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The Development of *'Ilm Tafsir* and *Hadith* in Malaysian Educational System[1]

Perkembangan Ilmu Tafsir Dan Hadis Dalam Sistem Pendidikan Malaysia

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Abstract

The development of science of *tafsīr* and *hadīth* in Malaysia is quite advanced. However both are not formally established as a discipline of science. The discussion is more towards the science of *tafsīr* and *hadīth* commentary itself rather than studying the problems in society and its solutions from the perspective of Qur'an and Sunnah. Employing qualitative method, this paper aims at studying the experience of Malaysia in the development of science of *tafsīr* and *hadīth* studies, the historical overview and its impact towards educational system and other Islamic instutions, such as Shariah judicial and financial system. The paper also seeks to identify the challenges and obstacles that might have hindered the progress of developing a more integrated methodology of science of *tafsīr* and *hadīth* studies that may offer practical solutions to address the current religious, socio-political and economic problems facing the Muslim society from the Qur'an and *hadīth* perspectives.

Keywords: Development of *tafsīr* and *hadīth*, Malaysian education.

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Abstrak

Pembangunan ilmu tafsir dan hadis begitu maju ke hadapan dalam konteks Malaysia. Walau bagaimanapun, kedua-duanya tidak begitu menonjol sebagai satu bidang sains yang penting. Perbincangan tafsir dan hadis lebih fokus kepada penilaian dan perbincangan isi kandungannya daripada menawarkan solusi kepada masalah masyarakat yang perlu diselesaikan. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif dalam menganalisis perkembangan serta latar belakang ilmu tafsir dan hadis dan kesannya terhadap sistem pendidikan dan institusi Islam seperti Mahkamah Syariah dan sistem kewangan. Kajian ini cuba untuk mengenal pasti cabaran yang mungkin membantut perjalanan ilmu tafsir dan hadis dalam meneliti kaedah yang lebih tepat untuk mencari jawapan yang praktikal dalam menangani isu agama, sosio-politik dan masalah ekonomi dalam kalangan Muslim.

Kata Kunci Perkembangan tafsir dan hadis, Pendidikan Malaysia.

Introduction

The development of science of *tafsīr* and *hadīth* commentary was resulted ofan ongoingprocess that camealong with the development of other sciences related to Qur'ánand *hadīth*studies. In the early centuries of the expansion of Muslim empire, this developmet was consequently trigerred by strong religious awareness of the Muslims demanding a transformation of their societies according to the command of God as enshrined in the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH). The exegetical methodology applied by scholars of *tafsīr* and *hadīth*commentary during that times was almost homogenous and confined to their preference towards a single common exegetical methodology known as a tradition-based Qur'an interpretation or *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr*. Although other genres of *tafsīr* were acceptable, including *tafsir bi al-ra'y* (rational-based interpretation of the qur'an) and ṣūfī-oriented *tafsīr* for instance, many *tafsīr* scholars of that periods were reluctant to commit themselves with those kinds of exegetical trends due to their dialectical and heretical tendencies. Similar exegetical trends can be found in the development of *hadīth* commentary. In fact, the mastery of the Prophet's *hadīth*is a prerequisite for the survival of tradition-based Qur'an interpretation (*tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr*). It must be noted, however, that the development of *hadīth*studies was not that rigorous compared to the popularity of Qur'an studies. It was partly because of the tendency of many *hadīth* scholars during that times to focus their endeavors more on the specialized study of the history *hadīth* narration/narrators, collection and classification, and its authentication rather than exegetical study of the texts of the *hadith*.

However, different historical epochs would breed new realities and problems to the Muslims. These conditions determined the progress or regression in the development of Qur'an interpretation and *hadīth* commentary. For instance, the post-independent decades of Muslim societies had been facinga growing problem of illiteracy, poverty, and economic backwardness. To the western-educated intellectual elites, the secular model for the separation of religion and the state was the only solution to those problems, while to their reformist counterparts, a complete return to Islam was the only practical alternative to address those under-development problems and moral decadence. This struggle, according to the reformist intellectuals and scholars, must begin with the reinterpretation of Islam's own primary sources, namely the Qur'an and the*hadīth* of the Prophet (PBUH). Consequently, the intellectual and scientific activities that were aimed at reconstructing a more integrated exegetical methodology of Qur'anic interpretation (*tafsīr*)and *hadīth*commentary (*sharḥ al-hadīth*) in the Muslim world throughout the early decades of the 20th century were quite prolific. This was very much dependent on the intellectual struggle of the early reformist movement led by Shaykh Muhammad Walīyullāh, Al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, and the later Islamist-revivalist ideologues and scholars like Ḥasan al-Bannā, Malik Bennabi, Abul al-Aʿlā al-Mawdūdī, Sayyid Quṭb, and others.

