

Conferences, Seminars, and Addresses

The Islamic University: Dimensions and Dynamics

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Muḥarram 8-10, 1410/August 10-14, 1989

In order to promote a better and more comprehensive understanding of an International Islamic University within the dynamic socio-cultural setting of the contemporary world, the International Islamic University held a four-day seminar during *Muḥarram 8-10, 1410/August 10-14, 1989*. The seminar was also designed to look at the immediate and long-term development plans and strategies of the University to ensure that high international standards are maintained as well as practical relevance to the local socio-politico-economic environment. The Islamization of knowledge has multifaceted dimensions and implications for scholars in developing the integrated university curriculum with the appropriate teaching materials and the achievement of moral-intellectual excellence.

Originally planned as an internal affair, the seminar generated interest among the academic community in Malaysia and neighboring countries so that it finally involved over 600 participants, including the academic staff of the University. There were 26 speakers from various countries and disciplines.

Professor Abdul Hamid AbuSulayman in his introduction mentioned the need for Muslims to regain the intellectual dimension. He emphasized that Islamization of knowledge is not confined to the Shari'ah disciplines. Islamic thought integrates two sources of knowledge—revealed knowledge and human knowledge. He mentioned the plan of the University to introduce a system whereby graduates could, in five years, obtain two degrees—one in revealed and one in worldly knowledge.

In his usual erudite and scholarly manner Professor al-Attas discussed the purpose of the university and the Islamic concept of knowledge. He emphasized that the division into *fardhu 'ain* and *fardhu kifayah* did not imply that there was no connection between the two but the division was a moral one in order to prevent compulsory knowledge being absorbed into worldly knowledge. Professor al-Attas clarified that in order to understand what we want from a university we must first understand the nature of mankind and in order for us to understand the nature of mankind we must understand the Qur'anic teaching regarding human beings, which deals not only with the body but also with the soul.

The freedom so beloved of modern universities has meant that they no

longer reflect mankind because they deny the soul. The modern university has a body and a brain but no soul and therefore it does not reflect mankind. He mentioned the problem of the ignorant, the plagiarists, and the imitators. Wisdom, he pointed out, means knowing the limits of things and this is knowledge.

Then discussion followed on ten topics by distinguished panelists. The first topic was: What Makes a University Islamic? What are the Unique Features of an Islamic University? It was discussed by Ziauddin Sardar, Ishaq Farhan, and Abdul Rahman Doi. Ziauddin Sardar mentioned that a university should be a place where a society's intellectual heritage is discovered, thus leading society in a particular direction, and to be Islamic it must promote the Islamic world view. The knowledge available today is not neutral but reflects the vision of a particular society. Ishaq Farhan stated that an Islamic name, courses in Islam, and a dress code do not make a university Islamic. He said spirit, vision, and mission make a university Islamic. Whatever the discipline, the Islamic spirit should permeate the university. The knowledge must be unified and *īmān* must be reinforced. Students must be given a sense of responsibility. The philosophy and aims of the university, its view of knowledge, education, and instruction, student's life and activities of students, and evaluation are unique features of an Islamic university. Abdul Rahman Doi concluded that faith is a distinguishing factor lacking in secular-oriented universities and said that the power of reason had been neglected by most Islamic universities.

Topic 2 concerned "How to Foster the Integration of Human Knowledge into the *Tawhīdic* World View and Value System." Muhammad Kamal Hassan and Anis Ahmad were the presenters. Prof. Kamal said that it was important to recognize the guiding force of the First World Conference on Islamic Education, the need to study the Qur'an regularly, and the fostering of closer relationships between staff and students. As students move towards graduation they should be reminded that the purpose of seeking knowledge is to serve God and not individual glorification and self-advancement. He said that it was difficult to find Muslim academics who understood the true meaning of the Islamization of knowledge. Anis Ahmad rejected the dichotomy between human and revealed knowledge and said that real knowledge is not possible without constructively applying reason to the Qur'an and Sunnah. He emphasized the need to realize that the *Tawhīdī* world view encompasses not only knowledge and learning but attitudes and behavior. The *Tawhīdī* world view rests upon the role and nature of man, the universe, and the primary aims and objectives of human life and society. In the discussion the problems of staff and student attitudes were brought up.

