

ABSTRACT

The rise of secularism meant that religious teachings in the social and political systems were replaced with man-made legislation. This article addresses the reasons that brought about secular educational systems in the west and will refute the generalisations made by the West to include Islam as a religion of rituals and spirituality that does not manifest itself in the temporal affairs. This article is to enlighten the Islamic world view on the western secular educational systems.

ISLAM AS AN IDEOLOGY

The role of Muslims in the advancement in the fields of sciences and humanities is directly related to the driving force of Islam. It is this Islamic ideology that deserves the credit and not the individual Muslims. The Islamic ideology, by the definition of an ideology, consists of both the idea and the method to implement the idea as a practical manifestation in reality.

The Islamic idea itself is composed of two essential components; the creed or doctrine (Aqeedah) and a system of rules and regulation founded on this doctrine (Shari'ah). The Islamic Aqeedah provides the correct and comprehensive answers to the fundamental questions regarding humanity's existence and that of the universe. It addresses the issue of the human being's purpose in life, and links it with what proceeds life and what will come after it, thereby providing the basis for the Islamic system to properly organise human affairs.

The Islamic Shari'ah provides a comprehensive law governing the affairs of human beings. It correctly establishes the relationship between the human being and his Creator, the personal affairs of individuals, and the various relationships (social, political, economic, and international) that exist in society.

The Islamic methodology provides the means to apply the idea (the creed and systems) to practice. Unlike Secularism, Capitalism and Communism, Islam is built on the correct worldview that is compatible with the human being. Islam does not ignore human beings' instincts or desires, but organises them in the proper context, including the desire to acquire knowledge. The implementation of the Islamic system is neither confined to time or place nor dependent upon science and technology, and must occupy our instincts, needs and natural desires

ISLAM INVITES AND DIRECTS HUMAN BEING TO STUDY REALITY

Islam has made it obligatory on all believers to acquire knowledge for themselves. In the very first verse of the Qur'an revealed to him, the Prophet (s.a.w) was instructed to read:

"Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists). Has created man from clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. Has taught man that which he knew not." [Qur'an 96:1-5].

The importance of reading, writing and acquiring knowledge has been explained in this verse in a most forceful and direct manner. Since it is obligatory for every believer to obey Allah's commandments, it was therefore announced by the Prophet (s.a.w) that learning and searching after knowledge was a sacred duty of every Muslim.

The Qur'an appeals constantly to reason and experiment which is a blessing indispensable to arrive at proper judgement.

"Say: 'Are those who know equal to those who know not?' It is only men of understanding who will remember (ie. get a lesson from Allah's Signs and Verses)" [Qur'an 39:9]

The Qur'an also directs man to study the physical world in order to understand the reality and to appreciate more the greatness of the Creator. Although Islam points to the physical world to make people think, it encourages

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people to discover more laws. The Qur'an is fundamentally a book of guidance and a code of life for mankind to enable it to differentiate between the right and the wrong.

THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGY

"And Allah has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts (intelligence and affections) that you might give thanks (to Allah)" [Qur'an 16:78].

Allah reminds the human being that he is born into this world without any knowledge of the existence, but He has equipped this human with the tools -the five human senses- that he needs to explore the might of the creation in order that he may give thanks to the Creator. The Creator, Allah (swt), has taught man since his presence on earth, "And he taught Adam all the names (of everything)" [Qur'an 2:31], through the agency of wahi (revelation). The last revelation that is composed of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, does not establish itself in its followers by blind faith or imitation, but rather by an invitation to the human being to think deeply about his existence and his surroundings.

Islamic methodology calls human beings to ponder upon the profound nature of this universe and observe its many phenomena that establish a definitive proof for the existence of One Creator. We are constantly discovering more and more laws that make up this order. The motives and objectives of all civilisations (and the resulting urban growth world-wide) is firstly, to discover and research the resources in the universe and aspects of matter and energy that are useful to man. This is asserted in the Glorious Qur'an,

"Do they not look in the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all the things that Allah has created?" [Qur'an 7:185].

The second step is then to utilise these discoveries rationally for the benefit of man. Again, this is a direct command from Allah (swt):

"See you not (O men) that Allah has subjected for you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever in the earth?" [Qur'an 31:20].

For the Muslim, these processes are an act of worship that have to be guided by revelation in order to understand the reality of nature and the limitations of the

human being. On the other hand, the non-Muslims seek their guidance from man-made laws that mechanistically and absurdly view the creation as a self-operated system.

GUIDELINES TOWARDS AN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

By observing the physical world and the laws of nature, the Islamic thought, that is derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, presents the philosophy which explains Allah's Might and Wisdom. These observations should not remain at the boundaries of the material world, but should conclude that this unintelligible universe could not have possibly come to existence by itself not by a chance or accident, and hence should provide reflections about the attributes of the Creator. Such attributes define the Creator as a Deity above His creation, neither matter or energy can shape His identity, nor can space or time encompass His eternal existence, confirming the Qur'anic verse :

"There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer" [Qur'an 42:11].

The Islamic educational system does not acquire conceptions about life, death and the Universe from the materialistic and secular world, and must purify its curriculum from any materialistic ideas that contradict basic facts in Islam. However, the Islamic educational system should utilise the expertise and experience of the material systems in the fields of applied sciences and industry and reconstruct their data on the basis of man.

The achievements and contribution of early Muslim scholars which have been completely neglected and overlooked in the Western books on the history of sciences, should be unveiled and incorporated into the curriculum of the Islamic educational system. Since the Islamic civilisation was the longest in the history of humanity, scientific and humanitarian branches of knowledge flourished under its rule, and Muslim scholars led the world in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, medicine, agriculture and sociology, to name a few. The unveiling of this heritage which paved the way for the emergence of the modern sciences will dignify the sense of originality and belonging in the Muslim youth.

The miraculous scientific notions in the Holy Qur'an must also be revealed to prove to people that the Qur'an contains basic scientific facts and laws of the universe that were unknown at the time of revelation and for centuries

afterwards. These scientific notions are material proof to people of all creeds and tongues that the Holy Qur'an is the Word of Allah and that Muhammad (saws) is His final prophet.

The Islamic educational systems should emphasise the importance of acquainting a thorough knowledge of Arabic, the language of the Qur'an. Arabic is not only necessary to fully comprehend Islam, it is a requirement to perceive the Islamic world view. It is also important to ~~acquire~~ proficiency in the language of the community in order to effectively convey the message of Islam.

CONCLUSION

It is historically evident that many intellectual Muslims were able to integrate the sciences of religion with other branches of knowledge. The simple reason for that, is because worldly sciences in the Islamic Khilafah found the correct environment and methodology to cultivate and improve the quality of life. Today, worldly sciences are exploited to produce a mechanistic and a materialistic human being without the aspect of humanity, that sees no error in transgressing its limits and in violating its environment.

We have long been awaiting a promising young generation that can raise themselves above dunya. A lot of hope is rested upon the shoulders of this expected generation whose mission in this world should be the establishment of Allah's prerequisites for victory and success in this world and in the Hereafter.

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The art of a people is a true mirror to their minds.

- Jawaharlal Nehru

Failure comes only when we forget our ideals and objectives and principles.

- Jawaharlal Nehru

Action itself, so long as I am convinced that it is right action, gives me satisfaction.

- Jawaharlal Nehru