Malaysia was not exempted of being impacted by the intellectual legacy of both these classical and modern reformist movements. Their call for a reinterpretation of the Muslim religious texts, namely the Qur'an and *hadīth*of the Prophet (PBUH), had left its influences upon Muslim scholars, who were predominantly trained and graduated from various traditional religious institutions of learning in the Middle East and the Indian-Subcontinent. Many of them established themselves as founders of private religious schools and institutes of learning. Others were attached to public schools, universities and government religious departments, institutions and agencies as teachers, government officials, judges, lawyers, Shari'ah advisors, and even political leaders. These were the people whose views and *fatwā* influenced government policies on matters related to Islam and the implementaion of its Shari'ah rulings and teachings in various domains of the Muslim cultural, socio-political and economic life in society. It must be admitted that despite their professional and administrative roles in society, it were in the sphere of teaching and learning that their intellectual contributions are most prominent and visible.

Historical Overview of the Development of Science of *Tafsīr*

In Malaysia, as well as in other countries in the Malay world, the development of science of *tafsīr* and *hadīth* studies has begun from the very beginning of the advent of Islam in Nusantara in the late 12th and early 13th century ago. The discovery of Islamic manuscripts belong to the 13th century Terengganu has indicated the local people's familiarity of the Qur'an and its teachings. Researchers have found that the process of translating the Qur'an into the local language took place not long after the advent of Islam into the Malay world.[2] According to Sayyid Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, the historical notes about the progress of Islam in the Malay world have shown that the writing of Qur'anic exegesis or *tafsīr* had fully developed after the 20th century.[3] This finding however does not overlook the fact that teaching *tafsīr* as an art to explain the meanings of the texts of the Qur'an had been already widespreading in various religious centres throughout the Malay world, including Malaysia, for many centuries. This teaching activity was not confined to Qur'anic interpretation only, but extended to include other related sciences of the Qur'an, such as the virtues and ethics (*adāb*) of Qur'anic recitation, the science of *tajwīd* (the rules of Qur'anic recitation), the Qur'anic narratives (*Qaṣaṣ al-Qur'ān*) and others.[4]

Latest studies that aimed to trace classical manuscripts about the translation of the Qur'ān into local language and Qur'anic *tafsīr* written by Malay Muslim scholars[5] have found that one of the most significant manuscripts is "*Al-Quran al-Karim wa Bihamisyihi Tarjuman al-Mustafid*" by Shaykh Abdurrauf bin Ali al-Fansury al-Singkili. It is one of the earliest religious Malay literatures ever discovered, and its translation is mostly taken from "*Tafsir al-Baydawi*".[6] It had been used as a major reference to science of Qur'anic exegesis offered in many traditional Islamic learning institutions, such *pondok* and *pesantren*.[7] The

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[2] Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor& Wan Mohd Tarmizi Wan Othman, "Sejarah dan Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam di Malaysia",*Jurnal At-Ta'dib,* (2011): p. 59-78.

[3] Haziyah Hussin and Latifah Abdul Majid, "Early Development of Quranic Exegesis in Malaysia", International journal of Asian Social Science, 2013, Vol. 3 (8), p. 1732.

[4] Mohd Roslan, "Sejarah dan Perkembangan Pendidikan Islam di Malaysia", p. 70-78.

[5] Ismail Yusoff, "Perkembangan dan penulisan kitab-kitab Tafsir di Malaysia " *Islamiyyat* (1995) : 19-32.

[6] Zulkifli Yusoff and Wan Nasyrudin Wan Abdullah, "Tarjuman Al-Mustafid: Satu Analisa Terhadap Karya Terjemahan", Jurnal Pengajian Melayu, (2005): p. 156-173.

