenry* (New York: Routledge, 2006), xv.
21 H. Rosnani discussed this in her work *Educational Dualism*, 2nd edition (Petaling Jaya: The Other Press, 2004), 212–13.
22 H. Rosnani, *New Straits Times*, "Make education truly national," April 1, 2001.
23 M. Parker-Jenkins, D. Hartas and B.A. Irving, *In Good Faith: Schools, religion and public funding* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005).