EDUCATIONAL DUALISM IN MALAYSIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

By

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EDUCATIONAL DUALISM IN MALAYSIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

By
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Chairperson: Robert R. Sherman
Major Department: Foundations of Education

This study examines Islamic and national education in Malaysia—their philosophical assumptions, aims, and practices—and seeks a synthesis between them. The study traces the dualistic education system to the introduction of Western, liberal, secular education during the British colonial period. Since then, Western education has stood side by side with Islamic education. National education is a legacy of Western education.

The study reveals that dualistic education has posed a dilemma for Muslims, since neither approach provides a sound education from the Islamic perspective. Since Independence and through the 1970s, national education has offered only nominal Islamic religious instruction. It has been preoccupied with producing skilled manpower for national development and has neglected moral and spiritual growth.
National education has tended to detach the populace, in particular, the Muslims from their religious values. On the other hand, Islamic education has focused primarily on the religious and spiritual domain and has neglected intellectual and vocational development. It has tended to produce Muslims having a shallow understanding of the world. These two systems are manifestations of the two extremes of epistemology—intellect and revelation.

However, in the 1980s national education underwent reform, especially with the formulation of a holistic National Education Philosophy and the implementation of the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools. The study shows that the National Education Philosophy is based on a conception of God that is sufficiently broad to agree with the spirit of Islam and at the same time is appropriate for a multi-religious population. Conceptually, the study found many similarities, such as the goal of producing a good man of excellent character. But in practice, some differences arose from conceptual muddles and inconsistencies, such as in the uneven contents of the curriculum. However, these differences are shown to be resolvable, and a synthesis of the two systems is possible. The study further argues that from philosophical, curricular, and pedagogical perspectives, the dualistic system of education can be integrated without alienating Malaysians of any race and religion.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Introduction to Malaysia

Malaysia is a multi-racial and multi-religious country in Southeast Asia. Geographically, Malaysia consists of two parts, Peninsular or West Malaysia and East Malaysia, which lies on the northern quarter of the island of Borneo (see Figure 1-1). They are separated by about 400 miles of the South China Sea. Peninsular Malaysia lies at the tip of the landmass of Southeast Asia, with Thailand bordering on the north and Singapore on the south. Peninsular Malaysia (formerly known as Malaya) consists of eleven states: Perlis, Kedah, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Johor, Pahang, Terengganu, Kelantan, Melaka and Pulau Pinang. East Malaysia is made up of two states: Sabah and Sarawak. Malaysia has a population of about 15.8 million people, consisting of the indigenous Bumiputras (literally "son of the soil"), Chinese, and Indians. The Bumiputras comprise 61.4 percent of the population, while 29.9 percent are Chinese, 8.1 percent Indian, and 0.6 percent are from other
Fig. 1-1. Map of Peninsular or West Malaysia. Inset, location of Malaysia in Southeast Asia.
The Bumiputras consist primarily of Malays, who are almost all Muslims. Although there are a few Indian and Chinese Muslims, in general the Indians are mainly Hindus and the Chinese are primarily Buddhists or followers of Confucius. There also are a few Indian and Chinese Christians.

Historically, Peninsular Malaysia has been populated by the indigenous Bumiputras, mainly the Malays. It was not until the eighteenth century with the British rule that Chinese and Indian immigrants were brought into the country for economic purposes. Great Britain's connection with Malaysia began in 1786 when the British East India Company acquired Pulau Pinang as a trade settlement from the Sultan (Ruler) of Kedah. In 1819, Stamford Raffles negotiated the acquisition of Singapore from the Sultan of Johor as another trade settlement for the company. With the signing of the Anglo-Dutch Treaty in 1824, the Dutch gave Melaka to the British in exchange for Bencoolen on the west coast of Sumatra. In 1826, Pulau Pinang, Singapore, and Melaka were incorporated into the colony of the Straits Settlements.

During 1874-1884, the states of Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, and Pahang and Great Britain concluded a series of treaties accepting British protection. In 1895, a system of centralized government known as the Federated Malay States

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was formed from the four mentioned states. In 1909, following the Anglo-Siamese Treaty, the four states of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, and Terengganu were handed over to the British. These states together with Johor formed the Unfederated Malay States. In 1946, the Malayan Union that united the Federated Malay States, the Unfederated Malay States, Pulau Pinang, and Melaka was promulgated. Singapore was maintained as a separate crown colony. The Federation of Malaya, as this union of states was called after 1948, got its independence in 1957. Malaysia, comprised of the Federation of Malaya, Singapore, and the northern Borneo region, came into existence in 1963. In 1965, Singapore seceded from Malaysia and formed an independent state.

The British brought Chinese indentured laborers into Malaya to work in the tin mines in the 1850s, and Indian indentured laborers in the 1870s to work in the rubber tree plantations. Thereafter, as an aftermath of the British intervention, Malaysia became a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation.

Islam is the official religion of Malaysia. However, the Constitution guarantees that other religions may be practised in peace and harmony. The Sultan is the head of the religion of Islam in his state. However for those states not having a Sultan—Pulau Pinang, Melaka, Sabah, and

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Sarawak—the position of the head of the Islamic religion is held by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. He also is the head of the religion of Islam in the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan. As a continuation of the British tradition, the autonomy of the state governments in religious matters and Malay customs is upheld in the Federation Constitution.

The Islamic Educational System

Traditional Islamic education took root in Malaysia sometime around the fourteenth century. Historical documents such as Sejarah Melayu [Malay annals] and Hikayat Abdullah [Abdullah's story] furnish evidence of the continuation of traditional Islamic education into the early nineteenth century. According to Khoo Kay Kim, a well-known Malaysian historian, the Islamic educational

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3The Yang di-Pertuan Agong is the Supreme Head of the Federation and the senior of the (willing and suitable) nine Malay sultans. He serves a five-year term and acts on the advice of ministers. See L. A. Sheridan and Harry E. Groves, The Constitution of Malaysia (Singapore: Malayan Law Journal (Pte) Ltd., 1987), Article 32.


5Abdul Jaleel Hassan, "Islamic Education in Malaysia," Muslim Education 1 (Winter 1983): 81-84.

system evolved from a loose pondok-type\(^7\) institution in the middle of the nineteenth century to the more organized and formal madrasah\(^8\) system in the early twentieth century.\(^9\)

These pondok and madrasah were founded by individuals, mostly `ulama (pl. religious scholars, sing.`alim), or by the local community.\(^10\)

Although the curriculum and syllabuses of the pondoks and madrasahs varied from one teacher to another, they had a common core. The curriculum subscribed to the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence and Ash'ari's theological thought.\(^11\)

\(^7\) A pondok institution consists of several small huts surrounding the teacher's residence or the one-room school premise. The school hour is flexible and the curriculum depends very much on the knowledge of the teacher.

\(^8\) The madrasah is a school comparable to the modern school in organization and design. It is also known as the religious/Arabic school.


\(^10\) `Ulama is plural for `alim, an Arabic word that means learned, erudite, scholar, expert, savant, or scientist. However the usage of this word throughout the Muslim world has been restricted to scholars of the religion. In the Qur'an, `ulama are defined as those who fear Allah (see Al-Qur'an 35: 28).

Arabic words in the study are not all transliterated according to a standard transliteration but the author has tried to keep as close as possible to one.

\(^11\) There are four schools of jurisprudence recognized in the Sunni Islamic tradition, viz., Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali. The Ash'ari theological thought emphasizes freedom of reason within the bound of revelation in contrast to the Mu'tazilah's theological thought which puts reason above revelation.
The focus of study was `ilm naqli (the revealed sciences), namely, Al-Qur'an; Hadith (Tradition); Tawhid (theology); Fiqh (jurisprudence); Tarikh (history of Islam, including the Prophet's biography); and fundamentals of arithmetic and Mantiq (Aristotelian logic). The curriculum was subject-centered. The method of study was traditional, primarily memorization and rote-learning, and school discipline was strict. There was no age restriction and everybody was welcomed to attend school and pursue knowledge. These Islamic schools did not incorporate `ilm aqli (the acquired sciences) in their curriculum although in the early Islamic civilization Muslims actively pursued these subjects in

12Al-Qur'an is the Muslim Holy Book revealed to Prophet Muhammad over a period of approximately 23 years. It consists of 114 chapters spanning 6,666 sentences. It was commonly spelled "Koran" by Orientalists, but in this study it will be spelled "Qur'an" for reason of proper transliteration.

13Hadith or Tradition is every utterance of Prophet Muhammad, his deeds, and his silence in approval from the beginning of his mission to the end of his life. Hadith forms the second source of legislation in Islam, after Al-Qur'an.

14Traditionally knowledge has been divided into two major categories. Al-Ghazzali classified it into fard `ain and fard kifayah. Fard `ain is knowledge that is deemed obligatory for every Muslim, especially about their rights and duties. On the other hand, fard kifayah is knowledge that is "indispensable for the welfare of this world," such as medicine and arithmetic. In another classification, Ibn Khaldun categorized knowledge into `ilm naqli and `ilm aqli. `Ilm naqli refers to revealed knowledge or the prophetic sciences and auxiliary sciences such as Arabic language. `Ilm aqli refers to philosophical sciences that man acquires through thinking and observation. Chapter Five has more discussion about the classification of knowledge in Islam.
observatories, hospitals, and libraries and had great achievements in these fields. These educational institutions had a common goal of producing virtuous Muslims who would obey the religious commandments and be useful to society.

Through the years especially after the Second World War, the madrasahs experienced financial difficulties. Various states Islamic religious departments and councils set up during this period took over the management of some of the madrasahs. Subsequently the states religious departments began establishing their own system of schools. Now the number of schools and the curriculum varies from state to state. The pinnacle of the early Islamic educational system in Malaysia was the founding of the Islamic College of Klang in 1955, which provided tertiary education terminating in a Diploma in Islamic Studies. This was followed by the establishment of the Department of Islamic Studies in the Arts Faculty of the University of Malaya in 1959. In 1971, the Islamic College was transformed into the Faculty of Islamic Studies of the

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National University. Finally, the International Islamic University was established in 1983.

The National Educational System

The traditional Islamic educational system evolved gradually and peacefully to fulfill the needs of the Muslim community until the period of British colonialism in the late eighteenth century. The British established English schools run by Christian missionaries as early as 1816 in Pulau Pinang. English was the medium of instruction. The establishment of English schools began educational dualism in Malaysia--the existence of two systems of education alongside each other. The dual system had tremendous influence on the Malays. Most of the English schools were built in urban centers populated by the Chinese and were inaccessible to the Malays who lived in the rural areas. However, another factor made these schools unpopular even among Malay aristocrats--the fear that children would be converted to Christianity. Most of the Malays resented the English schools because they omitted the teaching of the religion of Islam. Furthermore, the Malays already had a system of Islamic religious education that they believed was not only adequate but of higher value than English education.

The British administration later introduced Malay vernacular schools. The goal of these schools was to ensure
a smooth administration that would be free from any
disruption by the natives. Education for the Malays was
limited to creating better fishermen and farmers, because
the British worried that an "over-educated" population might
rebel against colonial rule. The British had learned an
expensive lesson from "over-education" of the natives in the
Indian subcontinent. The Malay vernacular schools did not
offer the teaching of religion. Those few schools that
later offered religious study did so with little enthusiasm
or skill. The administrators relegated religious
instruction to afternoons when the temperature was hot and
students were tired. Secular subjects were taught in the
morning when the students were fresh and the temperature
cool.\(^\text{16}\)

The British later succeeded in drawing a larger
proportion of the Malay population into the English schools
by employing an economic strategy. They gave education an
economic aim. They made a policy that only Malays with
knowledge of English would be employed in the junior
administrative service and in British-owned commercial
houses. The British began to change the Malays' conception
of education, from seeing education as a socializing process
with religion at the heart, to that of commercial utility
and as a means toward material prosperity.