[7] The word 'pondok' (literally meaning a hut or cottage) comes from Arabic word which means a temporary transit place for travelers. The term was used to refer to the residential place of students who come to a particular place or area for the sake of

book has caught the attention of scholars coming from different scientific backgrounds. They have studied the manuscript from historical and linguistic perspectives, and recognized its intellectual contribution in enhancing the public interest of people in the Malay world to study the Qur'an and the *hadīth* of the Prophet (PBUH) in line with the Sunnī theological and jurisprudential school of thought. Another manuscripts of Qur'an interpretation, which are less comprehensive compared to "*Tarjūman al-Mustafīd*", are two works of *tafsīr* of the same title "*Tafsīr sūrah al-Kahf*" written by two renowned Sumatran Muslim scholars, Hamzah al-Fansūrī and Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī. These books had been widely read and studied among Muslim community not only in the Malay world, but also among Malay Muslim community who lived in Turkey, Egypt, and Mecca.[8]

The later development of *Qur'ani*c exegesis, especially in the late 19th and early 20th century, was very much influenced by two dominant reformist schools of thought associated with an Indian-subcontinent reformist thinker, Shaykh Walīyullāh al-Dihlāwī (1762), and an Egyptian scholar, Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1905). For instance, the influence of Muḥammad ʿAbduh and his disciples, Rashīd Riḍā (1935) and al-Marāghī (1945), was very significant to Muslims in Malaysia. This influence became almost like a permanent feature of reformist movement in Malaysia before and after indpendence in 1957 mostly through the role of the local scholars who were educated in the Middle East. Their call for renewal of the prestine teachings of Islam according to the reformist model of "*al-Islām huwa al-ḥāl*" that Islam is the only alternative for Muslim development and survival from onslough of Western notion of modernization had further enhanced the public interest towards the reform of traditional system of Islamic education.[9] As a result, Islamic studies or Shari'ah sciences, including Qur'anic studies had been

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learning religion by bringing their own needs. From here, pondok was specifically used to refer to the earliest established religious educational institutions in Malaya and in the archipelago in general. It consisted of a teaching place called madrasah or mosque, surrounded by small houses or residences of students, called the pondok. The teachers' houses were also built in the area. This educational institution came into existence in Malaya as a product of scholars' awareness. These scholars emulated the educational system of foreign countries such as Pattani, Aceh, Mecca and Medina. This system was seen developing in the states to the east and north of Malaysia, such as Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, Penang and Perak. See Nabir, A., *Maahad 'Ihya Assyarif Gunung Semanggol 1934-1959* (Kuala Lumpur: Department of History UKM, 1976), p. 201.
[8] Zulkifli Yusoff, "Tarjuman Al-Mustafid", p. 160-173.
[9] Haziyah Hussin, "Early Development of Quranic Exegesis in Malaysia", p. 1732.

introduced as a formal subject matter of Islamic education offered to Muslim students at school and university levels.

At the beginning of the 20th century, during the pre and post-colonial period, *tafsir* studies has gained a strong foothold in the country and has been growing and expanding ever since. As asserted by al-Attas, based on the phenomenon described by Abdullah Munshi (1854) in *Hikayat Abdullah* in the year 1819, there was a school of the Qur'an. When Malay schools were first established in 1871, extra classes for teaching Qur'anic recitation were held in the afternoon religious schooling session conducted by the State Islamic Religious Council.[10] According to Haziyah Hussin, *tafsīr* studies has yet to be introduced into the system of education during that time. The textbook used in the subject of *tafsīr* during the period was compiled by the Malaysia Ministry of Education. In 1970, the syllabus for Qur'anic studies was amended and unfortunately, the *tafsīr* was ceased to be taught in all government's primary schools. Instead, the focus of Qur'anic studies was shifted to instill the ability of reading and pronouncing the phonetics of the letters of the Qur'an as well as reciting the short *sūrahs*. Several changes were later made to the syllabus of religious education after its first revision in 1977. It re-introduced *tafsir* studies as one of the subjects taught. These changes were implemented in the new Integrated Curriculum for Primary Schools (KBSR)[11] in 1983. The new syllabus focused on students' understanding of the meaning of short surahs from *Juz 'Amma*.[12] In August 1995, the introduction of science of *tafsīr* and Sunnah at secondary school level in Malaysia were formally supervised and managed under the Islamic Education Division which was established under the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE). Prior to that, it was known as the Islamic and Moral Education Department (JAPIM). In its early days, the Islamic and Moral Education Department was a unit under the Schools Division of the Ministry of Education (MOE), providing an assistance to the people's religious schools and also newly recruited religious teachers. It was known as the Religious Education Unit.[13]

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[10] Ibid, p. 1732.

