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The Islamization and Revitalization of Theory and Practice in Higher Education

The International Islamic University, Malaysia as a Model

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The Problem

The remedy prescribed for a given problem is often inappropriate or insufficient owing to an erroneous diagnosis or a defective analysis. This applies most truly to the deficient diagnosis of the underdevelopment of the Ummah (the Muslim nation), an ailment from which it has been suffering for several centuries. The ailment does not seem to have responded to any treatment since Abu Hamid al-Ghazaali's (d. 1111) cry of alarm in *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* [The Inconsistency of Philosophers] and appeal for a cure in *Ihyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn* [Revival of Religious Disciplines]. A major reason for the failure of both diagnosis and treatment is that the focus has been on the symptoms and so appearances alone have been targeted, in addition to the distortion of the dominant concept of civilization, and the inability of the approach used, limited as it is, to explore fundamental causes.

The Ummah's malady has been underdevelopment, division, tyranny, and oppression, yet it has also been suffering from injustice, poverty, ignorance, and disease. All the while, it has been yearning for power, unity, and justice. However, none of the hopes for political, economic, scientific, and technological development has been realized, and these hopes have been and still are a mere illusion, a mirage. The desire of the Ummah and its peoples to catch up with others and to enjoy truly human standards of living, education, and health continues to be unfulfilled.

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While there is agreement with all reformers that all these aspects of reform *are* required, and that the awakening of the Muslim nation cannot take place, nor can its mission be carried out, unless these reforms, particularly educational reform, are realized – it is also believed that these are reforms which address only the symptoms of deeper and more extensive causes. Unless Muslims adopt a bold, critical perspective and equip themselves with the appropriate tools of knowledge to identify these causes, the Ummah's failure to detect them will persist, and it will continue to lack the real ability to confront and overcome them, and to realize its legitimate cultural aims and demands and the practical reforms which it urgently needs.

All aspects of backwardness in the history of the Ummah are but an expression of a serious disease: the inadequacy of performance. It is a disease caused by poor psychological motivation, which in turn stems from a distorted vision and a defective approach. In other words, the whole phenomenon results, first, from distortions in the Ummah's cognitive and psychological makeup, which can be treated only when their true nature is discovered and when they become the focus of the Muslims' reform efforts. Only then can the Muslim nation rid itself of the malady of hazy vision, poor motivation, and inadequate performance, which underlie the symptoms of failure and backwardness in all the aspects of Muslim life: in politics, economics, science, and technology.

An important question arises. Since the Ummah accounts for one-fifth of the human race, that is, over one billion people, and covers an area extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, how has it fallen so much behind? The gross national product (GNP) of all the Muslim countries together is worth about US\$1,100 billion, which is less than the GNP of France alone and about half that of Germany. It is also less than a quarter of the GNP of Japan, whose population, being no more than 120 million, live in small, scattered islands, poor in natural resources, with mountains covering more than three-fourths of the total area, and with earthquakes and volcanoes plaguing both the land and the population.

The only possible explanation of this phenomenon is that it results from inadequate performance. The only current aspiration of the Ummah and its peoples is to survive with the least possible effort. It is a nation with no future and no ambition, content to produce basic materials using primitive methods or dependent on foreign expertise and consumer-oriented assembly industries. The tons of metals and raw materials that are

exported for a handful of dollars come back in the form of electronic and technological products worth millions of dollars. What makes the difference is the human beings: their performance, ability, and quality of thinking.

Today's Muslims are the descendants of the early Muslims (the Mission generation) and inheritors of Islamic civilization. The Muslim world has no shortage of natural resources, its land being expansive and rich, and Muslims do not lack noble principles, values, and aims, for Islam has the lion's share of these qualities. Nevertheless, until Muslims delve deep into themselves and into Islamic history and scrutinize the cognitive and psychological distortion of their minds and souls, they will not be able to understand the backwardness and weakness from which they suffer, unless the cause of backwardness is latent within them, within their minds and methods of thinking. In other words, the problem and the ailment, in the final analysis, lie in the foundation of the Muslim intellectual structure and have psychological effects that have led the Muslims to the worst malady: performance inadequacy. It is an ailment that afflicts the patients wherever they go. It afflicts the Ummah in its public order, production, education, technology, protection of rights, and defense of the homeland. The only cure for it is to effect change in oneself, that is, change and reform of one's mind and soul: "God does not change the fortune of people unless they change inside" (13: 11).

Education

Reformers are on target when they mobilize themselves to improve education, regarding it as one of the most important aspects of reform and one of the strongest building blocks in the construction of a nation. Unfortunately, their orientation has been, as it is in all other things, quantitative, and their reform, superficial. It addresses appearances and is based on duplication and the imitation of all types of capable people. The Ummah, thus, blindly follows others in darkness, stumbling as it goes. The road it follows forks into branches, and it does not know where to turn.

Undoubtedly, appropriate education and learning are the right foundation on which to build, for they are the two bases of dynamic human energy. Without them, neither power, production, nor achievement is possible. It is unfortunate, however, that reform

movements in education and learning have essentially called for the imitation of buildings and imitation of methods, for focus on quantity and teaching aids, and even for the establishment of branches of foreign schools and universities. Thus, an examination of the conditions of education and learning in the Muslim countries reveals that they concentrate on what is “urban and technological,” and go too far in imitating all the latest fads in the developed countries. The main interest of these reform efforts is in the importation of new machines, equipment, and systems. These efforts soon turn into “confusion and fabrication,” guided only by “duplication and imitation.” In its ideological essence, an approach of this kind is no different from the indulgence in historical imitation and futile duplication that are perpetuated only by repetition and memorization.

Does it not seem odd that the fruits of reform throughout recent centuries do not lead the Ummah to a single objective, nor realize a single goal? The loss of soul persists, because of the enormous gap between the actual and the ideal, the assertions and the results.

Although it is agreed that the essence of reform lies in reforming education and learning, it is not intended to be limited to tools, quantity, imported plans and blueprints, mechanisms, instruments, and equipment. Rather, it means delving deep into the essence of building humankind, a process that is a cultural, doctrine-based vision and a cognitive, intellectual, and scientific approach. This in-depth effort requires a particular ability and leads to the utilization of tools, achievement of a suitable quantity, and provision of the skills needed to reach goals, solve problems, and achieve reform and progress in political, economic, and technological arenas; triumph in the cultural race; and delivery of the message.

Where to Begin

The most important question at this point is: Where does one begin? The answer is with self-reform. The beginning of Islamic reform has to be reforming the souls of Muslims by remedying the distortions of their ideological vision, cultural motivation, intellectual approach, social culture, and educational discourse. These distortions are due

to the tempestuous events that have accompanied the Ummah's progression and the cultural accretions of folk heritage left by various other nations. They are similar to pebbles thrown at the cogwheels of the Islamic cultural drive that stems from the message of Islam and dates from its early years. These pebbles have continually slowed its progress and reduced its impetus until the distortions and impediments have stopped its motion altogether. The total number of trades and industries developed by the Ummah over many centuries has been of no avail, causing it to end as a lifeless corpse, a neglected quantity in the race of nations and civilizations. The Ummah has turned into a prey for its enemies, suffering severe pain and lamenting its misfortune.

How has that happened? How did it begin? It began in the century of conflict under Umayyad rule, following the end of the era of the Prophet and the orthodox caliphate. The performance of Islamic education and training slackened, favoritism and sectarianism prevailed, vestiges from dark pre-Islamic cultures resurfaced in the midst of events, which were taking place in rapid succession and which posed formidable challenges. As a result, scholars who were striving to preserve the model embodied in the era of the Prophet were eventually isolated from government, politics, and public life. They were forced into a scholarly isolation, employed in issuing fatwahs, handling individual affairs and matters of personal status, leading the prayers at the mosques, and urging worshippers, on Fridays and in mosque seminars, to observe high moral standards.