Ishaq Farhan and Ilyas Ba-Yunus discussed "Post-graduate Research and Education: Policies and Priorities." Ishaq Farhan said that the differences

lay only in outlook, point of emphasis and view of education and knowledge. He said research should be given the importance it deserves, priority should be given to opening post-graduate programs, full-time research should be encouraged, research methodology should be taught, there should be a balance between theoretical and practical research, it should be inter-disciplinary, the quality should be high, there should be international cooperation, the results should be disseminated with practical steps taken, and research should be reorganized. Ilyas Ba-Yunus said that education at an Islamic university should reflect the idea of dedication to Allah (SWT) and the students should uphold good and prevent evil. He said that all knowledge should be gathered within the framework of revealed knowledge and there should be community involvement.

For topic 4 regarding "Future Cooperation Among Islamic Educational Institutions," Mokhtar Shafii and Abdullah Ahsan presented their views. Abdullah Ahsan stated that cooperation was missing and suggested holding seminars, exchanging scholars, developing an ummatic consciousness and an understanding of the circumstances facing Muslims. Mokhtar Shafii stated that cooperation was necessary to resolve problems in the curriculum and syllabus and student discipline. He said that there was need for cooperation from experienced staff, transmitting information and values of Islamic life, more Islamic orientation to administrators, in student activities, and in research and knowledge.

In the discussion it was mentioned that the League of Islamic Universities did not seem to be functioning effectively due to poor leadership. The need for specialists to meet was emphasized and the fact that there should be cooperation regarding Muslim minorities.

"The Challenges of Achieving Excellence and All-Around Development: Academic, Islamic, Socio-Cultural and Leadership, How to Ensure the Credibility of the University and Employment Opportunities for its Graduates Without Losing Sight of Moral-Religious Excellence" was the topic discussed by Hisham al-Talib, Fathi Malkawi and Razali Nawawi. Hisham al-Talib mentioned that the question was not "how" but "what." He said that Muslims are neither dynamic nor are they convincing. Fathi Malkawi said that excellence was important and therefore quality came before quantity. There was the need to integrate knowledge. Prof. Razali Nawawi mentioned that the diversity of understanding and direction had caused staff to become confused, which had resulted in confused students. Students should be concerned with the political, cultural-academic, and spiritual situation of their country.

Topic 6 was on "Islamizing the Natural and Applied Sciences: What and How?" M.A.K. Lodhi and Ishaq Farhan were the panelists. Lodhi said that he wishes to emphasize the Islamization of science and technology which involves the Islamic view of the physical world, defining the role of Muslim

scientists, group efforts in various disciplines, basic issues, categorizing comparative research in the disciplines and Islamic values related to them, suggesting how to Islamize science. He said that the personality of the scientist must be Islamized. Ishaq Farhan said that revealed knowledge provided the outlook on acquired knowledge, emphasizing order and a way of expressing things. Muslim scientists should use science in the service of society and its value system.

Hassan Langgulong and Fathi Malkawi discussed the "Reconstruction of the Curriculum in the School of Education in an Islamic University and the Building of an Effective Islamic Theory of Education." Hassan Langgulong dealt with the need for a theory and four major areas of curriculum reconstruction: aims and objectives, content, method, and evaluation. Fathi Malkawi said that reconstruction would mean that the curriculum would cover core Islamic courses, professional courses, and compulsory and elective courses. An Islamic theory must be well-justified and consistent with the Islamic world view.

Parvez Manzoor, Syed Zainal Abidin, and Anis Ahmad dealt with the topic, Islamic Studies at "the University Level." Parvez Manzoor pointed out that Islamic studies are not an Islamic way of looking at the discipline as these studies emerged from the West. They are not part of the Islamic tradition and were part of the missionary enterprise. The universities in the Muslim world are mainly secular and those who graduate are not Islamists but professionals. The disciplines need to be restructured to agree with the Islamic world view. Anis Ahmad said that Islamic studies emphasize the heritage without an in-depth analysis of the sources. No new theories are discovered. He said that blaming the West would not help, history must be understood, post-graduate programs need to be specialized, courses need to be future-oriented, studies on the state and society, economics and finance, and ethics and social teaching need to be developed. Islamic studies need to be integrated with field work and minority and women's studies need emphasis. Syed Zainal Abidin emphasized that Muslims have been studying a dead civilization and that new, contemporary and real issues must be tackled.

On Islamization of the social sciences and the role of the spiritual values of Islam and revealed knowledge Ilyas Ba Yunus and Mohd Nor Nawawi discussed the urgency to speed up Islamization in this field. The discourse on human nature and society in the Qur'an can be used as a basis for scientific and psychological explanation. Aidit Ghazali drew attention to three proposals on issues of methodology in Islamizing disciplines by Muhammad Akram Khan, Muhammad Arif, Muhammad Anas Zarqa and Muhammad Yusuf al-Qardhawi. There are many questions that need to be addressed regarding methodology.