[11] Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah means Integrated Primary School Curriculum. It was later changed to KSSR, the new system introduced by the Ministry of Education in 2011.

[12] Ibid, p. 1741.

[13] Official website, Ministry of Education Malaysia, http://moe.gov.my/en/profil-jabatan?div=19 (12 December 2016).

Historical Overview of Development of *Ḥadīth* Studies

Nusantara had become one of the important Muslim center of education especially during the 15th to 16th century in Malacca. It produced many classical Islamic manuscripts including hadith literatures. Studies has been done in the discussion and review about the significant hadith literatures which were written in Nusantara before the independence of Malaya in 1957. It revealed the development of the literature century by century, starting from the 15th century until 20th century. The titles of the manuscripts and the authors were identified from the original literature itself and other printed materials. The study had found that the number of *ḥadīth* literatures in Malay Peninsular was very little compared to other major subjects in Shari'ah sciences (*al-'ulūm al-Shar'īyyah*). As a consequence, scholars who were involved in this field are unfortunately remained unknown.[14] It is important to note, however, that although there were no manuscript found on specific topics related to sciences of *ḥadīth*, it does not mean that *ḥadīth* studies were indefinitely ignored. In principle, the function of *ḥadīth* is explanatory in nature. It is meant to explicate the teachings, rulings and injunctions of the Shari'ah stated in the Qur'an. It is inconceivable to argue that scholars in the past had been active in teaching *tafsīr* of the Qur'an and other Shari'ah sciences without a reference to the Prophet's *ḥadīth*. Further study of the available Islamic manuscripts has shown that *ḥadīth*studies in general, and sciences of *hadith* in particular, are basically incorporated as an integral part of the study of Islamic jurisprudence, *tafsīr* of the Qur'an, the science of *Tawḥīd*, the science of *Akhlāq* and *Adāb*.

Justifications for Integration ofQur'an and *Ḥadīth* studies

The critical role of *'Ilm tafsīr* and hadith studies can be seen throughout the development of the disciplines itself. Both disciplines which were taught formally at the traditional schools and *madrasahs* during the colonial period were then transformed into formal subjects taught in modern schools. Subjects related to science of *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* are believed to play a critical role in creating the awareness of the importance of divine revelation as a source of guidance to Muslims. Islamic education with its emphasis on the study of the Qur'an and

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[14]Abdur-Rahman M, Abdul Mutalib Embong and Muhammad Ridhuan Tony Lim Abdullah, "Historical Review of Classical Hadith Literature in Malay Peninsula", *International Journal of Basic & Applied Sciences*, (2011) : p. 1-6.

ḥadīth had been successfully inculcating the spirit of national unity, motivating the Muslims to rise against the British colonialism in the name of protecting the faith and Islam. The Qur'an and *ḥadīth* were invoked to justify the importance of national unity to regain independence from the yoke of colonialism. This was done throughout the country, not only during religous classes and Friday sermons, but also through writings and publications in magazines and newspapers.

The teaching of *'Ilm tafsīr*and Sunnah were first included in the syllabus of religious education when it was introduced in 1959 in the government schools,[15] (two years after the independence of Malaysia from British administration) and was later implemented in 1962. The teaching methodology at that time was very limited. Students were only exposed to a brief explanation of the meaning of a group of Qur'anic verses selected from certain chapters, and*ḥadīth* from different narrations. Those selected verses and *ḥadīth* are related to issues of faith, ethics and jurisprudence, with the translation of words that were difficult to understand, brief reviews and instructional text were included.[16] This methodology was mainly a carbon-copy of the traditional pedagogical system of *talaqqī simā'i*(face-to-face learning) in which at the end of the day, students' performance will be assessed only based on their memorization, either with or without understanding. This system had actually discouraged students to apply critical thinking in their understanding of the Qur'an and *ḥadīth*, and at the same time, had been detrimental tothe inculcation of the spirit of*ijtihad* among young generation. Nevertheless, the introduction of Qur'an and *ḥadīth* studies into the formal system of education in Malaysia had produced students with satifactory qualification to further their Islamic studies in the Middle East including Egypt, Libya, Iraq, and Saudi.