The exclusion and isolation of active scholars, upholders of the Islamic ideal, who are, in the final analysis, the Ummah's driving force, had terrible consequences: the distortion of the comprehensive, cultural, ideological vision; the destruction of national leadership institutions and of the Ummah's educational future; and the decline of educational approaches.

The comprehensive, civilized, doctrine-based Islamic vision is the creed of *tawhīd* (monotheism), of deputation, of belief in God and the Hereafter. It is a serious, positive creed that takes as its purpose charity and reform in this world ("Work for your life on earth as if you were to live forever, and work for your life in the Hereafter as if you were to die tomorrow!"). It turns a Muslim's life, in all its aspects and dimensions, into worship, that is *subjugation* to the True God. Thus, this vision serves as the conscience of the Ummah, stimulating it to righteous action that is useful in both this life and the

Hereafter. It requires it to divide its time between invocation (of God's name) and jihad. Invocation serves as an incentive for righteous work that is useful for the Hereafter, that is, an incentive for all kinds of jihad in learning and in action. Thus, it is an incentive for the jihad of self-purification, of seeking sustenance, of the pursuit of learning, of endeavors at reconciliation, of efforts to meet the needs of the deprived, of advocacy, of defending the faith, of self-protection and the defense of family and homeland, and of defending the weak and oppressed. This implies that a Muslim's life is a life of constant jihad, whether in its private or its public aspect, and whether it strives to meet individual or social needs. In all this, a Muslim seeks support by invoking God's Name, glorifying Him, reciting the Qur'an, praying, fasting, giving alms, performing Hajj, undertaking additional religious rites, and privately and publicly observing God's instruction.

God has promised those of you who believe and do good that they will be his deputies on earth, the same as their predecessors were.... (24: 55)

Say, "My prayer, devotion, life, and death are to God, the Lord of all creatures." (6: 162)

Those who strive for Our sake We will guide to Our right paths. God supports the righteous. (29: 69)

Perform prayers, for prayers prevent lewdness and abomination. Invocation of God's Name is a greater duty. God knows what you do. (29.: 45)

Meanwhile, the isolationist ivory-tower vision that became common among elite Muslim scholars, owing to their situation and their viewpoint of and function in society, was bound to turn into a vision that marginalized the public aspects of political governance, economic equity, social solidarity, performance of public office duties, and public institutions in general. It was bound to focus on the invocation of God's Name and religious ceremonies, as defined in Qur'anic terminology, calling them acts of worship and excluding other things, although it is clear from the Qur'an's perspective that a Muslim's whole life is *worship*,¹ whether it is an invocation of God's Name or the pursuit of knowledge and jihad. The isolationist scholarly vision was bound to give, passively, little importance to the kind of jihad that took the form of action and earthly

¹ While the Arabic words for *worship*, *slavery*, *subjugation*, and *enslavement* are derived from the same root, the concept of worship is derived from *subjugation* rather than *enslavement*, with the implication that by their free will, Muslims accept what is true and right. This for them is a source of pride and strength. (Power belongs to God, to His messenger, and to believers. – 63: 8)

pursuits, and to reduce it to mere procedures and contract rulings meant to regulate the transactions of people and affairs relating to their interests and to earning their living.

This distortion of the comprehensive view, effected by the isolation of the elite (that is, of scholars), was psychologically responsible, more than anything else, for the passivity that dominated the life, identity, goals, and collective functions of the Ummah in its attitude toward life and its cultural and reformative purposes. It was no longer a positive, cultural vision that encouraged cultivation and labor, even when the cultivator, with the end of life approaching, had no expectation of living long enough to harvest the crops. This distortion of vision was certainly responsible for the absence of consciousness and of serious and creative endeavors in the life of this Ummah. It also bore the principal responsibility for the corruption and division in its public life, for its passivity and poor psychological stimulation, and for its defective cultural performance.

The seclusion and scholarly isolation with which men of learning and wisdom, and the Islamic model, were besieged in later days produced a one-dimensional vision, with which human knowledge and experience, as well as social changes, retreated to a remote corner, with the result that knowledge was limited to textual and linguistic comprehension. Ultimately, all potential for renovation and interpretive judgment was stifled, imitation and memorizing became dominant, and intellectual failure shielded itself with the sacredness of the text to overpower the will of the Ummah and subject it, whatever the original intention, to practices of dark ignorance and to the arbitrariness of ignorant and sick people and promoters of self-interest. With this, learning, science, and fields of human knowledge witnessed a decline in the centuries of imitation and decadence. The general education of the Ummah at large, and young people in particular, was limited to modest elementary schools offering a simple, insignificant amount of education by teaching parts of the Glorious Qur'an and basic principles of arithmetic, just enough for the common needs of daily life. The educational and instructional approaches used were defective, based on authoritarianism and punishment. This education was financed by parents with the little that they could afford to pay to the unfortunate teacher who could find no better employment than the teaching profession. This educational system, with its methods and practices, was the target of criticism, censure, and derision by many intellectuals and enlightened people when compared with

the educational system offered to the children of the upper class. That system was of a different level and a wider scope that included religious and literary studies. Students were well treated and not subjected to any abuse. This type of education included also the training given by government officials and upper class dignitaries to the tutors of their children at home. Nothing was added to these opposite poles of educational systems other than a few schools designed to train students to serve as a corps of prayer leaders, preachers, judges, and muftis.

With the distortion of the comprehensive ideological vision, the one-sidedness of knowledge, the barrenness of the cognitive approach, the setback of the religious discourse, and the tyranny of the political elite, the progress of the cultural spirit of Islam slowed down and the Ummah and its institutions experienced decline and decadence. The psychology of people was afflicted with passivity and subservience, and the performance of individuals tended to be deficient. All energy waned, and psychological incentives for excellent workmanship waned, because it is those who are sympathetic and willing who devote themselves to and accept the burden of earnest and diligent work, whereas those who are fearful and reluctant are usually passive and content themselves with doing the minimum.

Performance inadequacy and poor motivation are still insurmountable obstacles to all efforts at reform, and the Ummah has first of all to free itself from them and their causes so that Islamic reform schemes may succeed, yield the desired results, and allow the Ummah to participate in the world's civilization in the age of science and technology.

The Place of Higher Education within Islamic Cultural Reform

The question now is: Where does higher education stand within the Islamic cultural reform project? How do we revitalize it and allow it to play the roles assigned to it: the dissemination of knowledge and education, the generation of new branches of learning, and the training of the personnel needed to meet the Ummah's present and future requirements.

Since the above are among the most important tasks and purposes of higher education, they go beyond the efforts to secure material equipment, administrative

procedures, and the academic structures of schools that depend on the importation and imitation of cognitive patterns and educational and learning systems. Every cultural identity has its own starting point, objectives, values, and keys that release its latent potential. Any efforts that ignore these particular characteristics and do not address the potential energies of the Ummah's cultural identity will fail to awaken its conscience and move it toward the necessary response and workmanship. Therefore, the Ummah will not be able to take its proper place among nations unless higher education is revitalized and reformed within the educational and learning system, and the blights that have dominated it are removed, so that it can achieve the basic tasks and goals assigned to it.

Afflictions of Higher Education in Muslim Countries

The First Affliction is that of imitation and replication. The majority of higher education systems and philosophies in Muslim countries are Western in character, alien to the Ummah's conscience and cultural goals. Based on imitation and duplication, these systems fail to take into consideration the nature of Islamic civilization, as well as its special characteristics, starting points, and values. These values are based on the principles of *tawhīd* and deputation, the purposefulness and moral dimensions of existence, the unity of its foundations, and the complementarity of its material, spiritual, and moral – as well as its secular and eternal – dimensions. In that civilization, gain, achievement, efficiency, and urbanization would not be ends in themselves, but rather a need for living and a spiritual means to something beyond, something more important. That something is making the soul eligible for the immortality of the Hereafter with competence and charity, which express love of and subjugation to the True One, the Most Just and Merciful.