After independence in 1957, the new government began a systematic drive toward achieving national unity through education.\textsuperscript{17} The British had left educational institutions that were a divisive force in society and that tended to sustain their ethnically plural character. Several new educational policies were formulated.\textsuperscript{18} The search for a national system of education that could lay the foundation for integrating the various ethnic groups, as well as being the instrument for socio-economic development, became one of the major preoccupations of the Malaysian leaders after World War II and continued after independence.

During this same period, Malay vernacular and English schools began to gain popularity among the Malays for economic and religious reasons. The teaching of Islamic religious knowledge in both the national schools (the former Malay vernacular schools) and the national-type English schools (the former English schools) was recommended by the

\textsuperscript{17}Independence was achieved through a peaceful transfer of power from the British to the Alliance Party composed of United Malays National Organization (UMNO), Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC). The Alliance won the first national elections for Legislative Council seats in 1955 with a strong majority and gained the confidence of Great Britain to be self-governing.

Razak Report submitted on the eve of independence in 1956.¹⁹ In 1960 the government accepted the Rahman Talib Report and Islamic religious knowledge was made compulsory for all Muslim students in all government schools.²⁰ These efforts by the government hastened the decline of the Islamic schools, by lessening the need for private religious education.

Although the religious schools experienced a decline in the late 1950s, interest returned in the 1970s when there was an Islamic resurgence in Malaysia.²¹ Islamic consciousness was strongly felt by the Muslim masses, and Islamic organizations sprang to life. Muslims expressed their dissatisfaction with the national system of education, which they regarded as secular. They called for educational reform in line with Islamic principles.

In response to pressure from the Islamic political party (Pan Malayan Islamic Party or PMIP), Islamic groups, Islamic organizations, and individuals, the government implemented a few educational reforms beginning in 1977, when the Ministry of Education introduced the national

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religious secondary schools (SMKA) for selected students based on high achievement in the Primary School Evaluation Examination. The national religious secondary schools differ from the national secondary schools in that the former offer Arabic language and higher Islamic religious knowledge for selected students beginning from the first year of secondary school.

Second, in 1979 the Report of the Cabinet Committee recommended that all Muslim students be required to sit for Islamic religious knowledge in national examinations. In 1983, based on the same report, the Ministry of Education implemented the New Primary School Curriculum (NPSC). The curriculum emphasized the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic and the Malay language. The periods devoted to Islamic religious knowledge was increased, and moral education was introduced for non-Muslim students. Third, in 1987, a National Education Philosophy was formulated that expresses the aim of creating Malaysian citizens who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God.

Finally in 1989, following the formulation of the National Education Philosophy, the Ministry of Education

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launched the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (ICSS). The implementation of the Integrated Curriculum coincided with the entrance into secondary schools of the first generation of students who had completed the New Primary School Curriculum. The new curriculum emphasizes the growth of a balanced personality, the integration of "universal values" (recognized by the major religions in the country) in teaching all subjects, the greater usage of Malay language across the curriculum, and an extension of general education for all students from nine to eleven years old. In this curriculum, too, the number of periods devoted to Islamic religious instruction was increased and moral education was introduced.

Statement of Problem

Despite all the effort put forth by the government, Muslims in general still are unhappy with the present state of education. They are dissatisfied with both educational systems. They criticize the national system for several shortcomings. First, Muslims feel that the teaching of Islamic religious knowledge is ineffective in the national schools. (The national schools and the national-type English schools were combined in 1972, with Malay language as the medium of instruction). Religious teachers reported that a sizeable number of students could not read the Qur'an (in Arabic) and did not know how to perform the obligatory
daily prayers. Turning Islamic religious knowledge into an examination subject did not help, critics contend, because students were learning religion as though they were consuming information rather than for moral development and practice.

Second, Muslims feel that Islamic instruction is inadequately taught for the modern era. Islamic instruction is compartmentalized, isolated, and taught from a narrow perspective, as though it has no connection to modern living. Conversely, subjects such as natural science, mathematics, geography and art are taught as if they have no connection to the Islamic worldview which is based on the principle of Tawhid (Unity of God). The Western view of religion as a private matter has been inculcated, in contrast to the Islamic view of religion as ad-din (a way of life). The idea that religion is a private matter, a system of beliefs and rituals confined to the relationship of an individual and his God, is foreign to the Muslim. The inadequacy of Islamic religious knowledge taught in this way is evident from the fact that none of the students from the national system are qualified to


specialize in Islamic studies in higher education unless they had studied in the national religious secondary schools.

Third, The Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM), whose members are Muslim intellectuals with either Western or Islamic education, criticizes the government education policy as overconcerned with physical and material development and manpower training. Members claim that the system has failed to develop moral character and point to the rise of corruption, white collar crime, and drug addiction in Malaysia to support their claim. They say the secular nature of the national education is wrong and the objectives of the present system are improper and opposed to Islam. 

Fourth, although Muslims accepted the formulation of the National Education Philosophy and the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools, they are not optimistic when it comes to its implementation. There are pedagogical difficulties involved in attempting to inculcate the specified values. There is anxiety over the possible misuse of moral education classes because in the past, civic education has been used to drill students for examinations. Muslims argue that their concern is not just with the

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inculcation of religious knowledge and values. All subjects in the curriculum, they contend, should strengthen belief in the unity of God and lead pupils to perform good deeds.

Muslims also are unhappy with the Islamic educational system. First, they claim the content of the curriculum is narrow and out of date. It overemphasizes Arabic language, grammar, rhetoric, and religious knowledge. The curriculum is designed to turn every graduate into a religious teacher, a *kadi* (Islamic jurist), or a *mufti* (Islamic legal scholar). Religious schools do not prepare students to be doctors, engineers, architects, or scientists. Nor does the narrow curriculum help students understand contemporary social, political, or scientific issues. Instead it has led students to believe simply that the Qur'an contains solutions to all of mankind's problems and that there is no need for other sciences. As a result of the shallow religious curriculum, there is little market value for graduates of this system.  

Second, Muslim scholars complain that the methodology employed in instruction does not allow for or develop inquiry and critical thinking. Memorization pervades Islamic education. No innovative methods have been deployed, and there is barely any use of modern instructional techniques. The Minister of Education, Datuk

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26 Fatimah Ali, "Malaysian Education System and Islamic Educational Ideals," 76.
Amar Dr. Sulaiman Daud, asserts that "religious teachers are very knowledgeable in Islam but somehow, they are not teaching effectively and have made the subject less interesting to students." According to Wan Daud, the components of higher order thinking (analysis, interpretation, synthesis, coherency), all important aspects of the Islamic concept of knowledge, are not taught in the religious education system. Consequently, graduates of the Islamic educational system have not been creative and innovative in putting forth ideas for overcoming social problems in contemporary Malaysia.

Third, Islamic schools are poorly financed and largely depend on resources from the various states religious departments and private endowments. Poor funding affects the quality of schools, physical plants, educational equipment such as library books and laboratory apparatus, and the quality of teacher training.

The greatest grievance against both systems of education lies in discontent over their graduates, who, critics claim, do not possess the integrated personality of the ideal Muslim. On the one hand, successful graduates from the national system can climb the ladder of


professional careers in medicine, engineering, business, and other scientific and technological fields. In general, there is broad economic opportunity for them. Their careers confer high status on them, and they are looked on to provide leadership in the modern society. However, many of these graduates lack Islamic character and attitudes. They exhibit the character of secular men who compartmentalize religion into a private domain and do not allow their religious beliefs to affect their public affairs.

On the other hand, most successful graduates from the religious system possess good moral character and attitudes. Their deep religious knowledge provides the community with guidance about how to conduct its religious affairs. However, as a consequence of a narrow, religious curriculum, their ability to solve contemporary problems that require vast knowledge of the human and natural sciences is curtailed. In addition, their professional careers are limited to religious pursuits. These are not financially rewarding careers and do not confer on the graduates high status in the community. Graduates from religious programs seldom grow to be leaders in modern society, as their predecessors did in the pre-Independence era.

Each system has deficiencies that could be complemented by the strengths of the other. Muslims have begun to recognize the importance of both modern and religious subjects for the full development of the human personality
and for rebuilding their nation to function in the modern era. A rising Malaysian scholar, Faisal Osman, believes that the rejuvenation of traditional Arabic or Islamic religious schools will not prepare students to face the powerful challenges of contemporary life. In fact, exclusively religious education will bring science and religion into needless conflict in Malaysia. What is needed, says Faisal Osman, is a total change where all knowledge is considered in an integrated perspective. The same sentiment was echoed by the present Director-General of Education, Datuk Dr. Wan Mohd Zahid Mohd Noordin, who called for the revamping of all religious schools that are not meeting the objective of Islamic education.

Muslim parents in Malaysia face a difficult educational dilemma. Where should they send their children for secondary education—to the national school or to the Islamic religious school? Their dilemma might not be understood by non-Muslim Malaysians who generally are Buddhists, Hindus, or followers of Confucius. The


religion of Islam comes with a comprehensive legal system (shari'ah) that can be understood by Muslims only through education. It is not concerned only with matters of belief and worship. Islam does not separate State and Mosque. According to Al-Faruqi, a well-known Muslim scholar, Islam "is not an otherworldly religion like Christianity and Buddhism, content to direct 'divinity' affairs and leave the rest to Caesar." There is a growing feeling among educated Muslims that the government, which is led by Muslim leaders, is not doing enough for Islamic education. These leaders are merely adopting minor reforms for the sake of preserving their political interests. This "delaying" move by the government has caused some Islamic workers and Muslim intellectuals to suggest that Muslims should shun both systems and construct instead a third educational system that unifies Islamic and modern aims and resources. But is this a practical solution? Would a third system cause more problems for Islamic education and national solidarity and leave the basic problems unresolved? Are these two systems based on philosophies that cannot be integrated, or are the aims of the two systems compatible? Can they be unified and


function in the interests of Muslims as well as the nation? This is "the problem" to which this study is devoted.

The following questions define the problem I will study and on which I will focus my research.

1. What are the underlying philosophical assumptions, aims, and practices of the national and the Islamic educational systems?
2. In what respects, if any, are these assumptions, aims, and practices similar, or different, compatible or incompatible?
3. Can a synthesis be formulated to bring together the national and the Islamic systems of education?
4. What are the implications of an integrated system of education for curricular, pedagogical, and administrative affairs?
5. Does the National Education Philosophy capture the spirit of an Islamic philosophy of education, and is this philosophy appropriate for a pluralistic Malaysian society?

Prior Studies

The problem of the dualistic educational system in a Muslim country that has undergone colonization is not unique to Malaysia. As a matter of fact, the problem of educational dualism is the most urgent problem facing the Muslim world in general, so much so that it has been called
a "crisis" in Muslim education. Some studies in the Muslim world address this issue. Attempts to resolve this problem have been observed in India in 1870s, in Egypt in 1890s, and in Bengal in 1910s. All these attempts have failed. The experiment of mutual coexistence of modern and Islamic studies in an institution in the Indian subcontinent ended because most students opted for secular studies that had economic value. The attempt to reform Al-Azhar University in Egypt was initiated by Abduh, who wanted to introduce modern subjects into the curriculum. However Abduh was accused of secularizing the institution. His effort failed, but he did succeed in some administrative reforms. The attempt to combine some modern and Islamic religious subjects in Muslim Bengal fell short of a substantial synthesis, and the dual systems persisted.