Another note that needs to be pointed here is that the British administration was not really supportive towards the implementation of religious education in Malaya. Many religious schools during that time were either self-sponsored and funded by private individuals, or funded by state's religious departments. This system had created dualism in the Malaysian system of education in which religious schoolswere offering traditional Islamic sciences, while vernacular school fully funded by the

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[15] Haziyah Hussin, "Early Development of Quranic Exegesis in Malaysia", p. 1741.
[16] Ibid, p. 1741.

state offering modern sciences.[17] The secular philosophy of education that was predominantly evident in the post-independence of Malaysian system of education was very much a legacy of the British colonialism. Consequently, the Islamic education, including Qur'anic and *ḥadīth* studies as its main subject matter, was practically marginalized and deprived of its rights to government funding and teachers training. The compartmentalization of the Muslim intellectual community in Malaysia today was another negative consequence of this dualism in the Malaysian system of education. The traditional religious schools produced graduates qualified to be *imām*, religious teachers and preachers, *muftī*, judges (*qāḍī*) in Shari'ah courts, officers attached to goverment Islamic instutions, who were ignorant of the world, while, in contrast, the venacular schools produced professionals, technocrats, scientists, enterpreneurs who were well-versed with the hustle and bustle of this world, but completely ignorant of their religion and tradition.

To overcome the negative implication of this dualism, the Malaysian government had introduced a drastic decision by converting many traditional schools of *pondok* and *madrasah* into government Islamic boarding schools such as Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama (SMKA) with two main streams, Art and Science. Instead of becoming more expert in *'ilm tafsīr* and Sunnah as compared to the graduates from the traditional religious schools, students of SAR and SMKA are found to be less expert in Islamic studies and Arabic but equipped with science, math, geography knowledge etc which were not taught before. The positive side is that, students graduated from these schools are more or less acquainted with basic Islamic studies and Arabic language that qualifythem to pursue higher degrees in Islamic studies, including in Qur'an and *ḥadīth* studies although they were previously opted for science stream. Some of them continued their professional and science education with basic understanding and practise of Islam as compared to those who went to missionary schools which were established by the British colonial. However, after independence, many of these missionary schools were then nationalised by the MOE, in which Islamic Studies subjects were also introduced as school's fundamental syllabus[18].

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[17] Shiraz Thobani, "The Dilemma of Islam as School Knowledge in Muslim Education," *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2007, p. 11–25.

[18] Among the missionary schools in Malaysia are the Methodist, Convent, La Salle, Anglican Church schools and tothers.

The need to integrate Qur'an and *ḥadīth* studies in the current Malaysia system of education is further justified with the latest finding of public misunderstanding and misconception about the teachings of Islam and its application in society. The quest for Islamization and the availability of information about the teachings of Islam on line has created many "instant" religious preachers and ustāz overnight. Many of them did not have any satisfactory background in Islamic studies at all, let alone in Qur'an and *ḥadīth* studies. These were the people who fruquently quoted *ḥadīth* from secondary sources, while the status of the quoted *ḥadīth* are found to be unauthentic and fabricated. Misquoting a fabricated or forged *ḥadīth* may have negative consequences upon the public understanding of the original intent behind the Shari'ah legislation. For instance, one of the most famous fabricated *ḥadīth* is the myth about the golden umbrella as a reward to wives in the Hereafter for their willingness to allow their husbands to practice polygamy. According to the interpretation of the preachers, wives are adviced to remain patient in facing the unfair treatments of their husband for the sake of the golden umbrella.The use of this *ḥadīth* has distorted the original objective for the legislation of polygamy in Islam. Morever, the frequent quotation of the *ḥadīth* has caused a strong criticism of feminist and liberal advocates in Malaysia about the legislation of polygamy in Islam. In fact, the criticism was also expressed by Islamist advocates, who many of them were specialized in *ḥadīth* studies. According to them, the spreading of fabricated hadith without explaining its status is a grave sin and dangerous on the ground of the Prophet's *ḥadīth*.[19]