The Second Affliction is the distortion of the comprehensive Islamic vision, together with the blights, superstition, and charlatanism that have crept into the culture of Muslims; bringing their cogwheels to a stop; distorting their mentality; spoiling their knowledge, daily life practices, and educational methods; and drawing them far away from the power derived from dependence on God and observing divine examples in all their endeavors and life pursuits.

For these reasons and because of these afflictions, higher education in the Muslim World has failed so far to perform its role successfully in the disciplines of learning, whether they are religious or secular studies, whether in the humanities or in science and technology. For the same reasons, higher education has not managed to disseminate knowledge, generate new disciplines of learning, and train creative and efficient personnel. The Ummah continues to be lost in its division and to live in the darkness of superstition, at the margin of the progress of human civilization.

Higher education reform and revitalization is an essential element in the Ummah's reform and awakening and for the realization of its civilizational aspiration and success of its global mission. Therefore, higher education reform has to begin at the roots by removing all the distortions afflicting them. It has to begin with the **Islamization of Knowledge**, based on sound foundations. This calls for reforming the approach to knowledge and integrating its divine and human sources. Revealed knowledge would provide a comprehensive, spiritual, and moral dimension of the sphere of human action, and universal laws, the scientific and technological tools for that action. Thus, the barriers of helplessness and lethargy would be removed, and the faculties of thought, study, and research would focus on temperaments and occurrences, applying the principles of reason and natural laws, and the guidance of revealed knowledge.

The Islamization of Knowledge – with its sound universal vision, integrated sources of knowledge, and observance of natural laws – will enlighten Muslim minds and enable them to explore the vast fields of science and knowledge, liberating them from superstitions and charlatan influences, as well as from the obstacles represented by inconsistencies, illusions, and perversities. In liberating minds, the Islamization of Knowledge will endow them with the ability to venture into the realms of science and knowledge, with strength, confidence, and inventiveness. It will provide them with the equipment to seek reform, competence, and creativity. Thus, they will acquire the capacity for serious, ethical performance, and the ability to meet challenges, solve problems, reach desired ends, and achieve objectives.

A reformed Islamic vision and a sound intellectual approach are prerequisites for the refinement of culture and the reform of educational curricula, which, in turn, are prerequisites for the reform of the affective structure of the soul, providing it with

guidance for its movement and incentive for its performance. When this guidance and incentive become operative, the utilization of available tools and equipment will be wise and effective, leading to the fulfillment of tasks and provision of needed materials, setting the Ummah's cogwheels back in motion, and stimulating its potential for ethical and creative production.

Therefore, if the Muslim World wishes to set the reform on the right track, after centuries of deviation and wandering, its priorities have to be reflected in an education reform plan. It must put quality before quantity, content before facilities, and curricula before instruments, without failing to give each of these items its due to the degree that allows it to function and serve its purpose, without any conflict or failure.

The balance of quality and quantity, content and facilities, is characteristic of nations with performance skills. With culture, education, and learning, these nations express their identities and their civilizational foundations. The balance originates in their energy stores and the performance incentives in their very existence. They place cultural and educational affairs, and the training of human beings and releasing their creative potential, at the top of their lists of priorities. They provide their citizens with all the available resources, ensuring that they become the instruments to achieve the goals and objectives of those nations.

Backward nations, on the other hand, are wont to imitate and replicate. Their educational systems fail to express their basic principles, features, and civilizational particularity. They are rather an artificial combination, both in vision and orientation. Educational needs and requirements are placed at the bottom of their lists of concerns, and these needs are the first to suffer the effects of scarcity when a crisis occurs and helplessness and failure are compounded. Yet, it is known as a fact that energy renewal and improvement of performance depend mainly on the quality of the culture and on the improvement of educational curricula, closing any gaps therein.

The Islamization of Knowledge: A Living Experiment in Revitalizing Higher Education

The Islamization of knowledge is an issue that concerns knowledge, learning, and education. It originated and developed in the minds and conscience of a group of Muslim believers, who were aware of the spirit and cultural power behind Islamic civilization and of the role they played in elevating human civilization as a whole to new horizons, which served as a starting point for other nations that later developed their cultures and achieved their aims. Those believers know how effective Islamic values were in securing for the Ummah an eminent position in human history.

Advocating and strongly believing in the Islamization of Knowledge, this group has been established to combine the disciplines of Islamic history and culture on the one hand and contemporary culture and science on the other. The group is also characterized by a high measure of sophistication and wisdom, resulting from the scholarly and professional experience of its members. In other words, the remarkable intellectual constitution of the group allows for an actual integration of knowledge that combines the disciplines of revealed knowledge and those of human and technological sciences.

This integration of knowledge that characterizes the group is reflected in the early writings of some of its members, such as *The Islamic Theory of Economics: Philosophy and Contemporary Means* (1960), and in the group's efforts to establish a major Islamic cultural society, the Association of Muslim Students in the United States of America, in 1963. The association grew and became a nucleus for important Islamic institutions sponsored by the Islamization of Knowledge Movement. From an intellectual perspective, the most important of these are the Association of Muslim Social Scientists in the United States and Canada (established in 1972), the International Institute of Islamic Thought (1981), and, most recently, the Child Development Institution (1999).

The notion of the Islamization of Knowledge is based on the conviction that the essence of the Ummah's crisis and performance deficiencies is, first of all, the distortions that have plagued Islamic thought, disrupted its unity of knowledge, and transformed it into stagnant textual knowledge. Those distortions have also marginalized the role of human knowledge within the structure and performance of Islamic thought and destroyed the seeds of human disciplines, which had started to sprout in the secondary origins of the principles and concepts of Islamic jurisprudence. The result was the decline of the

Ummah's institutions, unity, and ruling regimes. Moreover, religious discourse developed an intimidating character, which, with the widespread phenomenon of intellectual impotence and political despotism, pushed the Ummah into a passive role, causing it to lose its creative, cultural energy, and suffer from humiliation and backwardness. A reluctant and scared person does not make an effort beyond the minimum required, whereas generosity, dedication, and creativity are characteristics of a willing and warm-hearted person.

The Islamization of Knowledge is a plan to reformulate Islamic thought, using as its starting point Islamic basics and the humanitarian, global, and civilizational principles of Islam, which, in turn, are based on *tawhīd* and deputation. The plan aims at recapturing the positive, comprehensive Islamic vision, which is to serve as a base, and starting point. The plan also attempts to reform the approach to education, so that it will be built on a controlled, analytical, comprehensive concept, on an indissoluble integration of divine and human knowledge. The plan addresses the reality of human life on earth with the aim of realizing the purposes of Islamic Law; namely, conciliation and welfare. It observes the principles of reason and the divine laws of the universe. Thus, the plan provides the necessary tools to purify and refine Islamic culture and remove the distortions afflicting it, and the superstition, charlatanism, impurities, and illusions that have infiltrated it. Ultimately, God willing, it will provide sound educational and cultural inputs to reform the mental and psychological constitution of Muslim individuals and of the Ummah and raise generations endowed with strength, ability, and productivity.

The International Institute of Islamic Thought regards its basic task as, first of all, alerting intellectuals and educators, regardless of their specializations and orientations, to the nature of the crisis and aspects of educational reform, thus allowing them to see the situation more clearly. Consequently, they can also shoulder their responsibility in culture reform and development, the improvement and validation of educational curricula, and the stimulation of the Ummah's potential energy so that its progress may be improved.

The International Institute of Islamic Thought has collaborated with the intellectual elite in various Muslim cities and throughout the world in joint intellectual efforts that

have provided Muslim thinkers and scholars with platforms for dialog and significant intellectual contribution. The Institute's efforts have produced centers, institutions, conferences, symposia, publications, and periodicals in Arabic, English, and other languages spoken in the Muslim World and elsewhere. It has sponsored joint activities with all the parties concerned with the question of intellectual and educational reform. All this represents a hope, a promise, and a serious issue of great significance, offered for academic and scholarly discussion, to explore and utilize in the reconstruction of the Ummah's thought and its civilizational foundations. This is one of the most important foundations for the creation of conditions necessary for the awakening of the Ummah, activating its potential energy, and carrying out its civilizational enterprise in the service of humanity, God willing.