Ashraf posits that attempts to resolve the dualism and to "islamize" modern education have failed because the problem has not been approached holistically. He argues that although some attempts have been made to make religious education compulsory, there has been no attempt to teach the

34For more details, see Sayyid Ali Ashraf and Sayyid Sajjad Hussin, eds., Crisis in Muslim Education (Jeddah: King Abdul Aziz University & Hodder & Stoughton, 1979).

natural and social sciences and literature from the Islamic perspective. As a result, what students learn in religion classes sometimes contradicts what they are taught in their humanities, social, and natural sciences classes.\(^\text{36}\) Ashraf argues that this dichotomy could not be resolved by teachers educated in the old systems. Such teachers do not understand the complexities of modern civilization. Nor can the problem be solved by teachers educated in the modern systems, for they do not fully appreciate their own religious heritage. Ashraf asserts, that a third group must emerge whose members are acquainted both with their own religious traditions and with the scientific wisdom of Western civilization.\(^\text{37}\)

In *Islamization of Knowledge*, the scholar Al-Faruqi studies the Muslims' malaise and argues that there can be no revival of the Muslim ummah (world community) unless the dualistic educational system is integrated and infused with the spirit of Islam. He believes that the union of the dual systems would economize the financial resources of the state, overcome archaic textbooks and inexperienced teachers in the Islamic educational system, and reject imitation of secular Western methods and ideals in the secular schools. Al-Faruqi proposes a two-year study of Islamic civilization

\(^{36}\)S. A. Ashraf and S. S. Hussin, eds., *The Crisis in Muslim Education*, 17.

\(^{37}\)Ibid., 15.
for students in higher institutes of learning as a short-term solution and, more importantly, the "Islamization" of knowledge as a long-term solution. By "Islamization" of knowledge he means the integration of new knowledge into the corpus of the Islamic legacy by eliminating, amending, reinterpreting, and adapting its components as the world view of Islam and its values dictate. The exact relevance of Islam to the philosophy--the method and objectives--of the discipline should be determined.\(^9\)

In a separate study, Ahmed reveals that there is no inherent contradiction between the fundamentals of Islam and modernization.\(^9\) He suggests that for the proper modernization of Muslim nations, what is needed is reform in education. He calls for better integration of Islamic and Western education and the need to distinguish between Western education and colonial education. Ahmed believes it is naive to let the two systems exist separately or in mutual coexistence and at the same time allow free competition in the job market, as is envisioned by some policy makers. The separation itself creates needless differences in the two systems. Graduates from the Islamic


system will never be able to compete if opportunities for modern jobs require graduation from a secular program.  

Few studies of the religion/secular conflict have focused on education in Malaysia. In his analysis of more than 280 studies published in the past decade and a half, Thomas found that educational studies in Malaysia have focused on four major concerns: (a) ethnic issues and differences; (b) the role of the educational system in socio-economic growth and the influence of the five-year national development plans; (c) the educational process; and (d) the applications of educational research to Malaysia. He predicted that the concern about ethnic differences will diminish as the country further stabilizes and there is more national planning. From a survey of research done on or about Malaysian education since Thomas's review, I have found only a few studies dealing with education and national development, and none of them examine the issue of importance here.

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40Ibid., 128-9.


42Among these studies are: Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad, "Educational Reform and Ethnic Response: An Historical Study of the Development of A National System of Education in West Malaysia" (Ph.D. diss., University of California Los Angeles, 1980); Robiah Sidin, "The Roles of the Universities in the National Development of Malaysia as Perceived by Selected Government Officials, University Administrators and Faculty Members" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio
Al-Attas, a Malaysian philosopher prominent in the Muslim world, provides one of the earliest glimpses of the problem. He asserts that the Western world view dominates in Malaysia because of the experience of colonization and Western cultural control. The de-Islamization of the Muslim mind, Al-Attas claims, was accomplished gradually through an increasingly secularized educational system. Inadequate Islamic education gave rise to false `ulama (religious scholars) who restricted knowledge to the domain of jurisprudence. These false `ulama and secular political leaders caused confusion in knowledge, which led to excesses in belief and practice. Al-Attas calls for the de-Westernization of knowledge.\(^4^3\) Professor M. Kamal Hassan, the vice-rector of the International Islamic University, also has discussed this issue.\(^4^4\)

In one of his more important works, Harun Din, a prominent scholar of Islam in Malaysia, expresses his


uneasiness at the current status of the Islamic schools and Islamic education in Malaysia. He enumerates some of the problems confronting these schools, especially finance, teacher shortage, decline of student enrollment because of the poor economic value of such an education, and an overburdening of students, with too many subjects, resulting in mediocrity. He is concerned that if nothing is done for the more than 85,000 students enrolled in such schools, the nation will suffer a great loss in human resources. He believes that many of these schools will close, and consequently acquiring Islamic education will become more difficult. Din suggests that government policy makers and Muslim intellectuals, especially educationists, should review and resolve this problem.45

In another study, Ishak highlights the significant contribution of religious educational institutions, known as pondoks, to the development of Muslims in Malaysia. In addition to developing Islamic education, Ishak asserts that these institutions safeguarded Islam from the influence of Western cultures and Christianity, and helped eradicate misunderstandings and erroneous teachings of Islam (khurafat) which existed and influenced the Muslim community. He suggests the redevelopment and upgrading of

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these institutions to meet changes in society. Ishak's proposal represents the nostalgic feelings of a conservative for this traditional institution and contradicts the viewpoint of another scholar, Faisal Osman, who believes that such a revival would result in a conflict between science and religion.⁴⁶

Said concludes a study of the madrasah by posing a challenging question: To what extent has the National Education Policy benefited students from these schools? He argues that although there now exists the Department of Islamic Studies in the University of Malaya, a Faculty of Islamic Studies in the National University, and the Islamic Teachers' College, they are at the tertiary level. He believes that attention should be focused on the primary and secondary religious schools. Said alleges that the national system of education is infused with secular values, and not with a genuine Islamic spirit. He proposes that the National Education Policy be reviewed and restructured so that it takes into account all the kinds of schools that exist in the country. He believes that the present policy has deceived thousands of Malay students and has wasted national resources. Said emphasizes the need for an integrated curriculum filled with the Islamic educational

spirit that would allow students from the madrasah to acquire all kinds of knowledge, including knowledge of the natural sciences.  

Ali exposes the magnitude of the problem by drawing a brief systematic, descriptive, historical comparison between the two educational systems in Malaysia and urging the establishment of an integrated educational system for the Muslims. In an epistemological study of knowledge in Islam, Wan Daud discusses contemporary Muslims' confusion over the meaning of "knowledge" and its implication for education in Malaysia. He indicates that a misconception of knowledge from an Islamic perspective is prevalent among Muslims, and this misconception is manifested in the curriculum and the content of Islamic education in both religious and the national schools. In his study of ABIM (The Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia), Monutti lays out the movement's criticisms of the national education system but without offering any alternative. However, ABIM has

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48 Fatimah Ali, "Malaysian Education System and Islamic Educational Ideals."

49 Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, The Concept of Knowledge in Islam.

50 Mohammad Nor Monutti, Perception of Social Change in Contemporary Malaysia.
maintained a nationwide program of Islamic kindergartens since the 1970s and launched its first Islamic primary school in 1989.

These studies reveal the gravity of the problem of a dualistic educational system in the Muslim world in general and in Malaysia in particular. There seems to be a consensus that the two education systems in Malaysia should be integrated, but until now no one has examined the conceptual and practical feasibility of such a union. The study I propose, therefore, is appropriate and timely. Before any real integration can occur, we must examine its philosophical grounding and anchor it on a firm foundation.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the problem of educational dualism in Malaysia, particularly as it affects the Muslims. I will examine the underlying philosophical assumptions, aims, and practices underpinning both the national and the Islamic educational systems. I will study the compatibility and differences in each system's philosophical assumptions, aims, and practices. I will look for a way to unite the two systems through a genuine synthesis that will be firmly grounded in a philosophy and that will overcome the Muslims' educational dilemma without alienating non-Muslims. I will subject the National Education Philosophy to a philosophical examination
and ascertain whether or not it captures the spirit of an Islamic philosophy of education. The proposed study also will scrutinize the curricular, pedagogical, and administrative implications of this synthesis.

Sources

Literature about the historical development of the national and Islamic education systems in Malaysia is available from both English sources, such as Winstedt, Cheeseman, and reports of the the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, and from Malaysian educators such as Awang Had Salleh, M. A. Rauf, Ibrahim Saad, D.D. Chelliah, and Philip Loh Fook Seng. Journals such as Muslim Education, Muslim Education Quarterly, Jurnal Pendidikan Islam [Journal of Islamic Education], and publications of the Malaysian Historical Society also are helpful.

The philosophical ideals of the Islamic educational system may be studied from primary sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith and from secondary sources such as the works of Al-Ghazzali, Al-Farabi, Ibn Khaldun, Ikhwan as-Safa, Iqbal, and Al-Attas. The philosophical assumptions and aims of the Malaysian Islamic educational system will be drawn from studies that have been done on Malaysian madrasahs, from documents such as school syllabuses, issued by Education Divisions of states religious departments, and from reports and documents issued by The Advisory Council for the Coordination of Islamic Education (LEPAI). The philosophical ideals and policy of the national education system can be surmised from historical documents, reports, and the published works of British administration; the Five Year Plans of the Government of Malaysia, beginning in 1965; publications and

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reports issued by the Ministry of Education and the government; and press releases of high ranking officials of the Ministry of Education. A survey of educational aims, content, and methods will be made from syllabuses and textbooks of both systems. Curriculum and textbooks of the national education system can be procured from the Curriculum Development Center of the Ministry of Education, while those of the Islamic education system can be obtained from the various states religious departments.

Methodology

The problem described above reflects the change in values that is taking place in Malaysian society as it modernizes. Unfortunately, many Malaysians focus only on what may be lost through modernization and ignore the scientific and social progress that economic development can provide. Anti-modernity attitudes are reflected in the educational system and must be changed. Such changes will require a reformation of education and a reconstruction of philosophy. According to the American educational philosopher John Dewey, "the task of future philosophy is to clarify men's ideas as to the social and moral strifes of their own day." In this study I will clarify, criticize,
and analyze national and Islamic education— their aims and means— and seek a continuity between them. A critical examination of the existing aims, assumptions, and practices of both educational systems will be carried out in light of Islamic principles of education. This study aims to clarify and sort out the values held by Muslims— whether they are antiquated, or are held because of nostalgia for a glorious past, or because they are useful, relevant, and enduring.

This study seeks to uncover the presuppositions and hidden assumptions underlying both systems. It aspires to detect conceptual confusion that may cloud the actual issues and supply conceptual clarity. It will examine the supporting arguments advanced in both systems of education. Thus, the inquiry is philosophical in nature. It will be descriptive, analytical, critical, and evaluative. A brief historical analysis will be essential in laying out the development of these dualistic education systems.

The study will be limited to primary and secondary education in both systems. The Islamic education system will be confined to schools run or assisted by states religious departments. Religious schools that are run privately by individuals, Islamic organizations, and particular communities will not be examined. The study will concentrate on Peninsular Malaysia and on the period after Independence.
Organization

The study will be organized in the following sequence. The present chapter is a description and definition of the problem and states the purpose of study. Chapter Two will describe the origin and development of the Islamic religious education system until Independence. In Chapter Three I will describe the evolution of the national education system before Independence. In Chapter Four I will discuss the impact of the National Education Policy on the development of Islamic religious education and the subsequent growth of both systems after Independence. Chapter Five will lay out the Islamic philosophy of education which will be useful as the criterion of reference. In Chapters Six and Seven I will deal with the philosophical analyses of each educational system, with reference to educational assumptions, aims, content, and methods. In Chapter Eight I will evaluate the similarities, differences, and compatibility between these two systems of education. Finally, in Chapter Nine I will attempt a synthesis of Islamic and national education and will examine its implications for curriculum, pedagogy, and administration. I will conclude the chapter with recommendations and a summary of the study.