Another example is regarding the *ḥadīth* about the obligation of a wife to entertain her husband unconditionally, even to fulfil his request of having sex on the back of a she-camel. Many unqualified self-style religious preachers had come with a wierd commentarythat it is a religious duty of the wife to entertain the husband unconditionally regardless of her physical, psychological and mental conditions. Such a patriachal commentary of the *ḥadīth* has put the blame on the wife if she failed to entertain the husband as requested, although she was unable to do so. Certainly, such an interpretation of the Prophet's *ḥadīth* contradicts the teachings of the Qur'an which make it obligotary for Muslims to treat their wives with kindness, and any marital disputes must be dealt with

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[19]Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin, "Kenali Hadis Palsu Menerusi Matan," Minda Tajdid Official Website, http://drmaza.com/home/?p=2250 (16 December 2016).

justice and fair,[20] not with force and violence that may have caused physical injury and psychological repercussions on the part of the wives.[21]

Integration of Qur'an and *ḥadīth* studies and Its Challenges

One of the main challenges facing attempts towards integration of Qur'an and Ḥadīth studiesin Malaysia is the dualism feature of Malaysian national system of education. Although, attempts had been done to reduce the impact of this dualism by converting traditional religious school to become a boarding school, such Sekolah Integrasi and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama, and the introduction of few subjects of Islamic studies and Civilization as elective courses at university level, the same dichotomy remains evident as one of the main features of Malaysian system of education. The impact of this dichotomy is also evident in the delivery of course instructions at the university level. Consequently, students of Islamic studies are not exposed to social sciences discipline of knowledge, and thus they become virtually narrative in their approach to reality and unable to apply their knowledge and training to address the socio-political and economic problems facing the society today. On the other hand, those coming from the science stream and human sciences background areunfortunately not equipped with strong foundation in Islamic studies, namely in Qur'an and *ḥadīth* studies. They are suffering of the loss of identity dilemma and often treating those problems facing humanity today from a materialist theoretical perspective, as if the life in this world and its problems are but a reality bereft of any metaphycialsignificance and meaning.

Fully integration of Qur'an and *ḥadīth*studies into the current system of education could not be realized by simply introducing them as another additional subject matters or couses that students need to study, but more than that, it requires a process of Islamization of all pure and applied science and human science disciplines according to the perspective of the transcendental teachings of the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (PBUH).ThisIslamization project that has been an

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[20] See the Qur'an, *al-Nisā'* 4: 19; *al-Taḥrīm* 66: 6

[21] In a *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said that a good Muslim is one whose deed and action does not destruction anything, including human life; see Ibn Majah, Muhammad bin Yazid al-Qazawayni, Sunan Ibn Majah (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Kutub al-Arabiyyah, n.d.), *Kitab Al-Iḥkām*, no. 2340, vol. 2, p. 784; and for the commentary of the *ḥadīth*, see Al-'Aini, Badr al-Din, *'Umdah Al-Qārā Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Kutub al-Arabiyyah, n.d.), vol. 9, p. 195.

intellectual discourse for the last three decades, which was led by the late Ismāʿīl al-Farūqī and his learned students who were mainly western educated, is yet to see its practical achievements.[22] This project that seeks to harmonize and integrate the revelation-based transmitted sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-naqlīyyah*) and the rational sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqlīyyah*) is not merely about a structural amalgamation or unification of the Shari'ah/transmitted/religious sciences with the empirical and human sciences under a single system of education. Such an understanding of Islamization as it is currently applied in higher institutes of learning in many Muslim countries is truly misleading, although it may be acceptable as a preliminary requirement for further realization of Islamization project, that is, to reconstruct the whole epistemological framework of human knowledge and science, including the Shari'ah/transmitted/religious science, in accordance with the Tawhidic worldview derived from the Qur'an and *hadīth* of the Prophet (PBUH).[23]

Another intimidating challenge obstructing the integration of Qur'an and *hadīth* studies in today's Malaysian system of education is the legacy of westernization of the Muslim mind that has been well-entrenced in the Muslim society. The Islamization project had been already in place in the Malay world since the advent of Islam in the late 12th and early 13th century, but the process was abruptly interrupted by Western colonialism of Nusantara for about more than five centuries. Although Muslims were free to practice their religion in a limited sense, but they were completely deprived of their right to self-determination, including the right to develop a formal system of education in accordance with their own Islamic worldview. One of the implications of these centuries of westernization hasbeen the relegation of religion studies to an insignificant state of educational prefrence, if not neglected altogether.