The Islamization of Knowledge Experiment at the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM)

In 1956, Malaysia became an independent country and started to feel its way toward building itself as a new state. The Malaysian leadership recognized the role of Islam in stimulating the energy potential of its Muslim population. Influenced by the First Conference on Islamic Education, held in Makkah in 1977, the leadership of the country founded the International Islamic University in Kuala Lumpur in 1984 according to an international agreement with the Islamic Conference Organization. The university is meant to be part of a system of international Islamic universities, which, as envisioned by the organization, will focus in their curricula on Islamic culture.

The Malaysian leadership recognized the nature of constructive, civilizational, reformative thought contributed by the International Institute of Islamic Thought, which held one of its international conferences on the Islamization of Knowledge and reform of the cognitive system in Kuala Lumpur in 1984. The Malaysian Minister of Education at the time, Mr. Anwar Ibrahim, had had an close relationship with the Institute since the time when he served as a member of the General Secretariat of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth in Riyadh. Therefore, in 1988, the Malaysian Ministry of Education invited the International Institute of Islamic Thought to sponsor the fledgling university,

with a 1,000-student population. The Ministry requested the delegation of an Institute member, as a service to Islam and a contribution to reform and development efforts in Malaysia, to compile a university curriculum that embodied the concepts of the Islamization of Knowledge and its foundations.

The Institute, represented by one of its thinkers with experience in organization and university education, took charge of the University, and within eleven years (1988–1999), both its physical and academic construction were completed. The curricula of its colleges covered all the disciplines of Islamic studies and human sciences, in addition to architecture, engineering, and medicine. It had two campuses, as well as an additional campus for preparatory courses in Arabic and English and for complementary courses for students whose educational systems failed in some aspects to meet their needs and the University's requirements, such as students from the former Soviet Union and students of general education who had only eleven years of pre-college schooling.

Body and Soul

The planning of the two campuses – the main campus in Kuala Lumpur and the medical campus in Kuantan, which consists of the School of Medicine and the Faculty of Science – was meant to express, ideologically and physically, concepts of the Islamization of Knowledge and its foundations. These concepts and foundations are particularly embodied in the Kuala Lumpur campus, the construction of which is complete in 2006, except for certain affiliate facilities and services.

The achievement represented by the University and its campus – which has a current enrollment of 15,000 students – is not merely a matter of creation and innovation in curricula and programs. Rather, it goes beyond that to include the beautiful design of Islamic architecture, which makes it one of the most elegant campuses in the world, expressing Islamic values in its beauty of structure and efficiency of performance.

The mosque is situated in the middle of the campus and represents its spiritual center, with student and staff traffic flowing around it in all directions. The mosque affords an important arena for Islamic cultural and spiritual activities. The grounds of the campus and the way its facilities are connected provide a spirit of cultural and social intimacy.

Moreover, the location of housing and recreational and sports facilities locations observes Islamic criteria. It ensures, in addition to performance efficiency, the privacy and freedom of each of the two sexes; upholds Islamic standards of morality in the relations between the sexes; and responds to all the psychological, social, cultural, recreational, and sports needs.

Disciplines of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and the Human Sciences

The essence of the IIUM system is the academic and educational curriculum. The syllabus is educational and embodies the goals of the Islamization of Knowledge, remedies the intellectual and methodological distortion, builds a mechanism for cultural refinement, and makes an effort to rebuild the generations of this Ummah, psychologically and educationally.

The most important task on the agenda of the IIUM administration was confronting the distortion of knowledge and methodology afflicting Islamic thought and paralyzing its ability to reform and build, and to recruit alternative, educated work groups, characterized by unity of thought and thoroughness of approach. The most important field of this alternative academic approach is that of Islamic studies and the humanities.

For this purpose, the Faculty of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and the Human Sciences was set up as the largest college, comprising all specializations in Islamic studies and social and human sciences. For professional reasons, the disciplines of economics, administrative studies, and the law were excluded, although their syllabi have the same purpose and goal.

The cornerstone of the academic system of this college – aspiring to realize the goal of the unity of Islamic knowledge, reform of methods of thought, and training alternative educated groups of leaders and professionals – was the double-major, credit-hour system.

Under the double-major system, every student specializing in Islamic studies has to choose a cognate major in one of the human sciences, and likewise, any student majoring in the humanities has to have Islamic studies as a cognate major. Students who are willing to study for one additional year can fulfill the requirements of a second bachelor's degree in the cognate major, and the university encourages that option. These students

will finally have two university degrees in Islamic studies and in the social science that they have originally chosen as a cognate major.

This duality of knowledge and specialization does provide students not only with a wide scope of knowledge, complementary in orientation and tools, and in its superior comprehension of the dimensions of spiritual, ethical, and social life, but also with particular (the analogy method in Islamic study) and general (the methods of social sciences) methodological complementarity, and with the various study tools of these methods. This is a very important methodological element in the integrated cultivation of student mentality and of future performance skills.

This system of study serves to expand the students' intellectual capabilities to include the general, social aspects (social studies) in addition to the personal and spiritual aspect (religious and ethical studies). With these expanded capabilities, students acquire the intellectual tool to interact with the soul and psychological and cognitive spirit of the Ummah. They are enabled to switch on its motion and energy. In addition to all this, the dual system opens the door to a wider range of employment for the students, and consequently the skills of these young people are utilized and their dignity is safeguarded, particularly in countries with Muslim minorities and in poor Muslim countries, where employment opportunities are scarce, especially in religious services. With a degree in social sciences – coupled with the mastery of English, the language of instruction of technical courses, and Arabic, the language of instruction in religious subjects – graduates have the ability to work in any appropriate civil field they wish. They are qualified for employment in the civil service, in the teaching profession, or in private business. They do not have to enter, as happens to students of Islamic studies graduating from some Islamic universities, a profession which does not suit their abilities and training. Graduates qualified in both Islamic and social studies have, by any standard, a more thorough knowledge and a wider range of thinking, comprehension, performance, and efficiency than others.

Under this system, the University admits graduates from one-major universities into its postgraduate programs if they meet its requirements, which call for a good background in the subjects of revealed knowledge, as well as any field of human science in which the student has majored.

For example, students who want to study any of the disciplines of Islamic Law at M.A. or Ph.D. level have the chance to do so after completing the requirements of that discipline. These include mastering Arabic and completing the number of basic courses in Islamic studies required for study in that field. On the other hand, if the applicants are graduates of a department of Islamic studies, they have to meet the basic requirements of a social studies subject and English, in addition to Arabic, which they are supposed to have already mastered.

Although the International Institute of Islamic Thought had offered this idea to some universities in the Muslim world, these universities later abandoned the system and reverted to the single-major system in their postgraduate Islamic studies. The reason was that those universities could not develop a good program of social studies or effective courses of Arabic for non-native speakers. However, by reducing the period of study, they gave quantity greater importance than quality.

The IIUM's system has been successful for several reasons. Most important is the large number of graduates of the University itself, with Islamic and social studies majors, who seek admission into postgraduate studies at the University. In addition, the IIUM has developed its program of Arabic for non-native speakers into a series of courses that ranks as the best in that field. Moreover, graduates of other universities are highly interested in being admitted to the IIUM's postgraduate program, and the fact that mastering Arabic and English is a prerequisite for their admission makes those who know only one or neither of the two languages work hard in their home countries to catch up with or join the University preparatory program at their own expense. Thus, the IIUM does not have a shortage of applicants for its postgraduate programs. In fact, the demand is higher than it can accommodate, which allows those programs, with the integration of knowledge and with the methods of investigation and research they offer, to fill the intellectual arena with people who have experience and knowledge covering the various disciplines of natural and human sciences from an Islamic perspective based on the principles, values, and purposes of Islam.