The proposed study is significant because it may contribute, by way of a reconstructed foundation, to the resolution of the pressing educational and social problems
that have lingered for some time within Malaysia. The study could be pertinent not only to Malaysia but to the Muslim world in general.
CHAPTER 2
THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS

The development of Islamic religious schools is a subject that has been neglected in the past.¹ There are very few written sources on the subject, and it is only fairly recently that research in this area has begun, especially at the Department of History and the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Malaysian universities. This historical vacuum in Islamic education is in contrast to the abundant historical writings available on Chinese and Indian education. Undeniably, Malaysian and British scholars have produced an immense store of work detailing Malay dynastic history, folklore, and traditional culture. However, little work has been done on the history of Islamic religious schools. The development of Islamic religious schools and national schools since the period of colonialism are not independent of each other and are not mutually exclusive. This is true especially for the curriculum of the religious schools, which has undergone many changes as a result of

¹Khoo Kay Kim, "Recent Malaysian Historiography," Journal of Southeast Asian History, 10 (September 1979): 247-60.
British and national education policies. The organization of Malay vernacular schools set up by the British also was affected by the presence of Islamic schools. However, for clarity and ease in discussion, I will discuss the development of these other schools in separate chapters. In this chapter I will discuss the development of Islamic religious schools from the nineteenth century to the period just before Independence. The discussion of the evolution of the national education system until Independence, and how it was affected by the religious schools, will be the subject of Chapter Three. The growth of the Islamic religious education system after Independence, which saw the effects of the National Education Policy, will be discussed in Chapter Four, along with the development of national schools after Independence.

Islamic Education In The Nineteenth Century

Qur'anic Schools

Islamic education in Peninsular Malaysia began with the introduction of Islam. Evidence indicates that Islam was already established in Peninsular Malaysia, in the state of Terengganu, by the fourteenth century. It was during this period that the famous Terengganu stone was found. This stone bears the inscription of certain Islamic legal

\[2\text{From now on, reference to "religious schools" will mean Islamic religious schools.}\]
provisions in jawi (Malay language in Arabic script).³ Further evidence shows that Islam was present in Melaka in the early fifteenth century with the conversion of Parameswara, the Ruler of Melaka.⁴ Fatimi asserts that the spread of Islam in the Malay Archipelago was through the effort of the Sufis (mystics). The Sufis were successful in spreading Islam among the Malays because of the "eclecticism and the elasticity of Sufism, which had made it adaptable and therefore acceptable to the Malay mass."⁵ This view is supported by Al-Attas, who advanced the thesis that tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism) effected "a rise of rationalism and intellectualism not manifested in pre-Islamic times." He claimed that the advent of Islam spelled the beginning of

³This evidence is based on the correct date of the Terengganu inscription, determined to be Friday, 4th Rejab 702 Hijrah (the Muslim year), or 22 February 1303. Ten laws were inscribed on the stone, but three were missing. The ten dealt with the relations of creditor and debtor, punishments for the offense of adultery and the special case of wantonness on the part of women, punishment for false evidence, payment of a fine, and obedience to the above code. The laws were prefaced with an order to rulers to expand and uphold the Islamic faith and the teachings of the Apostle of Allah. Jawi is the Malay language written in Arabic script; see Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, The Correct Date of Terengganu Inscription, 2d ed. (Kuala Lumpur: Muzium Negara, 1984) and S. Q. Fatimi, Islam Comes to Malaysia (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Ltd., 1963).


⁵S. Q. Fatimi, Islam Comes to Malaysia, 94.
the end for mythology, to be replaced by intelligence, reason, and order.⁶

The simultaneous introduction of education with the spread of religion is not surprising, since Islam, being a religion of the Book with a high regard for knowledge (‘ilm) and without any priesthood, makes it necessary for its followers to be literate in order to understand and obey the demands of the religion. To reach this end, Muslims would have to learn the language of the Qur'an, that is, Arabic, to be able to read the Holy Book and Hadith (Tradition of the Prophet) themselves or to listen to or read the works of the ‘ulama (religious scholars) who would explain the religion in their own language. This religious need for literacy is akin to the experience of the Protestant Christians after the Reformation, initiated by Martin Luther in sixteenth-century Germany. This movement brought the goal of universal education to the Christian West, a goal achieved much earlier in Islamic Civilization.

The earliest form of Islamic education found in Peninsular Malaysia was the Qur'anic schools.⁷ It is the tradition of the Malays to trust the young to a religious

⁶Al-Attas, Islam and Secularism, 165.

⁷F. W. H. Kee and G. Y. Hean remark that the Qur'anic school was in existence since the introduction of Islam in the fourteenth century; F. W. H. Kee and G. Y. Hean, Perspective: The Development of Education in Malaysia and Singapore (Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd., 1972), 7.
teacher beginning when children reached the age of five or six. It is presumed that the teacher would teach the Qur'an and the rudiments of the religion, particularly prayers. These schools usually are conducted in the homes of religious teachers, in mosques, or in surau.\(^8\) The mosque is specially important to the religious life of a village. J. F. McNair reported that Malays in Perak in the 1880s formally built and instituted a mosque whenever a village grew larger than forty houses.\(^9\) Initially, teaching was conducted in the teacher's home. However, as the number of students grew and the teacher's house became overcrowded, schooling was transferred to the surau or mosque.

In the Qur'anic schools, children were taught the Arabic alphabet and reading the Qur'an in Arabic. They were taught to memorize short chapters from the Qur'an and recite them in prayers. The children practised reading the Qur'an in parrot-like fashion, chapter by chapter, until they reached the end. The instructional emphasis was tajwid,

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\(^8\) A surau is a small building found in villages and is used mainly for religious purposes such as teaching the religion. It is smaller than a mosque where the Friday congregational prayers are held. Isabella Bird reported in the 1880s that in Melaka "scarcely any kampong [village] is so small as not to have a mosque"; *The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1883), 177.

which is the authorized method of Qur'an reading.\textsuperscript{10} Reading the Qur'an is like reading a musical piece, where each letter indicates a note of certain measure. Taiwid teaches the recognition of the proper measure of the note. It was not uncommon for the children not to understand what they read because they were not taught any Arabic. Winstedt, a British administrator in the early twentieth century, noted that "Malay children were taught to chant the Koran from page to page in a language they did not understand."\textsuperscript{11} Despite this inadequacy, the Qur'an reading had some positive effect, as testified by Cheeseman:

We are accustomed to hear scorn poured upon the parrot-like repetition of the Koran. But those religious classes marked the beginning of education in Malaya. . . . I learned much there, including the important truth that the Koran even imperfectly understood can touch hearts and stir thoughts.\textsuperscript{12}

The tradition of recitation is still alive today, but it has not been utilized to advantage. Little effort has been made to use Qur'an reading to teach students Arabic, for example.

Traditionally, only after children have mastered the Qur'an could they go on to learn the Malay language. The earliest written document of this practice was recorded in

\textsuperscript{10}M. A. Rauf, "Islamic Education in Malaya," Intisari 2 (n.d.): 14-31.


1810 in Melaka. Abdullah narrated an incident where he
guided Sir Stamford Raffles, the Lieutenant-General of Java
and the founder of Singapore, on a tour of a Malay school
taught by Lebai Abdul Razak in Melaka.\textsuperscript{13} The school's
emphasis was recitation of the Qur'an. When asked by
Raffles why he did not teach the Malay language, Lebai Abdul
Razak responded,

The parents of these children require that they
shall first learn the Koran. Once they have
mastered it they can proceed with the Malay
language. That has always been our practice, and
it is not a custom in this country for people to
have places where the Malay language can be
learnt.\textsuperscript{14}

During this period, the Malay language was written in
Arabic script and was called jawi. The teacher of the
Qur'anic school was usually the Imam attached to the local
mosque or a Hajji.\textsuperscript{15} He was commonly a farmer or a
fisherman and taught in his spare time. It took the pupils
an average of three years to complete their recitation of
the whole Qur'an. Besides Qur'anic recitation, the pupils
were taught how to perform the five daily prayers and other
principles of Islam, such as fasting, the pilgrimage to

\textsuperscript{13} Lebai is a title given to someone knowledgeable about
religious matter.

\textsuperscript{14} Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, Hikayat Abdullah
University Press, 1970), 79.

\textsuperscript{15} An Imam is the person who leads the congregational
prayer; a Hajji is a person who has performed the pilgrimage
to Makkah.
Makkah, the articles of faith, some forms of supplication, and some Arabic songs with Islamic themes. The teachers observed strict discipline, and in special circumstances punishment could be harsh. There was punishment for stealing or hitting fellow pupils, for running away from schools, for being lazy, for making mistakes in class, for misbehaving, and for lying. But despite this strict discipline Abdullah had praise for the teachers.

Now when I remember how I was struck, beaten, slapped, and admonished, the many tablets broken over my head, the stern and angry looks, the nagging and scolding of all my teachers, I realize that each blow of the cane on my body has now become a lamp to guide me. . . . I beseech Allah that it may please Him to grant a thousand mercies and the reward of peaceful repose to my teachers who have made me aware of these pitfalls. . . . Now at last do I taste the honey which has flowed from the honeycomb, for which I have waited diligently from the days of my youth.

The pupils did not pay fees, but donated money to buy kerosene for the oil lamps that were used if classes were held at night. More often the pupils assisted their teachers with such chores as carrying water from the well, carrying firewood, or growing and harvesting padi (the crop from which rice is obtained) in the fields. The brighter

\[16\] See Hikayat Abdullah [Abdullah's story], 42-44.

\[17\] Ibid., 40-41.

boys who completed their basic instruction in the Qur'anic school went on to pursue further study at a pondok institution that will be described later.19

The Qur'anic schools that existed in Peninsular Malaysia were not dissimilar from the education of Muslims in early Islam. The early kuttabs (classes for reading and writing) were found mostly in the teachers' houses and used the Qur'an as the major textbook. These kuttab provided elementary education.20

Pondok Education

The next period of education in traditional Malay society is pondok education which began in the nineteenth century. Pondok is derived from the Arabic word "fundug" which means inn or hotel.21 A pondok educational institution consists of a centrally located building, usually the teacher's house or a mosque, surrounded by rows of small huts or inns. The first pondok in Kelantan was

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Pondok Tok Pulai Chondong, established in 1820.\textsuperscript{22} The establishment of a pondok was usually prompted by a situation of having too many students flocking around a teacher whose fame and reputation had spread widely. This created a problem of accommodation. To overcome this problem, small simple huts were built around the teacher's house by individual students and sometimes in cooperation with other students at their own expense. The land normally was given by the teacher as a waqf (religious endowment).

Many scholars discuss the origin of pondok in Malaysia, whether it originated in Sumatra, Indonesia or Pattani, in southern Thailand. However, one cannot dismiss the possibility that the pondok institution was an influence of Makkah education of that era. This is possible because the content and teaching methods in the pondok institutions were comparable to those of Masjid al-Haram (Al-Haram Mosque) in Makkah.\textsuperscript{23} In addition, many pondok teachers had taken the pilgrimage to Makkah and deepened their knowledge of Islam. In fact, some of the Malay pilgrims took up residence in Makkah and stayed in communication with their countrymen.