In the western model of education, the study of religion was always depicted with outdated images, and should be therefore restricted to individuals' private interest only rather than a public interest of the society or the state. This state of affair may be relevant when speaking about teaching and learning of Christianity and other religious traditions, but not of Islam, because it is not merely a religion in the Western

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[22]Md. Helal Uddin, Manjurul Alam Mazumder, "Islamization of Knowledge: An exploratory study of concepts, issues and trends," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 2014; 1(6): 99-109

[23] See the meaning and the method of Islamization project in Shaykh Taha Jabir al-Alwani, *Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (London/Washington: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1426/2005), 21-63

conception of religion, but it is also a complete way of life. In the Western model of education during the colonial era, teaching and learning activities related to Qur'an and *ḥadīth* were confined within the boundary of the mosque and other religious institutions. The objective of teaching and learning was not more than for the purpose to preserve the Muslim identity of the society. Such an objective was far departed from the objective for the revelation of the Qur'an and the mission of the Prophet (PBUH) to humanity, that is, to regulate every sphere of human life according to the dictate of the divine command of God. Similar state of affair is still prevalent today. Islamization of Qur'an and *ḥadīth* studies is therefore justified not because of the distortion of its epistemological foundations, but because of the question about the validity of its instruction methodology and objectives.

Undoubtedly, the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* are essentially Islamic, and they are the primary sources of knowledge and Shari'ah legislation in Islam. Therefore, the quest for Islamization of Qur'anic and *ḥadīth* studies is not to Islamicise those traditional sciences, but is purported for reappraisal of its traditional pedantic mode of teaching methodology. In this globalized world, Muslim societies cannot afford any longer to have many *huffāz* who are very good in memorization of the Qur'an and *ḥadīth*, but unfortunately unable to apply what they learned from the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* to address the socio-political problems facing the society. Students of Islamic studies should be trained with and exposed to some other practical methodologies of the human science disciplines, thus adapting those methodologies and disciplines of knowledge in the study of the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* is another mode of Islamization. Currently, many institutes of learning in Muslim countries have started to offer university programme in Islamic studies, particularly in Qur'an and hadith studies, by adapting to practical methodology of human science disciplines. In other places, attempts are made to offer both Islamic studies courses and human sciences courses under a single programme with the objective is to expose students to a multi-discipline of knowledge and methodology. Such a unification of Islamic studies and human sciences, which are offered under a single programme, could be the best practical option for further integration of knowledge in the future.

Relevantization of Qur'an and *Ḥadīth* Studies: IIUM Experience

There are many definitions of Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) that have been put forward by some modern Muslim scholars including Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Isma'il Raji Al-Faruqi, Abu Hamid Abu Sulayman and recently Muhammad Kamal Hassan. All of them have achieved the mastery of intellectual legacy of various scientific disciplines of Islamic studies in one way or another, including in the science of *tafsīr* and *hadīth*studies. According to al-Attas, the aim and objective of Islamization of contemporary knowledge is "to protect Muslims from corrupted knowledge that misguides and lead to confusion and skepticism of Muslim minds. It is also to produce true knowledge that can develop and mould Muslims minds and bring them to proper acknowledgment and recognition of God. Islamization of contemporary knowledge will result in peace, goodness, and justice and strengthening of the faith".[24]

In the experience of IIUM, its former rector, Kamal Hassan has imposed Islamization project affecting all IIUM academic and administrative staff. Those academic staff with Islamic studies background are required to take a Diploma Certificate in human and social sciences, while those with human and social sciences background are required to take a Diploma Certificate in Islamic studies. Apart from that all IIUM's academic and administrative staff are expected to abide by Islam's spiritual, moral and ethical values, and must present proper intellectual outlook and work ethics in their personality and good conduct.[25] Recently in 2013, the written "Policies and Guidelines on Islamisation" in IIUM was published by CENTRIS (Center for Islamization) to explain its meaning and implications, and to study the performance, achievement and effectiveness of the IIUM Islamization project.