The development of course assignments in each discipline, taught from an Islamic perspective, has been regularly monitored. These courses cover the whole syllabus that students of the same level study at secular universities, with the addition of a critical

Islamic evaluation and a survey of any Islamic viewpoints that have materialized in the field in question. With this approach, the Islamic perspective forms a considerable contribution which has an academic value and which completely enriches the educational disciplines. With time, this enrichment will prove its validity and credibility, and will grow in various fields to make a real contribution, serving the Ummah's interests in cognitive development and in the quality of graduates, whether in their performance or their achievement. The Islamic perspective will also offer intellectual and scientific options in the various aspects of science and life.

Several academic courses and fields of study that relate to the Ummah's concerns, needs, and perspective have been designed. These are courses in religion, philosophy, law, the humanities, economics, and administration, and they are listed in the University Bulletin for undergraduate and postgraduate studies as part of the curricula of various colleges and departments.

In this context, one can mention Western Studies, in particular, which began as a part specialization and gradually developed into a major subject. It is now a department that offers a conceptual, accurate, and perceptive study of Western history, thought, and culture. The graduates of this department are specialists that help the Muslim mentality to understand the West in itself, as well as its cultural and human contributions and transgressions. This can be useful in dialog and interaction with the West, and it contributes to the fulfillment of Islamic reform aspirations and to the development of relations with the West, based on active and constructive cooperation that overcomes grievances, grudges, and acts of aggression that are encouraged by the backwardness, weakness, and division of the Muslim World. In other words, the Ummah's interaction with the achievements of modern civilization and societies can thus be based on objective understanding and methodological foundations. The Muslim mind would confront this civilization as a system that has its own characteristics, foundations, and purposes, with the knowledge that interaction with it aims at positive, mutual fertilization for the good of the human race and its global civilization.

In physics, engineering, and similar fields and professions, the Islamization of Knowledge does not include scientific facts and the natural and divine laws to which all matter and creatures are subject, for in the study of these, all human beings are equal.

Differences and variation, however, come from the methods used in dealing with, utilizing, and benefiting from, these facts and laws, as well as the ethical standards observed in using them, whether for progress or destruction and whether seeking benefit or causing harm. All these things are concerns of the Islamic faith, covered by its culture, science philosophy, and ethics of research and professional practice. In this regard, there are different schools of thought, attitudes, purposes, and cultures. The Islamic perspective functions to ameliorate and guide, distinguishing good from evil, benefit from harm, and humanitarian concerns from barbaric actions, and restoring the spirituality and nobility of life and its purposes.

Another aspect that relates to natural sciences and their study is awareness of the history and contributions of the Ummah to bring it justice and free it from Western bias, and to enhance self-confidence among Muslims with scientific knowledge. This can serve as a stimulation to resume the process and as a means to learn the lessons of how the former progress was impeded, how the way was lost, and how the Muslim mind deviated from its seriousness and objectivity into a world of illusion, superstition, and backwardness.

What is important here in formulating the mechanism of the Islamization-of-Knowledge approach is the concept of program development, which means continuity and persist application of effort to achieve civilizational ends. It is a process of unceasing motion, development, and urgency that enriches thought and culture and meets the needs and conditions of live, developing societies. This process starts from firm ethical starting points and leads to benign and explicit ends and achievements.

The development of the content and quality of study courses, based on the principles of the Islamization of Knowledge, never stops, and it gains in momentum with continual revision in light of the experience gained and the interaction with the needs of the Ummah and of society. By supporting the always-renewing cognitive preparation of students and expanding their horizons, the University equips them with potential educational and psychological abilities that make many corporations and government agencies seek to employ only IIUM graduates. These graduates are characterized by competence, high moral standards, seriousness, education, skills, and potential, to the extent that many officials and visitors from other Muslim countries request that the IIUM

help to train students in order to acquire graduates of such outstanding quality and with such high competence, both educationally and professionally.

Languages and Arabization

While thought and curricula are the content, languages are the performance tools. Thus, languages play a vital role in efficient performance. The more efficient the tool of performance, the greater the likelihood of success.

IIUM has given considerable attention to the language question, to guarantee excellent and efficient performance by graduates and provide opportunities for learning, productivity, and communication between them and the environments in which they will work. Therefore, in addition to their mother tongues, students are trained in two international languages: Arabic and English. This, under the conditions that currently prevail in the Muslim World, gives them access to source materials, whether Islamic, educational, or technological.

In teaching Arabic and English, the IIUM provides teaching aids, following the most up-to-date international methods and using Islamic content and guidance. Arabic serves as the language of Islamic religious learning and for effective communication between Muslims, while English serves – in the early twenty-first century when scientific and technological resources in Arabic and other languages of the Muslim World are still scarce and inadequate – as the language of instruction in modern scientific and technological courses. Thus, the students are in a position to communicate and interact with the intellectual, cultural, scientific, and political elite in most Muslims countries at this stage. With the two languages, Arabic and English, IIUM graduates are qualified to play an active role in their countries, with their combined intellectual, educational, and effective abilities, and they contribute to the development of thought and areas of study in their societies and their spheres of action.

It is hoped that educational and scientific Islamic institutions, both regional and international, will address the language dilemma of the Ummah to find a radical solution. It is a dilemma that has been contributing to the cultural failing and political division of the Ummah. Unless scientific and educational activities are carried out in the native

language of a nation, its culture and education are bound to suffer. Education will be limited to an inadequate acquisition by a minority that masters foreign, international languages in which resources are available. The most important of these now is English, which is most often a second language for students and, consequently, does not allow them to be creative, for creativity can be only in the mother tongue.

The Ummah can acquire a significant, international position in learning and culture only by using a widespread international language, rich in scientific terminology, particularly in physics and technology. This requirement can only be met by using the language of the Qur'an, which serves as an effective bond for all Muslim peoples. Even an illiterate Muslim has a reasonable knowledge of Arabic from the Qur'an. If this knowledge is systematically nurtured, those people will have a cherished international first language, common to all of them, which gives them access to scientific and technological materials and enriches their culture and their conscience at the lowest cost.

Owing to their love of the Qur'an, Muslim peoples will not hesitate to adopt its language as their religious, educational, and scientific first language, in addition to their local tongues and colloquial dialects, as long as it is available to them and they feel no need to learn any other language. What Arabs and Muslims have to do is to contemplate their former experience in Arabization and the experience of currently advanced nations with their diligent and prompt translation of every new scientific addition, particularly in physics and technology. Such is the case in Japan, Russia, China, Germany, the United States, and other countries.

One of the most important areas of translation into Arabic – which should be given priority – is the scientific and technological periodicals, which are the channel through which new contributions in all fields make their first appearance. The translated version should be readily available at educational and scientific institutions and public libraries, because technology moves fast in those countries that have reached scientific superiority.

The cost of establishing institutions for the translation, publication, and efficient distribution of new additions appearing in the periodicals of science and other disciplines would be less than the cost of major universities in many Muslim capitals.

When scientific knowledge becomes available in Arabic, there will be much more demand for learning it and studying the religious, cultural, scientific, and technological materials available in it. Translation will become a business and assignments will be completed in record time. Using Arabic as the language of school and university instruction will be easy and effective, and will repudiate all arguments against such usage. Usually, these arguments are advanced not against the language, which has a remarkable ability of expression in all its forms, but against the failure to reinforce it with new scientific materials, as is done with international languages and the languages of active contemporary nations.

When scientific translations begin to flow, the problem of terminology will automatically disappear. Standard terminology will be promoted by publication and usage. This promotion can be supported by establishing a language academy with contributions from all the current academies, making a unified effort to keep up with the activities of translation and Arabization and provide standard terminology, free from local bias and isolationist tendencies, which have destructive motives and which reflect, or respond to, foreign and colonial interests.

Language Simplification: Grammar and Spelling

It is high time for Arabic academies to make greater efforts to simplify Arabic spelling and grammar, making the maintenance of sound and accurate comprehension of the Qur'an a working criterion, which allows also the comprehension and preservation of the Arab/Muslim heritage. With that guaranteed, other things should not be insisted on so that learning the language and using it properly can be made easier in an age in which education is a right for everybody, not only privileged groups and specialists, and in which the scope of knowledge has greatly expanded.