According to T. W. Arnold,

\textsuperscript{22}Azemi Kadir, "Madrasah Al-Diniah Al-Bakriah, Pasir Tumboh, Kota Bharu, Kelantan" [Al-Diniah Al-Bakriah Arabic school in Pasir Tumboh, Kota Bharu, Kelantan], (B.A. thesis University of Malaya 1985/86), 11.

\textsuperscript{23}The city of Makkah is spelled in several ways, such as Mekah, Mecca, and Mekka. In this work, the city is spelled as Makkah in accordance to the official spelling issued by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
A large number of religious books is also printed in Mecca in the various languages spoken by the Malay Muhammadans and carried to all parts of the Archipelago. Indeed Mecca has been well said to have more influence on the religious life of these islands than on Turkey, India or Bukhara.24

Education in the pondok was free and open to people of all ages. A number of the advanced students from the Qur'anic schools continued their education in the pondok institution. The students came with different levels of knowledge and ability. The minimum requirements for admission were the ability to read the Qur'an, to read and write in jawi, and to have adequate financial support. Because abilities varied, the more able students taught their lesser-abled classmates. In general, pondok expenses were met through donations, charity, and zakat (alms). The teachers were not paid a salary. They led simple lives, made great sacrifices in time and energy, and worked from a sense of duty. It was only later with the expansion of the pondok that fees were required of the students. There were no examinations, and promotion to a higher level was determined by students' capabilities. Thus, the length of study depended on students themselves.

Students had the liberty to attend whichever pondok they wanted and could move from one pondok to another when they felt they had gained whatever they could from their teacher. Students' travel in pursuit of knowledge was a

traditional feature of early Islamic education. However, unlike the practice of Muslims in the classical age of Islam, the pondok did not issue ijaza (certificates). In most cases pondok teachers such as Sheikh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani, Sayid Abdul Rahman (Tokku Paloh), and Muhammad Yusoff bin Ahmad (Tok Kenali), had studied in Makkah for a few years and specialized in several branches of Islamic studies.

Two states, Kelantan and Terengganu, could be considered as pioneers in pondok education, although there is evidence that Kedah was not far behind. Terengganu was known for its numerous 'ulama in the middle of the eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century. There were ten pondoks in Terengganu by the close of the nineteenth century, and least six pondok institutions in Kedah in the 1870s.

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27 They were at Losong, Tuk Jering, Durian Guling, Kuala Brang, Kampung Raja (Besut), Bukit Puteri (Besut), Jerteh (Besut), Alur Keladi (Besut), Padang Pak Sara, and pondok Zainiah. See Saudah Che Latif, "Pendidikan Islam di Negeri Terengganu" [Islamic education in Terengganu], (B.A. thesis, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1977/78), 117.

28 They were pondok at Titi Gajah, Langgar, Pumpong, Alor Setar, Pulau Pisang, Kota Kuala Muda, Anak Bukit, and Yan. See Ahmad Abdul Garni bin Haji Said, "Tuan Hussain Kedah," [Mr. Hussain of Kedah] (B.A. thesis, University of Malaya, 1977), 13.
Content and Method of Pondok

In pondok institutions, the content and methods of teaching depended on the teachers. The most common teaching methods employed were lectures, memorization, reading, mudhakara (constant recalling of a lesson) and copying texts. The most common procedure was known as "menadah kitab" (open book), whereby students sat in a halagah (semi-circle) facing the teacher and examined their books as the teacher read or slowly lectured from his text. Students were regarded much like empty receptacles ready to receive knowledge. Since the texts were in Arabic, the teacher would explain and elaborate difficult words, phrases, and passages. The students then memorized and copied the texts of the lesson. This procedure was repeated until the text was completed. The same text might be read a second time before the teacher moved on to another text, depending on the students' comprehension. In general, the teacher did not allow questions or discussion when he was reading or lecturing, which he did for thirty minutes to an hour at a time. Only rarely would the teacher discuss issues outside of the text.29 However, the teacher had teaching assistants, usually senior students, who would hold

discussions and answer questions about the teacher's lecture.

Memorization was employed in the learning of Arabic grammar, Qur'anic verses, hadith, and Tawhid. Memorization was emphasized in the pondok because it was regarded as the foundation for understanding the Arabic texts.  

In the pondok, the school timetable was flexible and left to the discretion of the teacher. In most cases, classes were held after the fajr (dawn) prayer and lasted until about eleven; after zuhr (midday) prayer, from two to four in the afternoon; and after maghrib (sunset) prayer until about ten at night. The teacher normally was not particular about students' punctuality because he took into account the fact that these students were mostly bachelors who had to cook and do their own washing. The teacher kept no record of class attendance. Students could absent themselves from class without informing the teacher, but this seldom happened because the teacher was very much respected and most students were serious and diligent. After all, they came to the pondok of their own free will.

Although pondok institutions were scattered throughout several states in Peninsular Malaysia, in particular the Unfederated Malay States, their curricula shared some common features. All the pondoks taught the basic subjects of tawhid (theology), tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), fiqh.

30 Ibid., 74.
(jurisprudence), hadith (Tradition), nahu (Arabic grammar), tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism), and tarikh Islam (history of Islam). In some pondok, tajwid (method of reading Qur'an), traditional medicines that integrate the use of herbs and Qur'anic verses, nashid (Islamic songs), and mantig (logic) were added. The textbooks for these subjects varied from one pondok to another depending upon the teacher's and students' abilities. In general, the curriculum emphasized only revealed knowledge or the fard 'ain. The aim of pondok education was to produce Muslims who know the laws and the demands of their religion, who possess high moral character, and who seek to be true servants of God. Its other goals were to produce mosque officials, religious and Qur'anic teachers, and to provide foundations for higher education.

Popularity of Pondok

Pondok education continued to expand in the early twentieth century. Kedah alone had more than 40 pondoks during this period. The popularity of the pondoks is evident from the complaint of a British district officer at Pahang who wrote in 1905,

31 Ibid., 158.
The natives are as apathetic as ever regarding secular education, though they will send their children miles to learn to recite the Koran. There is a well-patronised Koran school at Lipat Kajang, to which youths flock from all over the country. There is annually an exodus of the youth of the district to Petani and Kedah to seek that religious instruction which is not, apparently, to be found to any extent in Pahang.  

Various scholars have posited factors they believed were responsible for this situation. In one study, the quality and calibre of the pondok teachers who had received their education from great Islamic centers such as Makkah, Egypt, or Pattani (Southern Thailand); the devotion and loyalty of the Malay populace to the religion; the availability of the printing press that provided accessibility to original and translated texts in jawi; and the circumstances where Malay vernacular and English schools had not yet spread to outlying areas were cited as the factors that led to the increase in pondok institutions.  

However, the Malaysian historian Khoo Kay Kim has a different view. He notes that the rise in numbers was concurrent with British domination of Peninsular Malaysia. He reasons that the expansion of religious schools, including the pondoks, was a response to the challenge of secular education. The British, especially Christian

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missionaries, had introduced secular education through Malay vernacular schools and English schools.\textsuperscript{36}

An American scholar of Malay studies, W. R. Roff, has argued that the increase in the number of religious schools could be attributed to two main causes. First, from the point of utility, the Malays saw little advantage in vernacular education unless it could be supplemented with further English education—something considered to be a privilege, since it was available only in the urban area. Second, the Muslim reform movement known as Islah, which began at the close of the nineteenth century, contributed greatly to the new zeal for education. The Muslim reformers published newspapers and journals to disseminate the new ideas. According to Roff,

\begin{quote}
It is in fact in the field of the new education that the immediate impact of the reformist group may be most clearly seen, both in its encouragement of religious schools of a more ambitious and elaborate kind than had hitherto existed and in the formulation of a system of education which, ideally, would take account of the need not only for a purified Islam but for modern secular knowledge as well.\textsuperscript{37}
\end{quote}

An examination of the above points suggests that Roff provides stronger and more logical arguments than Khoo. It would be difficult to accept Khoo's arguments in view of the fact that at this early period there were very few English

\textsuperscript{36}Khoo Kay Kim, "Perkembangan Pelajaran Agama Islam," 8.

\textsuperscript{37}William R. Roff, The Origins of Malays Nationalism, 66.
and Malay schools in the Federated Malay States (which was formed in 1896). Besides, the Unfederated Malay States had not yet come under the British Protection. Khoo's argument might be true for states in the Straits Settlement, such as Melaka, Singapore, and Pulau Pinang, but there is no evidence that pondok bloomed there. However, there is sufficient evidence that local Muslim reformers such as Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin and Sheikh Ahmad al-Hadi pioneered the establishment of madrasah, a reformed religious school system, which is discussed in the next section. Their efforts, aided by favorable circumstances, led to the growth of madrasahs, and this was emulated by other thoughtful and educated Muslims in other parts of Malaya.

Islamic Education in the Twentieth Century

Madrasah Education Before World War II

At the turn of the twentieth century, some bitterness toward pondok education began to appear among some Muslim intellectuals. They believed that the objective of pondok education was narrow and merely confined to fard 'ain. The pondok did not prepare Muslim youths for the socio-economic changes that were taking place or for employment in the British government services or the commercial sector. These intellectuals believed that education that prepared youth only for the hereafter was inadequate. Another concern was the backwardness of Malays' economic position vis-a-vis non-
Muslim immigrants. The British tried to keep Malays in their traditional roles in fishing and farming. The education the British allowed enabled the Malays to read and write. The British brought in Chinese labor to work in the tin mines and Indians laborers to work on the rubber plantations. Tin and rubber were Malaysia's most commercially productive industries.

It was at about this time too that reformist ideas from the Middle East reached Malaya. Sheikh Tahir and Sheikh Al-Hadi, who were of Arab descent and had studied in Makkah, were very much influenced by Jamaluddin al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, two Muslim reformers from Afghanistan and Egypt respectively. Afghani and his pupil Abduh ignited the fire of rationalism in the Muslim World at the end of the nineteenth century. Afghani called for reopening the door of ijtihad (the interpretation of law and doctrine) and a return to emphasis on the Qur'an and Hadith. He believed that ijtihad would invite innovation and encourage economic development in the Muslim world. Afghani insisted that Islam is compatible with reason and modern science. He

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38 According to Nikkie R. Keddie, there is now abundant evidence that Afghani was not, as he usually claimed, born and brought up in Afghanistan but rather in Iran. See Nikkie R. Keddie, An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani" (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 5. The impact of the reformist thought in Egypt on Islam in Malaya is well-documented in Mohamed Aboulkhir Zaki, "Modern Muslim Thought in Egypt and Its Impact on Islam in Malaya", (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1965).
advocated the revival of philosophical studies and inquiries in search of scientific truths. Both Afghani and Abduh supported education as an instrument for change and attempted to dispel the notion that Western education led directly to Christianity. Keddie's study revealed that Afghani's primary goals were political unification and strengthening of the Islamic world and ending Western encroachments and that the reform of Islam was secondary.  

In the Malay archipelago this group of reformers was called the Kaum Muda (Progressive Faction), in contrast to the Kaum Tua (Conservative Faction). The Kaum Muda published a magazine called Al-Imam (the Leader) to publicise the reformist aims of Al-Manar (the mouthpiece of the Egyptian reformist movement) in the Malay language. The Kaum Muda established the first modern religious school, known as Madrasah al-Iqbal, in 1907 in Singapore. It was similar to a secular school in organization and included secular subjects such as geography, history, and science in addition to the religious subjects. Madrasah Al-Iqbal did not receive a good response from the public, which felt that the ideas of the Kaum Muda were contradictory to Islam. The school had to close only a year after beginning operation. In 1917 Madrasah Al-Hadi was founded in Melaka by Sheikh Ahmad al-Hadi. It met the same fate as Madrasah Al-

Iqbal. Sheikh Ahmad did not give up, but instead moved to Pulau Pinang where he established **Madrasah Masyhor Islamiah**, which was a success and remains as one of the famous centers of Islamic education in the country. Sheikh Ahmad not only abandoned the memorization method of study and the narrow religious curriculum; he even initiated student activities such as debates and rhetoric.

