

Conferences and Seminars

The National Seminar on Islamization of Education, 14-16 July 1998, International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The Department of Education, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences recently organized a National Seminar on Islamization of Education in the new campus of the university at Gombak. The seminar was attended by about 200 participants, mostly from Malaysia, and a few from Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, and Indonesia. The seminar was aimed at clarifying the concept of Islamization of education, examining the different aspects of education from the Islamic perspective, and investigating the challenges in the translation of the concept of Islamization of education at various levels of education.

The seminar was officially opened by Hon. Dato' Dr Ibrahim Saad, the Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, who addressed the participants on the major role of education—keeping a balance between maintaining the status quo and bringing about changes through educational reform. Similarly, participants were reminded of the roles of Islamic education with respect to conserving eternal Islamic beliefs and values and its radical role of transforming society to keep abreast with new knowledge and technology while at the same time to maintain a balance between the two. Henceforth, lies the danger of secular education and the need for Islamization of education.

Prof. S. M. Naquib al-Attas gave a very enlightening keynote address in which he attempted to deal with the meaning and importance of Islamization, which according to him involves conversion of the mind and personality. In particular, al-Attas underscored the importance of Islamization of knowledge as something that happens in the mind and not outside it. He reemphasized the process of Islamization and dewesternization as the isolation of four major alien Western elements from contemporary knowledge and infusing it with the Islamic elements. He then reiterated his call to the Muslim scholars to use the term *ta'dib* instead of *tarbiyyah* for education. Finally, he pointed out that the greatest challenge regarding Islamization arose from within the Ummah

itself, from the scholars who ridicule the idea, and from those who are simply confused about it. Prof. al-Attas felt that many Muslim scholars do not fully appreciate the meaning of Islamization.

In all 20 papers were presented in the seminar. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ghulam Nabi Saqeb (IIUM), a member of the organizing committee of the 1977 First World Conference on Muslim Education reflected on the progress in Muslim education during the last two decades. Prof Hasan. Langgulung (IIUM) explained the methodology of Islamization of education by first of all identifying what he felt to be the major sub-disciplines of education: curriculum, counseling, management, instruction and evaluation. Consequently, he argued that Islamization of education would entail Islamization of these five sub-disciplines. His idea on the Islamization of these sub-disciplines was elaborated upon by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rosnani Hashim, for the case of the curriculum. Dr. Rosnani, Head of the Department of Education, IIUM asserted that Islamization of curriculum would require Islamizing of its four basic components: the educational goals and objectives, the educational experiences, the organization of the experiences and the evaluation of achievement. She argued that the curriculum of Muslim educational institutions has lost its soul and did not reflect the hierarchy of knowledge. Ahmad Muhammad Said, the Director of the Teacher Education Division of the Ministry of Education, discussed the challenges that teachers face, and what could be their role in Islamization in the schools. The challenges of Islamization of education in the context of a multi-religious nation was addressed by Dr. Ghazali Basri, Rector of the Institute for the Studies of Islamic Sciences. He argued that Islam is tolerant of non-Muslims and the common values and beliefs of the various religious groups could be capitalized to enhance the Islamization process. Finally, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nik Azis Nik Pa (Univesity of Malaya) explained the differences between the expected goal of realizing the ideals, the goals implemented and the goals achieved.

Several papers were presented on Islamization of various sub-disciplines of education such as counseling, economics education, legal education, second language teaching, language education, and science education. Another major theme was the non-formal aspect of education such as co-curriculum, the hidden curriculum, and intercultural communication. Educational research was a popular theme. An interesting paper was presented on the use of statistics in behavioral science research, which attempted to correct the improper use of

statistics in research. The theme on teaching methodology attracted a paper, "Teaching Islamic Education with Respect to Child Development," which was a critique of current practices and a plea for the appropriate approach to teaching the subject. Finally a paper was presented on the "Role of Critical Thinking from the Islamic Perspective." this paper was appreciated for placing thinking in the proper perspective Islam—especially now that there seems to be a trend to encourage thinking among children.

The seminar was officially closed by Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Was Nordin, the former Director-General of the Ministry of Education. He reminisced his attempt to reform the national education system in line with the spirit of Islam and regretted that these ideas were not well-understood by most teachers and even officials in the Ministry to the extent that the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School was unable to achieve its goals.

In general, the seminar was conducted smoothly. Papers were presented in either Malay or English, and translation service was provided for the audience. The seminar also had a few paper presenters from Indonesia and one from Brunei. The participants were appreciative of the seminar and felt that more time should have been given for discussion. They even voiced their views on the need to have more seminars of this nature in future. The participants expressed the need for establishing a communication network between Muslim educators for exchange of ideas and called for the Department of Education, IIUM to be the nerve center.

Rosnani Hashim
Department of Education,
International Islamic University Malaysia