Because of the greater ability one gains from electronic devices in dealing with a language, discovering its mysteries, and surmounting its difficulties, it is possible now, without undue difficulty, to acquire an analytical understanding of all cases and issues of the language that has not been as feasible in the past. Therefore, it is hoped that the efforts of linguists will manage to solve many complexities of the language, particularly

those of spelling that have no benefit and add nothing significant.

One example of spelling difficulty which, in this education-for-all age, seems unnecessary is the various and complicated methods of writing a glottal stop (*hamzah*), depending on its type, position,² and the vowel preceding it. No other sound has such complex rules of spelling, which, difficult and complex as they are, cause many people to make mistakes in writing, even when these people are able to figure out its type. Rather than help people spell correctly when they write, the rules seem to have no other purpose than to prove people's ignorance of them.

A similar case is that of the soft *alif* at the end of three-letter words, which has two methods of writing depending on the root from which the word is derived, where the letter is originally either *waw* or *yā*, and this determines how the *alif* is to be written. When one is unaware of the origin of the *alif*, one is likely to make a mistake in writing it, or, at best, one may write it correctly by imitation, without knowing the reason for the spelling. Whichever the case, this is an example of rules that bring no special benefit, and there is no need to burden the language and its learners with them. They only make spelling difficult and exhaust the memory of students.

These are only examples, and there are many other cases that need to be simplified or standardized, such as a past-tense verb ending with an *alif* and the different cases of present-tense verbs and verbs in the imperative mood ending with vowels. In some of these cases, a silent *alif* is added after a *waw* with which the verb ends, while no such silent *alif* is added at the end of plural nouns ending with *waw*. A third example is the omission of the long *alif* sound in certain words (demonstrative pronouns in particular). There are many other cases.

It is also important to reconsider Arabic grammar formulas and methods of teaching. Admittedly, it is important to distinguish between the subject and object of a verb, particularly when the object precedes the subject, because failure to distinguish them may affect one's understanding of the intended meaning. Distinction by the final inflection is not possible with names that end with long vowels (such as Muna and Laila), and only

² By type is meant whether it is /a/, /u/, or /i/. By position is meant whether it occurs at the beginning, middle, or end of a word.

sentence order and/or context can serve to distinguish between subject and object. Inflections, however, do not serve to distinguish between an adjective and an adverb. No inflection tells us whether a noun has a certain quality or is in a certain condition; after all, both cases are matters of description. Therefore, these problems call for a thorough reconsideration of many grammatical rules. The linguistic reform movement should pay special attention to sentence structure and to context, both of which influence comprehension, without becoming involved in formalities, traditions, and professionalism related to meaning in formulating and teaching Arabic grammar in this education-for-all age. It is imperative to simplify classical Arabic and facilitate its appropriate and effective usage by Muslim learners in an age in which education is no longer a privilege for the upper class or for specialists.

Linguists in our age must make the effort to simplify the language and promote a more effective language performance, without affecting the basics necessary for understanding the Glorious Qur'an and comprehending its meaning, implications, and style. They should take into consideration that the various methods of language usage by Arabs, past and present, has not affected their ability to communicate with one another, nor reduced their eloquence.

Although both the International Institute of Islamic Thought and IIUM are aware of the need to enrich Arabic and to make the effort to give it its proper place, this undertaking is beyond the capabilities of either. The most they have been able to achieve in this area is making Arabic the language of instruction at IIUM and making source materials available for the Ummah's scholars and intellectual elite. The two institutions have also focused on the publication of journals and other periodicals in Arabic, as well as in English. The publication of intellectual and educational works and research papers in Arabic enriches the Ummah's knowledge and thought, and their publication in English serves as a global contemporary vehicle for communication with many nations and with the intellectual elite in many countries of the contemporary world.

It is important for concerned parties, official and non-official, charitable and commercial, local and international, to give special attention to scholarly and scientific translation, particularly the translation of major academic and scientific periodicals, into the language of the Qur'an, to enrich that language, and make it eligible to be the

scientific and educational first language of all Muslim peoples. The Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), governments of Muslim countries, and educational and research institutions throughout the Islamic World must cooperate and coordinate their efforts to bring this plan into existence and to ensure success for both the Ummah's civilizational and unity aspirations for the good of humanity.

We deceive ourselves when we dream that others will transfer science and technology to us, because science and technology continue to develop with astounding speed. They can be mastered only by a person qualified to be productive and endowed with a scientific mentality, a creative ability, and a rich background. Therefore, the beginning must be better intellectual training for the Ummah's new generations and future personnel, which revitalizes their energy, triggers their enthusiasm, reforms approaches and methods of thought and education, and enriches their culture, especially the Arabic culture, with every new work in science and technology. Initially, this has to be done in the native languages of the various Muslim peoples, and later they can be unified culturally through the medium of the language of the Qur'an according to a carefully drawn up plan.

It is a very easy aim to achieve if there is resolve and insight for the Ummah to have all the tools that allow it to be capable and productive and to revitalize its scientific and technological institutions and workers, with God's help.

Cultivation of Knowledge and Encouragement of Research

The cultivation of knowledge and encouragement of research undertakings are the other side of action in the Islamization of Knowledge at IIUM.

It is true that undergraduate education at the University and its complementarity in all departments are crucial for training a work force with integrated knowledge and methodological skill and for creating a full range of inter-disciplinary and comparative studies. On the other hand, postgraduate studies, research by faculty members and graduate students, research center projects, the interaction of these projects with life and society, the publication of scholarly and scientific writings and international periodicals,

hosting academic seminars and meetings of faculty member, holding dialogs, discussing academic and scientific issues and concerns, the exchange of views and expertise, co-sponsoring symposia and conferences with academic and international institutions – all these matters have received utmost attention and backing at IIUM. For this reason, within such a short time, the University has become an academic and scientific platform and lighthouse in religion, human sciences, medicine, and engineering. Many symposia and conferences have been held there, covering various subjects of study.

From the very beginning, IIMU has offered an extensive postgraduate program offering M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in a number of areas of Islamic studies, human sciences, and education, and in law, economics, and engineering. Library and laboratory facilities are provided, and channels of cooperation with various educational, scientific, and industrial institutions have been established. This policy and the willingness to provide all kinds of services, as well as the cooperation and exchange with various parties with similar interests, have been productive and have yielded numerous research works by faculty members and graduate students. The University has been working at constantly improving the standard of these works and their orientation toward contributing to Islamic thought and meeting the Ummah's needs.

The IIMU Research Center, the Academic Council, and the latter's committees in the various colleges have provided researchers with support and encouragement and sponsored their projects, in cooperation with educational, scientific, and industrial institutions, firms, and concerns. The University has implemented carefully prepared research plans to meet urgent needs. The teaching load of everyone demonstrating outstanding research skills in areas that meet the research priorities of IIMU and the Ummah is usually reduced and sometimes, in the case of certain research projects, waived altogether to allow the faculty members concerned to devote all their time to research. In order to serve integrated knowledge and the complementarity of curricula in student training, IIMU opens its doors, within the limits of research plans, to experts and specialists (outstanding judges and lawyers, successful business people, and experienced scientists) for a full or part-time contribution, by participating in its teaching and research programs, offering consultations and advice, or serving on boards and committees that guide the University and upgrade its curricula and syllabi.

One of the research projects to which academicians were fully committed was the preparation of syllabi and textbooks and the construction of an educational organization plan for a model international Islamic school. That school was meant to be the nucleus for an Islamic school system covering all stages of general education, from nursery school to secondary education. The system would be guided by Islamic concepts and vision and would aim at providing children with a wholesome, positive, and enlightened Islamic education. It would also develop in them a sound mentality that was scientific and methodological, not tainted by the deviations and distortions of superstition, charlatanism, and the residue of traditions inherited from ancient cultures. This school system would endeavor to reconstruct the concepts of family and school education of students so that they would grow into honorable human beings with the creativity, initiative, and constructive and reformative spirit that reflected the Islamic concept of deputation. As the culmination of the project, an all-level school was established, with a student body composed of the children of faculty members and any children from the general public that the school could accommodate. Although the project is still at an initial stage, the early projections of the system and curricula indicate a degree of success that encourages continued efforts toward the desired end.