The first *madrasah* to be built in the Federated Malay States was **Madrasah Al-Hamidiah** in Kedah. It was founded in 1908 by Sheikh Wan Sulaiman Wan Sidik in honor of His Royal Highness (H.R.H.) Sultan Abdul Hamid, the ruler of Kedah. This school was expanded in 1935 and later was named **Al-Mahadul Mahmud** after H.R.H. Tunku Mahmud, who laid the foundation stone. In the state of Kelantan, the first *madrasah* was the famous **Madrasah Muhammidiah** founded by the Majlis Agama dan Istiadat Melayu (The Council of Malay Custom and Religion), established in 1915. This *madrasah* had three streams—Malay, English, and Arabic. The Malay and English streams were begun in 1917, and the Arabic stream in 1924. This arrangement of establishing the Arabic stream later than the other streams seems strange, but it is because the *madrasah* originally was set up to cater to children of the elites.

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40 Jawatankuasa Penulisan, Sejarah Perkembangan Sekolah-Sekolah Negeri Kedah (Kedah: Jabatan Pelajaran Kedah, 1976), 206.
Al-Madrasah Alwiah Al-Dinniah was built in the state of Perlis in 1937 through the effort of H.R.H. King Syed Alwi and some adherents of the Kaum Muda. In the state of Melaka, skirmishes between the Kaum Muda and the Kaum Tua were sharp and each group founded schools to advance their ideals. After Sheikh Al-Hadi left for Pulau Pinang, his close companion founded another madrasah known as Sekolah Arab (The Arabic School). The Kaum Tua founded Madrasah Al-Khairiyah Muhammadiyah in the early 1920s. In the 1930s, four more madrasah were set up.\(^4\) The state of Terengganu had its first madrasah, Madrasah Arabiah, in 1925, held in the evening at the Paya Bunga Malay School. In 1933, the madrasah moved to its own premises, which was built from donations and was named Madrasah Al-Sultan Zainal Abidin in honor of the Sultan.

Madrasah Idrisiah established in 1922 was the first madrasah found in the state of Perak through the effort of its ruler, H.R.H. Sultan Idris. This was followed by Madrasah Al-Arabiah Bukit Chandan (1922), Ma'ahad Al-Ihya Al-Sharif (1934), and Madrasah Al-Ulum Al-Shariah (1937).

\(^4\) These are Madrasah Islamiah in Alor Gajah in 1937; Madrasah at Bukit Katil in 1938; Madrasah Tarbiatul Dinniah in Jasin in 1939; and Madrasah Nuriah in Sungai Udang in 1940. Khoo Kay Kim, "Perkembangan Pelajaran Agama Islam," 19.
The number of madrasah in the state mushroomed in the 1930s and 1940s.\footnote{They are Madrasah Ihya al-Sharif, Gunong Semanggol; Al-Akhlak Al-Islamiah, Bagan Serai; Al-Ulum Al-Shariah, Bagan Datoh; Al-Falah, Parit Buntar; Syamsul Maarif, Tanjong Piandang; Irsyadiah, Bagan Datoh; Yahyawiah, Padang Rengas; Idrisiah, Kuala Kangsar; and Aziziah, Parit. See Sabri Haji Said, 22.}

The number of madrasahs in the Straits Settlement and the Federated Malay States increased significantly after 1906. In 1913, the weekly newspaper Neracha (The Balance), related that there were tens upon tens of madrasahs in operation in the state of Perak alone. Most of the madrasahs provided elementary education (ibtidai), some went as far as secondary education (thanawi), and ultimately a few even provided higher education (aliyy). Those students who passed the higher level could continue their education in a Middle Eastern university such as Al-Azhar University in Egypt.

Although the number of madrasah rose steadily, it did not crowd out pondok education. However, from 1918 onward, the number of pondoks began to decline. Some pondoks either were closed because of insufficient pupils or were transformed into madrasahs. The decline of pondoks were due to several factors. First, modern education—English and vernacular schools—had begun to make an inroad. English schools offered graduates employment in government services and commercial houses. Employment possibilities changed the
people's attitude to modern schools. Second, the pondok reliance on a sole teacher suffered setback when the teacher's offspring themselves no longer continued in their father's footstep. Most pondoks were left without teachers. Third, pondoks did not have a stable source of income, and with the establishment of states religious departments and councils, zakat (religious tithe) were no longer given to pondoks but were collected and dispensed by these offices. Finally, the religious departments and councils also had begun to assume the responsibility of issuing licenses (surat tauliah) to all teaching 'ulama. This reduced the academic freedom and independence of 'ulama and changed the basis of their authority.\(^4\)

Despite this decline, the pondok has to be recognized for its contribution to Malay society especially before the existence of formal schools. The pondoks played a great role "in building up a peaceful and well organised society among the people of this country and in combating illiteracy and producing Alim Ulama and wise men."\(^4\) Khoo suggests that the First World War could be seen as a divider between


an era dominated by pondoks and an era dominated by madrasahs.\footnote{Khoo Kay Kim, "Perkembangan Pelajaran Agama Islam," 10.}

The period between the turn of the twentieth century and the early 1950s has been called the Golden Age of Islamic religious education.\footnote{Judith Nagata, The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), 43.} The madrasahs produced a steady supply of teachers and religious officials.\footnote{Neracha, 20 Aug 1913, quoted in W. R. Roff, Origins of Malay Nationalism, 77.} Several factors brought this about. One was the role of the Kaum Muda (Progressive Faction) in arousing the awareness of the Malays about the importance of education. There also was prestige attached to being religious teachers and officials in the religious councils that were mostly established in late 1940s and early 1950s (see Table 2-1).

However, another factor that caused religious schools to flourish was the unavailability of religious instruction in the Malay schools when they were first established by the British government in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Malay parents found these schools to be inadequate and inconsistent with their beliefs about the importance of religious education. They believed that the English and Malay vernacular schools would challenge the faith of their children and lead to its abandonment. They also believed...
that Islamic religious education through the pondoks or the madrasahs would raise better Muslim children.

**Table 2-1**

Legislative Establishment of Councils of Religion for States in Peninsular Malaysia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Kelantan (1938, 1953, 1966)(^\d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Johor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Perlis (1964)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Negeri Sembilan (1960)</td>
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<td>Terengganu (1963)</td>
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<td>Pahang (1956)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perak (1965)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Selangor (1964, 1972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Penang [Pulau Pinang]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malacca [Melaka]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Kedah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^\d\) = Date of major revisions.


Still another factor that could have led to the popularity of the madrasahs was their accessibility to the majority of the population. In contrast to English schools, madrasahs in principle did not charge any fees. Most madrasahs were located in rural areas within the vicinity of the Malay households. Furthermore, since the madrasahs did not set an age limit, drop outs and even graduates from Malay schools who had not gained access into English schools had no other options for secondary education except to study.
in the madrasahs. English education was the only form of secondary education during the period of British colonialism, with the exception of some madrasahs and a few Chinese vernacular schools.

A closer examination of the organization of the madrasahs reveals that they were of two kinds. The first was founded and administered by the state religious department or council, such as Madrasah Muhammadiyah in Kelantan. There also were madrasahs founded by individuals or committees. However, as a result of financial problems these madrasahs such as Madrasah Alwiah in Perlis, Al-Ma'ahad Al-Mahmud in Kedah, and Ma'ahad Hishamuddin in Selangor, were handed to or taken over by states religious departments or councils.

The second type of madrasah was founded by a local committee through funds collected from donation, zakat (religious tithe), and wagf (religious endowment), such as Madrasah Al-Ulum Al-Shariah and Madrasah Al-Ihva Al-Sharif in Perak. There were more madrasahs of this kind than of

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the first kind. These *madrasahs* also were known as the "*sekolah rakyat,*" or the people's school, for the reason that they were built, maintained, and managed by the people.

**Madrasah Education After World War II**

The growth of Islamic education did not falter after the World War II. In fact, as mentioned earlier, this period became known as the Golden Age of *Madrasah*. The growth increased and more *madrasahs* were built. For instance, in the state of Pahang alone most *madrasahs* in the form of the people's school were founded during this period.\(^5^0\) The success of the *madrasahs* prompted efforts to set up an Islamic College for furthering the education of the graduates of *madrasahs*. This would provide more opportunity for higher education than going abroad to the Middle East, which could be afforded by only a few. Muslims felt the need for such an institution, especially since graduates of English schools had King Edward VII Medical College (1905) and Raffles College (1929), both in Singapore, for further education. K. Sultan Merican, who founded the Muslim Association of Perak in 1940, was the prime mover of this idea.

In the early 1940s, Merican conceptualized an Islamic College that would be open to all people, Muslims and non-Muslims, and would adopt the best principles and methods of teaching evolved from both the East and the West. He envisaged it on the model of the Malay College of Kuala Kangsar, which the British had established in 1905 in an effort to produce Malay elites who would serve in the civil service administration. Merican expected the pool of teachers to come from Raffles College in Singapore, Al-Azhar University in Egypt, and Aligarh University in India. He expressed the hope that all the Arabic schools (madrasahs) would act as feeders to this proposed college. However, Merican's idea did not materialize.\footnote{Ibid., 24-25.}

The period after World War II also witnessed the establishment of the University of Malaya in 1949 in Singapore. The establishment of this university again brought the issue of a higher institute of Islamic learning to the fore. This time the issue was taken up by the Malayan Islamic Association. The blueprint for an Islamic College was prepared in 1949 and was presented to the Conference of Malay Rulers. The aim of the College would be to:

1. Develop a tradition of higher Islamic learning that would be modern;
2. Develop a center of Islamic education which would serve as a focal point for all the religious and Arabic schools with the aim of
improving the quality of teaching and uniting the various school systems;
3. Produce qualified religious and Arabic language teachers for the government primary and secondary schools;
4. Increase the number of qualified officers in the Departments of Religion and the Shari‘ah Courts as well as to enlarge their knowledge;
5. Spread the message of Islam by sending her graduates to all corners of the country (translation mine).52

The Islamic College finally was opened in 1955 with 55 students. The Sultan of Selangor gave his old palace as a waqf (religious endowment) to be converted as a premise for the College. The newly formed College offered English language, science, and mathematics, beside the core curriculum of Islamic studies and Arabic language. As the years progressed, demand for Islamic higher education exceeded the number of places available in the Islamic College.

Content and Method of Madrasah

In madrasahs students were divided into classes according to age and academic ability. Examinations were used to determine promotion. The class timetable was fixed and certificates were awarded to students who completed the full course of study. In the most advanced madrasahs, there were three levels of study: preparatory (tahdiri),

elementary (ibtidai), and secondary (thanawi). Each level took from two to four years to complete, depending on the school. However, most madrasahs included only preparatory and elementary instruction.

**Madrasah** organization and curricula varied from school to school. However a fundamental core of subjects was found in all madrasahs. The subjects offered in madrasahs underwent changes in three phases: Pre-Second World War, Post-Second World War, and after Independence. In the Pre-Second World War period, the curriculum was dominated by religious subjects. However, after World War II the curriculum was broadened to include some "Western" subjects such as geography and world history. After Independence, subjects that are offered in the national examination at the lower, upper, and higher secondary levels, such as general science, English language, Malay literature, and economics, are further added. These differences are demonstrated by examination of the subjects offered in one of the major madrasahs in Perak (Table 2-2).