The advantages and disadvantages of a double-major approach where

students learn both the relevant Islamic knowledge and issues related to the field was discussed by Prof. Abdul Rahman Doi and Assoc. Prof. Razali Nawawi. Abdul Rahman Doi felt that the approach was both integrative and expansive and enabled the students to go beyond their specialization, although it had implications for the student in regard to the time spent obtaining a second Bachelor's degree rather than a Master's. Razali Nawawi said that one problem was deciding on the field of specialization and ensuring sufficient courses to obtain recognition.

Ahmad Totonji and Fathi Malkawi discussed "The Role and the Making of a Professor at an Islamic University." Fathi Malkawi said that the professor in an Islamic university is a pioneer and he emphasized the need for research and community service. It was important to build up a sense of commitment. Ahmad Totonji made clear that a university cannot be more Islamic than its teachers and therefore the personal example of the professor is as important as his or her knowledge. Islamic understanding, knowledge, and commitment are important. He felt that a professor should be evaluated according to his or her success in imparting knowledge and having a positive attitude towards students and towards continuous learning.

In discussing "The Disciplines to be Taught at an Islamic University" Arifin Suhami, Anis Ahmad, and Siddiq Fadhil covered many issues. Arifin Suhami dealt with the framework in which the subjects should be taught and said that the philosophy and objectives must commit the university to the Islamization of knowledge and in the university all knowledge should be taught within the *Tawhīdī* paradigm. Anis Ahmad dealt with the subjects such as *sīrah*, comparative history, world religions, current affairs, and international relations, the history of ideas, psychological studies, computer and information science, economics, and the Qur'an and Hadith. The methodology should be critical and integrated with the possibility of the exchange of ideas between younger and more experienced academic staff. Siddiq Fadhil mentioned the need to participate effectively and contribute to the Islamic revival. Muslims must be responsive to global and regional needs and he emphasized the need for Malay studies to comprehend the Islamic legacy. He mentioned the disturbing trend for the Malay language to be divorced from its Islamic roots. Malay is a Muslim language but Indonesian linguists (Christians and Javanese) are trying to disassociate the Malay/Indonesian language from its Islamic roots. There has also been wholesale borrowing from Western languages without sufficient effort to look for Malay and Arabic roots for new terminologies, thus bringing in cultural pollution through the concepts brought in by adopting foreign terminologies.

"The Teaching of Language at an Islamic University" was discussed by Parvez Manzoor and Ismail Ibrahim. Parvez Manzoor mentioned that although words may be the same, the underlying reality is different. This means that

Arabic as the language of revelation is central as the same concepts of ambiguity do not exist. He mentioned the need to prevent linguistic incursions and the need to revive Arabic. Ismail Ibrahim mentioned the problem of the teacher as a role model and the difficulty of teaching to different groups. He called for an association of Muslim languages and stated that while Arabic was important most of the world's Muslims spoke another first language.

The discussion that ensued was related to the problem of the dominance of English and the need for better and modern methods to be applied to the teaching and learning of Arabic. All agreed that Muslim students must master both Arabic and English. The problem of Islamic values in teaching was mentioned and it was felt that there is a need for better orientation of Arabic teachers and better textbooks and methodology.

"The Role of Students and the Policy of Student Development in an Islamic University" was the next topic, in which Muhammad Kamal Hassan dealt with academic affairs and workload and student affairs related to the inculcation of spiritual commitment and the need to promote a respectable, confident, and comfortable Muslim personality. Special gifts and leadership qualities need to be developed. Ahmad Totonji mentioned the need to develop feelings of brotherhood and for the academic staff to mention the power of prayer. He said that academic excellence and co-curricular participation were not mutually exclusive. The moderator, Tan Sri Ainuddin Wahid, stated that all Muslims had to seek knowledge.

One important question raised in the discussion of creativity was that students must be encouraged to be critical or else initiative will be suppressed. There must be interaction between academic staff and students outside the classroom.

Syed Abdul Hamid al-Junid and Sayyid Tahir discussed "Developing the Discipline of Economics: State of the Art and Plan of Action." Syed Abdul Hamid al-Junid looked at the present scenario and said that initially those who had written about Islamic economics had been neo-classical economists. He then traced developments over the past 25 years. He said that within the Islamic economics discipline there are four kinds of contributors:

1. The Western/secular-trained economists who use numerous neo-classical concepts and it would seem they have not really commenced from the Islamic world view;
2. The Shari'ah-trained scholars who have some positive things to say about the nature of an Islamic economic system but whose exposure to Western economics is minimal;
3. The modernist approach which consists of eliminating variables felt to be abhorrent to Islam and substituting them.
4. The graduates of Islamic universities who have training that

includes criticism of the Western model. They are questioning the assumptions of the first group;

He suggested the need to develop a coherent view of Islamic economics, a proper notion of semantics, a clear understanding of methodology, the need for Arabic, and a code of ethics.