One of the tasks of the research center and the office of its dean is to organize consultations and research projects by faculty members on behalf of, or in collaboration with, companies and establishments.

Moreover, IIUM has developed a program for the publication of outstanding works written by faculty members. It also publishes a number of journals in English, some of which are specialized and published by various colleges and specialized research centers. An academic journal in Arabic called *al-Tajdīd* [Innovation] is also published, and it observes the highest academic standards of objectivity and free intellectual expression, which the University has always advocated, as long as research and expression stem from a scholarly spirit and aim to serve Islam.

These efforts are complemented by the academic activities of all colleges and departments, that is, academic programs that include seminars, lectures, panel discussions, and conferences – domestic, regional, and international. A number of these conferences and meetings are organized annually in Islamic studies, the humanities, and

physical science. The Islamization of Knowledge is the guiding principles for these activities devoted to the discussion of issues that concern the Ummah and develop knowledge from an Islamic perspective. Because of the seriousness and efficiency of IIMU activities, various universities and research centers inside and outside the country, as well as international institutions, have cooperated with the University. These include the International Institute of Islamic Thought, the Islamic Organization for Culture and Science, and the Islamic Development Bank. The cooperation has positively augmented research efforts, expanding research horizons and experience. IIMU publishes an annual book of the completed and continuing research works by faculty members. Thus, IIMU's academic programs have proved their ability to encompass all the positive aspects of the contemporary spheres of science, with an Islamic spirit, vision, and cultural purpose. All this raises hopes for a prosperous civilizational future.

The Integration of Academic and Educational Performance

It is established that the reform of specializations and curricula achieves the integration of knowledge and equips students with the cognitive bases that form the content of their minds and their methods of study. Meanwhile, related cultural pursuits and the campus activities are of great importance in forming the students' psyche and their future interaction with society.

The first resource that should be available to students within the university environment is sound general knowledge, remedying deficiencies in any important areas that are needed to correct the distortions pervading Muslim societies. The courses and programs designed for this purpose are included in the general requirements program offered to students. This includes academic programs at university level and student affairs programs, and is intended to fill the gaps in the students' background; to enhance their spiritual, religious, cultural, and educational development; and to equip them with cultural aptitude, social and physical skills, and constructive energy. In spite of the intensive curriculum, the productivity of students is doubled and their comprehension capacity increases in an extraordinary manner.

The University requirements program is included in the curricula to provide students

with an ideological, ethical, and cultural foundation, and thus to upgrade their education and knowledge. The program also aims at preparing students to play their social and leadership roles, in addition to a professional role. With this in mind, IIMU offers – in addition to courses in religious doctrine, ethics, and general education – a course on Family and Parenthood, which provides male and female students with the scientific, social, educational, and Islamic perspectives of the subject. The purpose is to lay the cornerstones of the basic social structure, the family, on a sound psycho-sociological Islamic foundation, and to equip young parents with the tools to follow educational methods and achieve the desired ends. This is an effort to produce citizens with spiritual and moral strength, objective mental capabilities, creative psychological potential, and feelings of dignity and self-confidence. Thus, future generations may have the necessary courage and initiative for human beings to succeed in their role of vicegerents and their mission of construction.

To serve the same purpose, IIMU offers a course in Creative Thinking and Problem Solving. The course promotes awareness of the nature of creative thinking, its psychological and educational foundations, and its scientific tools, which is clearly lacking in the culture of this Ummah. Young people can thus be guided in developing their thought and performance and in raising their children on bases that allow the Ummah and its young generations to take part in the race of construction and civilization building.

A course is available on the Rise and Fall of Civilizations. It is a University requirement because this Ummah was the heir of a number of ancient civilizations and is now in a close race with other civilizations. Young people need therefore to be equipped with an encompassing civilizational and scientific perspective that helps in the rationalization of programs for the desired civilizational Islamic reform.

The University has introduced two postgraduate diplomas for teacher training in Family and Parenthood and Creative Thinking and Problem Solving. This allows the University to include courses on these subjects in its basic requirements. For the same purpose, a Student Affairs Office has been opened. It is one of the largest and most important of the IIUM's offices. It has the task of releasing the potential of the students, fostering in them a brotherly and group spirit and a sense of belonging to the Ummah.

The Office provides a wide range of activities and experience, cultural programs, free education, and training in various skills. These programs bring all the students and faculty members together as one big family, the students comprising more than ninety-six nationalities and faculty members of more than forty. All of them are driven by a sense of having a mission, a spirit of brotherhood, a feeling of true belonging, a sublime objective, and an awareness of the challenge.

The administration of IIUM, the management of services and admissions, and all the staff of the administrative departments at every level, from the lowest ranking official to top leadership, are, according to IIUM policy, part of the University family and share in the educational responsibility. In fact, the educational role of the administrative staff may be more influential since they serve as an example to the students, who deal directly with them and feel their influence in their daily study routine, and who base their concepts and style of dealing with others and with society in general on the model and quality of that interaction. Therefore, driven by an Islamic sense of mission, IIMU make every effort to maintain the dignity of its staff members and meet their needs and those of their dependants. It extends easy loans to them to help them build their future and provides them and their family members with medical services and children's nurseries. That is how the IIUM looks after its staff members. At the same time, staff members are expected, by the same token, to treat students well, respect their dignity and the human nature with which God has honored every human being, take care of their needs, be always ready to help them and smoothly process any applications they submit, and provide them with all possible services and counseling without complicating matters and disregarding their ethnic, linguistic, or religious identity. Muslims and non-Muslims are treated equally.

Experience tells us that with a sense of responsibility, solidarity, and joint interest based on justice, equity, equality, appreciation, encouragement, and respect, and with the provision of training and experience, as well as guidance and counseling, positive energy can produce a vast output of work smoothly and easily. The cost and energy needed for this work are much lower than that required by negative, wasted efforts spent in overcoming obstacles and in the conflict that prevails in organizations that have no clear objective, sense of mission, group interest, or sense of belonging. It is true, as

demonstrated by experience, that although achievement, progress, and success require great efforts, impediments, conflict, and backwardness require in fact greater effort and toil. It is also clear that real poverty and want are in vitality and the spirit rather than in resources.

Promising Results

The Islamic spirit and mission common to all work approaches, together with building the team spirit, are behind the great success, achieved within only one decade, of this remarkable academic edifice. These achievements are due to the Islamization-of-Knowledge plan and concepts and the creative curricula, with the Islamic-style backing of the most cost-effective creative academic programs, installations, and facilities.

It is therefore not surprising that this outstanding edifice, based on the Islamization-of-Knowledge project and its civilizational foundations, provides the Ummah with outstanding work forces in all fields. Nor is it surprising that its academic programs, systems, regulations, and cultural, social, and educational arrangements are a qualitative and quantitative step forward in higher education. It is a step that covers the range of experience and talents and the fields, concerns, and issues of research. It is a step forward in the scheme to revitalize higher education to serve the Ummah's civilizational aspirations, release the potential of scholars, activate latent capabilities and productivity, and meet the Ummah's spiritual, intellectual, and functional needs.

In their performance during this short period, IIUM students have proved that they have better capabilities than their counterparts who have graduated from other, well-established universities, and that they are the winners in cultural and sports competitions, not only in Malaysia, but also in East Asian and Asian–African tournaments. They always hold leading positions at the Australasian level and in international cultural contests. In the 2000 international debate contest of college students, the IIUM team managed to be one of the top ten teams, which is a first for a team from a non-English-speaking country. In fact, the team ranked seventh among hundreds of teams from major English-speaking universities around the world.