**Islamic Education Just Prior to Independence**

To determine the status of Islamic religious schools just prior to Independence, it will be most useful to study the Report submitted by the Committee to Consider Financial Aids to non-Government Islamic Religious Schools. In 1956
### Table 2-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Second World War</th>
<th>Addition after the War</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tauhid</strong> (theology)</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fiqh</strong> (jurisprudence)</td>
<td>Malay language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tafsir</strong> (Qur'anic exegesis)</td>
<td>Islamic history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hadith</strong> (Tradition)</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tasawwuf</strong> (Islamic mysticism)</td>
<td>Cooking/needlework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mantiq</strong> (logic)</td>
<td>Rhetorics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arabic Language:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Usul Fiqh</strong> (science of the laws)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nahu (grammar)</td>
<td><strong>Fara`id</strong> (inheritance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarf (grammar)</td>
<td><strong>Musthalah Hadith</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balaghah</strong> (metaphors)</td>
<td>(science of Tradition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Tajwid</strong> (method of reading Qur'an)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Arabic Language:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Insha'</em> (composition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Imla'</em> (dictation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


the High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya, with the agreement of the Malay Rulers, appointed a committee to examine the conditions of non-government Muslim religious schools, including the Muslim College at Klang, and to make recommendations for any financial assistance considered necessary.³³

The Committee visited 76 non-government Islamic religious schools throughout the 11 states in Malaya. By this time there were 368 schools with 35,093 pupils (see Table 2-3). The neglected condition of the non-government Islamic religious schools was evident from the report

prepared by this committee, which stated that "what we saw and found during our visits to the schools was very saddening." Most of the school buildings were far from satisfactory. A great number had no partitions between classrooms, which made teaching and classroom management difficult. Many of the schools had earthen floors.

Table 2-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. Sembilan</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1,182</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johore</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>6,654</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selangor</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>889</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelantan</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3,846</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penang, Prai</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6,426</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trengganu</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahang</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kedah</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2,708</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perak</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>6,938</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perlis</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melaka</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4,252</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total          | 368     | 35,093 | 1,174    


These schools had poor administration. Few of them had accurate financial accounts, and in most cases the school's financial position was very weak. Several schools drew their income from wagf property such as rubber land, padi land, and house rent. That income was insufficient. Most

54Ibid., 3.
schools had additional income from irregular contributions; a few received financial aid and teachers from the religious department. The chief source of income for all the schools was school fees, which varied from RM$1 to RM$3 per month. Even this payment was uncertain, since parents were too poor to pay or did not appreciate the benefits of education.

The teachers, especially those in schools that did not receive financial aid, were grossly underpaid. In general the graduates from these schools had "nowhere to go." Only a few of the graduates could afford to go abroad for further study. A small number were engaged to teach in the non-government Islamic religious schools. A few lucky ones who passed the examination set by the religious department obtained employment as teachers in the government religious schools or as officers in the religious department. For the rest, the academic nature of their training did not prepare them to do craftwork or plant padi (rice), and consequently they did not benefit the community.

The Committee reported that there were morning session schools, afternoon session schools, and two session schools. The morning session schools drew students who could not get admission into government schools because of the unavailability of Malay schools or because of distance, students who left government schools before completion, and students who were unable to continue their studies in other government schools for various reasons. The afternoon
session schools drew their students from those who were studying in government Malay schools or English schools where no facilities for religious study were provided or where religious teaching was inadequate, and those who left the government schools after completing their studies (or earlier), with a view of making a living through religious knowledge.55

The Committee expressed concern over the methods of teaching that were below par and indicated that the source of the problem was lack of teacher training and inadequate knowledge. There was no uniformity in the curriculum, which led to difficulty when students transferred from one school to another. The curriculum was prepared by religious departments or councils or by the schools themselves. Some schools had no syllabus at all. Besides religious text books, there were readers and other educational books which were all written and published in foreign countries. Understandably these books had no Malayan content at all.

The Committee found that the lessons taught in the non-government Islamic religious schools were all religious subjects. Very few schools taught English language, Malay language, and other subjects such as arithmetic, geography, and history. Most of the schools used Arabic texts, and Arabic and Malay languages were the medium of instruction. In some cases, the sole medium of instruction was Arabic,

55 ibid., 4.
while in others it was Malay. The Committee believed that, with few exceptions, these religious schools could be considered only as primary schools. It alleged that those schools that taught up to secondary education had not met the necessary standard. In a majority of the schools, there was no age limit for admission, and students who failed examinations were not terminated or disqualified.

Realizing the contributions of these schools in the foundation of Islamic education and acknowledging their role in the supply of 'ulama (religious scholars and teachers), the Committee considered it crucial to subsidize them so they could function better in accord with the needs of the time and the country. The Committee believed that the quality of the schools could be improved with sufficient financial aid from the government. It advised the government of the need to provide appropriate opportunities and employment to graduates of these schools and warned of the "undesirable effects on the community, especially the Malays," if they were left behind in life. Related to this the Committee also recommended that these schools be given reasonable subsidies in order to relieve their financial stress.

The Committee also recommended the establishment of a section within the Ministry of Education that would be responsible for religious studies in government schools and non-government schools that enjoy government assistance. It
requested teachers' training classes for teachers of Islamic religious subjects in government schools or government-aided religious schools. It urged the introduction of special legislation to enforce the registration of schools and teachers of religious schools and proposed the introduction of a common syllabus and examinations for these schools.\textsuperscript{56}

As a result of these recommendations, some madrasah began receiving some form of financial assistance from the government. Of course this aid was not without further implication. Gradually, the madrasah had to change in some respects and bow to wishes of the government, as will be seen in Chapter Four.

\textbf{Summary}

Islamic religious schools have evolved within the past century from a loose, informal form represented by the Qur'anic school, to better organized residential pondok, and finally to the present more organized madrasah. Although the traditional pondoks have almost disappeared, their contribution to the intellectual development of the Malays should not be underestimated. The pondoks helped to purify the Malays' beliefs which were steeped in myths and legends, ushered in an era of rationalism, and cultivated the Malay minds with an intellectual tradition. Literary activities of the pondok ʿulama, although consisting either of

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., 3-7.
translations or summaries of works of great Muslim scholars outside the Malay Archipelago, led to the creation of jawi as an important media of communication in the region. The Islamic reform movement that introduced the madrasahs helped to accelerate this process of strengthening the intellectual tradition and meeting the challenge of Christianity and Western culture.

The Malays always have prized learning as a social and religious asset. Education to the Malays always has meant religious education. To learn to read the Qur'an is supreme. Only after this has been completed can the study of other things, such as their own language, be conducted. However, contact with the English, Chinese, and Indian in urban settings forced Malay intellectuals to examine the social realities. This led to innovative ideas in religious school curriculum, but they were not well received by the mainstream. Most of the madrasahs stuck to the old curriculum which consisted primarily of religious subjects. With the onslaught of secular education, the importance of the madrasahs as the last bastion for religious education could not be underscored. However, this role could not be rendered completely when the madrasahs were plagued with so many shortcomings.
CHAPTER 3
DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

The British had a significant influence in the development of education in Malaysia, especially in its early formative stage. This influence, which lasted for approximately one and a half centuries, had effects that were both good and bad—for communities of Malays, Chinese, and Indians, but especially for the Malays. The British administrators and missionary societies set up English and Malay vernacular primary schools. However, they provided no education to the Chinese and Indian communities because, they argued, the Chinese and Indians one day would return to their home countries.

Although British Malaya (the common name for Peninsular Malaysia under British rule) had a pluralistic educational system, this study will focus on the education of the Malays. Chinese and Tamil education is broad and deserves its own study.

In this Chapter I will discuss the development of national education before Independence. I will cover three periods of educational development: (a) the nineteenth century, (b) from early twentieth century until the Second World War, and (c) from the Second World War to Independence.
(1957). It will be helpful to recall from Chapter One that British domination of Peninsular Malaysia was completed in three phases. They were: (a) the formation of the Straits Settlements comprising the states of Pulau Pinang (Penang), Melaka (Malacca), and Singapore in 1826; (b) the establishment of the Federated Malay States consisting of the states of Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, and Pahang in 1895; and (c) the creation of the Unfederated Malay States which consisted of the states of Kedah, Perlis, Terengganu, Kelantan, and Johor in 1909.

Colonial Education in the Nineteenth Century

Education in the Straits Settlements

English education first was introduced in the Straits Settlements and later in the Federated and Unfederated Malay States. Three types of schools established in the Straits Settlements during the nineteenth century: (a) "Free" schools were supported and encouraged by the government until they were taken over by the government; (b) Branch English and vernacular schools were established or aided by the government; and (c) English and vernacular schools founded by missionary bodies and private individuals or organizations. A few of these schools were not solely English or vernacular, but were Anglo-vernacular schools in that both English and a vernacular or vernaculars were taught.
The first "Free" school was built in Pulau Pinang in 1816 by Rev. R. S. Hutchings, who wished English "taught to those who wished to seek employment in government and commercial activities." Named Penang Free School, it was called "free" not because it was cost-free but because it was open to all children regardless of race, creed, or color. English was the only medium of instruction. Malacca Free School (later renamed Malacca High School) was established in 1826 by the Trustees of the Orphan, Church, Poor, Leper and School Funds. Singapore Free School was founded by the Anglican Chaplain Rev. F. J. Darrah in 1834. These Free Schools later were handed to the government because of the Trustees' inability to shoulder the increasing financial costs. Singapore Institution, also a free school, was founded in Singapore in 1823. It was later renamed Raffles' Institution after Sir Stamford Raffles, its founder. It was founded for the purpose of educating the "higher classes of the native population," to facilitate British officers in learning the local languages and studying the history and resources of the country.


3Ibid., 16.
Several missionary organizations, especially Protestant Missions, were active in establishing schools in British Malaya, and in this they were greatly assisted by the government. According to William Milne, a scholar associated with the London Missionary Society, the aim of these mission schools was "to combine the diffusion of general knowledge with the promotion of Christianity."

These schools were not designed to overtly convert pupils to Christianity but they did aim to inculcate students in the tenets of Christianity, with a hope of "probable future conversion." Minimally, the schools aimed to improve the moral life of students.\textsuperscript{4}

The London Missionary Society was the pioneer of educational missions in the Colony, working from 1815 to 1847, when it left permanently for China. The Society started Malay and Chinese vernacular schools. William Milne, Robert Morrison, Samuel Dyer, and a Dr. Medhurst were among the well known scholars who established these schools.\textsuperscript{5} Their primary objective was "to teach the children to read Scripture portions in their own languages or dialects." Even in Malay schools where Qur'anic lessons were held, the Christian Scriptures superseded the Qur'an as a class book. The first Christian school established by the

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., 84.

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., 85.
Society for Chinese boys was opened in Melaka in 1815. In addition to the Scriptures, reading and writing English were taught. Abdullah Abdul Kadir was one of the first pupils of this school; he was mocked by local Malays as Padre Abdullah (Abdullah the priest). The London Missionary Society succeeded in establishing several vernacular schools in Melaka, Pulau Pinang, and Singapore.