Sayyid Tahir said that initially basic ideas had been discussed and that a consensus had been reached on the impermissibility of interest. The normative content of Islamic economics has been recognized. He said the literature was becoming more specified and detailed. He also mentioned methodology.

In the discussion it was pointed out that we talk more of growth than the beneficiaries of growth; in Islam the target is people not growth per se. Our lifestyle is Western and not moderate and our main aim should be collective self-reliance and emphasis should be placed on the utilization of indigenous resources. The lack of any central coordinating body on Islamic economics was raised but Syed Abdul Hamid al-Junid said that varying views were not necessarily bad. To the question as to how far one could say that there is Islamic economics the answer was that at the theoretical level the hypothesis had not been sufficiently developed for testing. There was need for the institutional arrangements and the emphasis on profit-loss sharing but not lending-borrowing.

The topic on "How Islamic Universities Can Help their Students Comprehend the Islamic Legacy as well as Contemporary Knowledge and Methodology and at the Same Time Prepare them to Face the Future" was considered by Parvez Manzoor, Ziauddin Sardar, and Anis Ahmad. Parvez Manzoor opened the discussion by posing the question of how the Islamic legacy can be integrated with modern knowledge. He said that Muslims must know the legacy and know modern knowledge and also our aim. We really need an Islamic vision for the future world order. Modern civilization and its concept of knowledge must be challenged but Muslims need to be clear both as to the goal and the methodology. Ziauddin Sardar said that the legacy should be presented as a dynamic, living entity, not as history. The legacy must be rediscovered critically. Comprehension of contemporary knowledge is also important and Muslims must understand that they are at the moment marginal people in the world, that the problems facing them are complex, and that all that happens in the contemporary world is interrelated. Students must be prepared to face the future and be aware that the future can be shaped. Anis Ahmad placed emphasis on the interplay between continuity and change in the legacy. He felt that an integrated approach was necessary and the commencement of research methodology early. The Islamic approach to various issues needs to be understood.

"The Development and Teaching of Shari'ah and Fiqh in an Islamic

University” was discussed by Ahmad Ibrahim, Muhammad ‘Ata al-Sid, and Mahmud Saedon, who started the discussion by looking at the historical picture. He mentioned the need for a mastery of Arabic, reference to the sources, an understanding of the historical development of Shari’ah and fiqh, and a love for the field. Muhamad ‘Ata al-Sid mentioned the need for better standards of Arabic and suitable textbooks. Ahmad Ibrahim differentiated between Shari’ah and fiqh and mentioned the dominant role of English law in Malaysia.

The final topic was “Models of the Most Appropriate Organizational and Administrative Structure of an Islamic University and the Sort of Student-Teacher Relations that Should be Fostered in an Islamic University.” Ishaq Farhan, Fathi Malkawi, and Mohammad, Nur Manuty discussed the issue, with Ishaq Farhan starting the discussion by saying that at this stage the best model could not be detailed. He suggested that the model should, however, have Islamic integrity, be clear about the basic functions of an Islamic University, have the correct approach to knowledge, and be open to various sources of knowledge. Decision making should rely on authentic information, full representation and participation must be possible, academic staff administration must be flexible, and there must be effective communications systems. There must be some independence for the chief executive, there should be many representative councils, and a unit for public relations. Fathi Malkawi concentrated on teacher-student relations and stressed the need to build an integrated and complete Islamic personality. Professors must know their students well, they should promote interaction, and they must be fair and just. Mohammad Nur Manuty said that Islamic relations should be stressed and there must be respect for each other. There must be sacrifice of time and a totally Islamic orientation.

In the discussion it was emphasized that university administrators must be clear on their functions and that all members of the university community must understand that their mission is that of Islamization. Fathi Malkawi said that administrators should not play an important role and they should not be allowed to create too much bureaucracy and much administration could be handled by academic staff. There was dissatisfaction about directions given by administrators without discussion. The need for checks and balances on freedom was mentioned. It was important to make sure the members of the university community conduct themselves in an Islamic manner. The need for consultation was recognized and it was emphasized that the structure of the International Islamic University in Malaysia was based on consultation and the principle of *shūra*.

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