Moreover, the IIMU male and female taekwondo teams are the champions of

Malaysia in this sport. When the soccer team at the University had its own field at the new campus in 1998, it managed to win the Malaysian soccer tournament from a former team that had held the championship for three successive years. In the tournament, none of the university teams managed to score a single goal against the IIMU team.

Reports of the achievements of the graduates of this young university and of the high leadership positions they hold in their countries, which are closely followed by the administration and alumni society, are concrete evidence that the logic on which it was founded is sound. It is the logic of the Islamization of Knowledge to revitalize higher education and serve the Ummah's civilizational aspirations. It is also evidence that the foundations of this logic are capable of stimulating civilizational energy latent in the Ummah's entity with the least effort and at the lowest cost. Quantity then would turn into quality, scarcity into abundance, and cheap into precious and expensive. This has been the case in the experience of live, alert nations and their active systems whose culture and educational programs activate the potential energy and productivity of their citizens. The IIMU experiment is, therefore, a pioneer endeavor that is worthy of consideration and contemplation to benefit from the lessons that it teaches in developing and revitalizing higher education in the Muslim World and to serve the Ummah's interests and civilizational aspirations.

Resources and Funding

The seriousness of action and the ends and aims sought by the IIMU project, the methodological reforms it has achieved, and the academic and educational policies it has drawn – all these have enabled the University to appeal to the conscience of activists and revive the hopes in many hearts. These people have witnessed their hopes embodied in the project and seen living and animate Muslim images in the blossoms of its output in physical and human sciences. Consequently, the urge to contribute financially and in other ways has been awakened.

Individuals representing all levels – ordinary people, activists, officials, etc. – from all over the Muslim World have been visiting the University to see it at first hand, to find out what they can about it, and offer advice, encouragement, and contributions.

Although the Malaysian government has undertaken to finance IIMU programs,

establishments, and buildings, many international Islamic institutions and organizations have extended their contributions in financing campus buildings, scholarship funds, and international conferences in an unprecedented manner. Likewise, charities, business people, and other philanthropists have extended their financial assistance to the University and its scholarship fund. Thus, thousands of outstanding students of more than ninety-six nationalities, representing all the ethnic groups and cultures in the Muslim World and reflecting its future unity, are supported in their studies.

Contributions do not take a financial form only; interaction with the IIUM mission is also represented by the excellent human resources who have made sacrifices to join the faculty. They offer their knowledge and experience to students, thus supporting IIUM academic and educational programs. The sacrifices have been made not only by many individuals, but also by universities and other educational and scientific institutions, which have released some of their outstanding faculty and staff members to help the University with its new programs and to contribute to its teaching and research effort.

The support and financial and human resources received by IIUM from the host country, the Malaysian people, and academic and scientific Islamic institutions and individuals inside and outside Malaysia are an expression of the effect that this project has produced. It has touched the souls and consciences of all the people concerned, awakening in them the urge to give, activating charitable inclinations to serve the Ummah, and revitalizing the educational establishment through this University and its future promise of the Islamization of Knowledge and reform of Islamic thought, culture, and education.

This experiment teaches us lessons about the stimulation of latent energies, the propensity to make liberal contributions, and the revitalization of the educational establishment as a basis to release the forces of the Islamic, civilizational reform initiative. These lessons should be applied, not wasted. The experiment should be well comprehended, benefits should be reaped from it, and it should be developed, and utilized in other experiments to revitalize higher education institutions to serve the Ummah's future and its civilizational aspirations. It is hoped that ISESCO will finance research into this experiment and the IIUM campus as a creative Islamic model. This research should be made available to universities and other higher education institutions in

Muslim countries.

The Future

From the above, it is clear that awareness of the dimensions of the Islamization-of-Knowledge project and the role it is to play in reforming the higher education establishment is imperative, so that it can reform the Ummah's intellectual and educational life. Thus, it is possible to upgrade the quality of education and research, and also that of leaders and professional work forces on bases that activate the Ummah's potential, touch the conscience of Muslims, set them in motion, rectify the distortion of and damage to the bulk of their culture and minds, and build their psyche.

Without the awareness of the people in charge of higher education institutions and the administration of these intellectual and educational dimensions, the revitalization of that education and the stimulation it entails would not be possible. The higher education establishment would, for decades and generations to come, continue to be a suffering invalid, as it is today and as it has been for many past decades and generations. By the international criteria of civilization, that establishment will continue to be helpless, and the work forces that graduate for employment will continue to have hazy thinking, a polluted culture, distorted programs, and a limited ambition. They will continue to seek nothing more than earning a living, driven by the instinct of survival. They will continue to be indifferent, regardless of how many imported devices and machines are available to them. Although additions can be made to these most up-to-date machines, nothing better than what has been seen so far can be expected. After all, future conditions can be divined from past experience.

The hope entertained by the **Islamization-of-Knowledge school** is to be able, with its efforts, to alert elite intellectuals, thinkers, educators, and all groups whose method of thinking and their perspective are Islamic. These people have to bear their responsibility in intellectual and methodological reform in general, and the reform of higher education in particular, since it is the field from which graduate the elite and the academic, scholarly, and professional work forces of the Ummah. The elite in question must undertake the necessary intellectual effort to purify and refine the Muslim culture offered

to the Ummah, removing all sorts of superstition, charlatanism, and gimmicks, and everything that is in conflict with objective thinking and based on rationalization and on divine laws of nature. This process is an important requirement for success. The said elite must base all matters on faith and belief, combined with dependence on God's will, since Muslims are expected to do their best and then depend on God. They should fortify everything that supports and strengthens the inclusive Islamic outlook, the moral concept of deputation, and the constructive, civilized mentality. The Islamic literature needed for reforming educational curricula and for training parents and equipping them with an educational background should be made available, in order to raise a generation fit for the responsibilities of deputation and free from the slave mentality, a generation characterized by purity and humility and the spirit of initiative and creativity. It is only parents that, with the influence they have on the minds and consciences of young people, can start the process of change. This makes parents, with their instinctive concern for their children's well-being and willingness to sacrifice everything to serve their children's interests, the key to reform and change, based on the convictions nurtured in them by intellectuals and educators.

If we compare the scholarly, scientific, and educational studies offered by advanced nations and their thinkers and educators to educate parents, teachers, and community leaders with the Islamic scientific studies offered by thinkers of the Islamic World, we will realize one of the secrets of the Ummah's backwardness. After all, its civilizational aspiration has been lacking to the extent that Muslim children are neglected, and so is the literature needed to raise and educate them. In addition, the training of the Ummah's intellectual and professional work forces, by using the little that is available in Islamic culture and education, is neglected. This is due to the lack of concern in the higher education establishment for an effective Islamic culture, and to its failure to play its role in revitalizing learning and knowledge and in training leaders and professional work forces to meet the Ummah's needs and remove the distortions that afflict its thought, culture, and educational programs and that prevent the Muslim mind from being effective, thus failing to stimulate its potential.

To have scientific and technological work forces in great numbers is not an aim in itself. The aim should be to prepare these forces to serve the Ummah, meet its needs, and

help fulfill its reformatory and civilizational aspirations. This includes mastering their specializations with great efficiency, being productive and serious, and having the sense of responsibility that usually encourages better performance. The reform of education, the refinement of culture, and the pedagogical education of parents are the most important areas of the Islamic civilizational reform that the International Institute of Islamic Thought has been working to achieve. Its efforts have been focused on offering a model and an experiment that embody its concepts and principles and prove their validity through its success in releasing the potential of young Muslims, activating their latent abilities, and proving the excellence of their performance. The International Islamic University in Malaysia has served as an experiment for the revitalization of higher education to serve the Ummah. It is hoped that under the current conditions in South-East Asia, the University will manage to continue and to thrive, performing its mission and serving as an example for other efforts to serve the Ummah with the revitalization of higher education and the reform of its foundations. When this is achieved, higher education can, with God's permission, exploit the potentials of the Ummah and stimulate its leadership and educational and professional work forces to serve human civilization and guide its progress.