Islamization and integration are two fundamental objectives for the establishment of IIUM and these are stated in the Mission Statement of the university. As far as the Islamization project is concern, the different terminologies used are meant to describe the various modes of Islamization itself. Criticism which has argued that Islamic studies is

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[24] Al-Migdadi, Mahmoud Hamid, "Issues in Islamization of Knowledge, Man and Education", Revue Academique des Sciences humaines at sociales", 2011, p. 11.
[25] Ali, Muhammad Mumtaz, *The History and Philosophy of Islamization of Knowledge* (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2013), p. 31.

already "Islamic" in itself and should not be, therefore, subject to Islamization project is entirely accurate. There is no doubt that all the coverage subject matters of Shari'ah/transmitted/religious studies are Islamic, because they are but derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). But the methodology and the scientific disciplines developed by Muslim scholars to deal with these two fundamental sources of knowledge and Shari'ah legislation are not revealed, but entirely a human-made intellectual construction and innovation. All this is subject to scientific verification and reappraisal in order to determine its validity and relevance. In this case, Muslims must be ready to accept the fact that some of the exegetical methodologies developed and applied by classical scholars of Qur'anic interpretation and *ḥadīth*commentary are already obsolete and no longer practical to meet the religious, cultural, socio-political, and economic problems and reality of the day. Any irrelevant aspect of these exegetical methodologies need to be reappraised, re-examined, revised and even rejected if necessary in order to make them a a more applicable and practical scientific instrument to interpret Islamic religious texts (*nuṣūṣ*) from the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* in the context of the current socio-political reality. The IIUM's Islamization project has called this mode of Islamization as relevantization of the sacred teachings, principles and values of Islam in today's human life and activities.

In the experience of Malaysia, relevantization is quite advanced. This intellectual project, as many scholars called it, has spread and permeated across diversed intellectual community coming from various scientific disciplines of knowledge. The coverage of its application is extended to include almost every aspect of human life and activities in this country in which over a third of its population are non-Muslims. Although it is yet to cover all aspects of human life and activities, it has however been able to incoporate Islamic teachings and values, such the theory of *maqāṣid*, in the sciences of Islamic banking, marketing and finance. Since the very beginning of its inception in 1983, IIUM is committed to its Mission Statement of Islamization to encourage and fund collaborative research projects in wide range of research interests and areas by integrating Islamic perspective in its research methodology. Apart from that, Islamization project has become a core business of IIUM's teaching and learning delivery. Students of non-Islamic studies streams are obliged to register at least fifteen (15) credit hours courses offered by Islamic Revealed Knowledge departments, namely Sciences of the Qur'ān (*'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*) and Sciences of Ḥadīth (*'Ulūm al-*

Ḥadīth). This is important in order to equip them with a valid scientific tool to "read" reality at hand from the perspective of the Qur'an and hadith of the Prophet (PBUH) connected with the areas of their specialization. In its first 25 years of its existence, the IIUM has produced more than 38,000 graduates, many of them have accupied influential positions in government and private sectors, including the Attorney General's Chambers, where they have become prominent supporters for greater compliance of civil law with the Shari'ah law.[26]

Conclusion

The development of *'ilm tafsīr* and Sunnah in Malaysian educational system is an on-going process to incorporate the inculcation of knowledge to individuals and society. In Malaysia, the experience signifies that the development has gone through a period of time since the advent of Islam in the Nusantara until the modern time. Undoubtedly, the process has its positive impact on society, including the government policies, economy, education, and social well-beings. Although the process does not cover all aspects of life but many aspects are trying to incoporate Islam in their own system.

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[26] Haris I. as cited in Jason P. Abott and Sophie Gregorious-Pippas, "Islamization in Malaysia: Process and Dynamics", Contemporary Politics, 16, no. 2 (2010), p. 135-151.

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