Another missionary group involved in educational work was the Catholic Order of the Christian Brothers, which founded St. Xavier's Institution in Pulau Pinang and St. Joseph's Institution in Singapore around 1852. The Institution in Pulau Pinang originally was intended for Roman Catholic children who had withdrawn from the Free school because of a dispute. However the school later was opened to the public, and Chinese pupils soon flocked into it. In 1886 another Protestant Mission group, the American Methodist Episcopal Mission, opened schools in Singapore and, a few years later in 1891, in Pulau Pinang. Its schools were known as Anglo-Chinese or Methodist Boys (or Girls) Schools. Chinese boys made up the major student body of these schools.

The Church of England as a body did not begin its educational work in the Colony until the close of the nineteenth century. However, individual Anglican chaplains such as Rev. R. S. Hutchings, William Milne, and Robert

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6Ibid.
Morrison played significant roles in pioneering the "Free" schools in the early decades of the century. St. Andrew's School in Singapore, St. Georges' Girl, and St. Mark's Schools in Pulau Pinang, owed their existence to the Anglican Church. The British colonial government encouraged the various missions in their educational work through grants. This policy was adopted by all the governors from Raffles on.⁷ All the schools mentioned above were elementary schools, with the exception of Raffles' Institution in Singapore and all Free Schools which had become principal centers for secondary education.

The missionaries preceded the British government in establishing schools. According to Cheeseman, the oldest educational institution in Malaya was the Theological College established by Mission des Etrangeres in Pulau Pinang in 1807. Its medium of instruction was Latin, and it drew students from all over Asia.⁸ The growth of English schools in Melaka was so rapid that by the time of the First World War, five more schools built by Catholic missionaries were set up.⁹

⁷For a detailed discussion of the various Mission schools, see D. D. Chelliah, A History of the Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements, 84-92.


⁹They were Convent of The Holy Infant Jesus (1860), St. Francis Institution (1880), Methodist Girls School (1904), Bandar Hilir English School (1908), and Sacred Heart Convent School (1909). See Abdul Rahim bin Abdullah, "Melaka: Orang
The Malays did not greet the "Free" and the mission schools with great enthusiasm. Malay parents refused to send their children to them. They feared that attendance in these schools would alienate their children from their own society or divide their loyalties. These suspicions were well founded, for as mentioned earlier, the schools used the Christian Scriptures as their sole textbook. Abdullah Abdul Kadir, better known as Munshi Abdullah (the author of Hikayat Abdullah), even helped to revise the Malay translation of the Gospels.\footnote{Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, Hikayat Abdullah [Abdullah's story], trans. A. H. Hill (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970), 133.}

Malay vernacular education in the Straits Settlements came into existence at the same time as English education. It first was initiated by missionaries, and later was taken up by the British government, especially under the administration of Governor Cavenagh. Its progress was rather slow. The missionaries recognized the reasons for the refusal of Malay parents to send their children and attempted a strategy of opening Malay vernacular schools for the instruction of Malay language in the Free school premises. This Malay school was first introduced in Pulau Pinang Free School in 1821 but was forced to close because
of poor attendance in 1826. Further attempts were made to institute Malay vernacular schools in the rural districts of Pulau Pinang as branches of the Free School, but they did not last long. From 1821 to 1839 there was a Branch Malay School at Glugor. The one opened at Ayer Itam in 1837 lasted only a few months. In 1855 a Malay school was opened at Bayan Lepas, but it was soon transferred to Glugor, where it was closed in 1863.

In 1856 two branch Malay schools were set up at Telok Blanga and Kampong Glam in Singapore. The latter gradually was transformed into a Qur'anic school in 1860s. The effort to establish Malay vernacular schools was more successful in Melaka than in Pulau Pinang or Singapore because of the approach used by the British Resident Councillor. Unlike the Resident Councillor in Pulau Pinang, who was not keen on employing Malays as teachers and was definitely opposed to Hajjis (men who had performed the pilgrimage to Makkah), the Resident Councillor in Melaka selected villagers as schoolmasters and started the schools in close connection with the mosques. The schools were allowed to teach the Qur'an for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon, and devoted the rest of the time to Malay instruction. In 1834 there were five Malay schools in Melaka (originally Qur'anic schools), four of which were
aided by the London Missionary Society. This confirms the contention of Wong and Gwee that the beginnings of Malay vernacular education have their roots in the Qur'anic Schools. By 1863 the number of Malay schools had increased to nine. Thus Cavenagh's attempt to establish Malay schools was successful in Melaka.

There was little educational progress in Malay vernacular education in the Straits Settlements as a whole, with the British government maintaining a laissez faire policy towards education, delegating this responsibility to missionary bodies. This condition began to change when in 1867 the Straits Settlements became a Crown Colony whereby its administration was transferred from India to the Colonial Office in London. As a result, the British government began to take a more active role in Malayan education.

The first act of Sir Harry Ord, the first governor of the newly established colony in 1870, was to appoint a Committee chaired by Colonel R. Woolley to inquire into the state of education in the Colony. It is significant that 1870 also was the year when Forster's Education Act was

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passed in England, establishing the policy that a school should be placed within the reach of every English child. It is clear that the British educational policy in Malaya until the outbreak of the Second World War, when Malaya temporarily was occupied by the Japanese, has been greatly influenced by what happened in Great Britain.

The Woolley Report found that "education in the Colony has been and is in a backward state" because of insufficient encouragement by the government, on the one hand, and the indifference of the various races, particularly the Malays, on the other. Two options to improve the schools were opened to the Colony: either to begin "de novo and thoroughly re-organise all the existing establishments, or to take the Schools as they now are" and slowly improve them. The Committee decided on the second approach. It recommended appointing an Inspector of Schools, reforming the existing grants-in-aid system, which mainly applied to English schools, and improving vernacular education, especially Malay. By vernacular schools, the Committee did not mean those in which children are taught the Qur'an but rather where they
will be educated in their mother tongue, where they will learn the rudiments of sound knowledge and to read and write in the Native and Roman character. Your Committee is of opinion that a boy, whether he be Chinese or Malay, can make no real progress in education until well grounded in his own language.\(^\text{13}\)

The Committee made it a condition that all Schools receiving grants-in-aid from the government should be open to pupils of all races and creeds and that the course of education "should be purely secular, and religious instruction should be confined to voluntary classes only." It affirmed its hope to secure for the people of the Colony "the incalculable benefit of a sound, moral and liberal Education."\(^\text{14}\)

In 1872 A. M. Skinner was appointed as the first Inspector of Schools. He held that position until 1879 and was responsible for creating an educational system that remained essentially the same throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. Skinner was aware of the importance of the Qur'an in Malays' life, especially in their education. So, he proposed to reestablish the vernacular schools in Pulau Pinang as supplementary to the existing system of Qur'anic schools, which he regarded as the foundations for his proposed schools. Skinner was concerned

\(^{13}\)Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council to Enquire into the State of Education in the Colony (Woolley Report), 1870, in Wong and Gwee, Official Reports on Education, 14.

\(^{14}\)Ibid.
over the possible opposition or boycott from the Malay community if his schools excluded the teaching of the Qur'an. To avoid such a problem, he decided to retain those hajjis and khatibs (men who delivered sermons during the Friday congregational prayer) who were teachers in the Qur'anic schools. Skinner believed that this ought to be continued until the time was right for their replacement by qualified schoolmasters.

A division of secular and religious education was maintained by Skinner, who held that the main features of these schools besides regulating studies would be "to separate entirely the Koran and Malay instruction and above all to give the teacher himself some interest in the growth and prosperity of his school."¹⁵ This was the beginning of the secularization of Malay education. The learning of Malay began to be divorced from religion, a practice unknown before, although the idea had occurred to Raffles when he visited the Qur'anic school with Munshi Abdullah early in the century. Among the rules that were posted in every school were:

1. The Koran may be taught in the school, but it must be kept strictly separate from Malay.

2. The morning lessons must be devoted to instruction in Malay. The Koran must be confined in the afternoon.

¹⁵D. D. Chelliah, A History of the Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements, 63-64.
3. The Government allowance to the teacher is made on account of the Malay lessons only. The parents should assist in paying the master for teaching the Koran; the teacher may otherwise refuse his instruction.\(^{10}\) Although these schools were based on the Qur'anic schools, it was underscored from the beginning that the teaching of the Qur'an was to be secondary, with instruction in Malay being the primary objective. Parents were expected not only to pay for the Qur'an teacher, but also to erect, equip, and maintain the school houses. Skinner's experiment, based on Cavenagh's model, proved successful. With his success, the government began to establish vernacular schools in other parts of the Straits Settlements.

According to the Isemonger Report, "it was only gradually and after considerable difficulty that it was possible to introduce secular Malay studies to the exclusion of the Koran."\(^{17}\) Skinner dedicated himself to the establishment of Malay schools by founding in 1878 a Malay College in Singapore for training Malay teachers in 1878.

The inefficiency of the vernacular schools in the Colony was evident in the Isemonger Report of 1894. Although it reported an increase in the number of vernacular schools from 17 in 1872 to 190 in 1894, and an increase in

\(^{10}\)Ibid., 64.

pupil attendance from 465 in 1872 to 7,216 in 1894, the Committee considered the cost of running the schools too high for the result obtained. Consequently it recommended "the closing of all schools where the average attendance is less than 15."^18 Thus, at the close of the century, the Malay College in Singapore and 22 Malay schools and many Malay night schools were closed for economic reasons.^19

Education in the Malay States

English and Malay vernacular education in the Malay States began following the Pangkor Treaty of 1874, which formalized British protection for the state of Perak. By this time, Great Britain had recognized and acted upon the idea that it was the duty of the State to educate its citizens. Thus it was natural for the British government, as soon as it ruled over the Protected Malay States, to concern itself with education of the Malays. The period between 1875 and 1882 witnessed the establishment of the government Malay vernacular schools and, in most cases, their closure through lack of attendance. Until the early twentieth century the British government met little success with Malay vernacular schools.

The first government Malay school in the Malay States was opened at Klang, Selangor in 1875. The second school

^18Ibid., 33-34.

^19H. R. Cheeseman, "Education in Malaya 1900-1941," 33.
was established the following year at Bandar, also in Selangor. However the first Malay school in Selangor, founded on the initiative of the villagers, was in 1883 in Kuala Kubu Bharu. By 1900 there were 15 such schools.

The first Malay school to open in Perak was at Sayong in 1878. In 1884 Malay schools were started in Kuala Kangsar and Batu Gajah. Sungei Ujong (later Negeri Sembilan) had 16 Malay schools by 1893.

Malay schools were unheard of in the Unfederated Malay States in the nineteenth century, except in Johor and Kedah. The first Malay school in Johor was opened at Johor Bahru in 1883. It expanded rapidly so that by 1906 Johor had 25 schools, with the highest concentration in Muar. Johor had a unique educational arrangement whereby both the Malay secular and the afternoon Qur'anic schools were administered.

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by the Education Department formed in 1885. These Qur'anic schools later were known as the Government Religious Schools. These schools were held in the afternoon using the premises of the Malay schools or the mosques. This administrative arrangement lasted until 1928. Kedah was reported to have its first Malay school in 1897, originally intended for the children of aristocrats.

English schools made their entry into the Malay States in 1864 when the state of Johor opened the Tanjung Petri School (later renamed Johore Free School) on the wishes of its ruler. The government employed Rev. H. G. Yzelman as its first teacher. In 1890 Rev. Frederick Haines established a Government English School in Kuala Lumpur. It was then the only government sponsored venture in providing English education. The progress of English education was enhanced mainly through the efforts of missionary bodies such as Catholic and Methodist Missions. Five English schools were built by 1900, all in the urban areas. There also were a handful of English schools in Perak and Negeri Sembilan, set up by missionary bodies. These schools

25 Ibid., 31.

26 They were Anglo-Chinese School, Kelang (1893); Bukit Bintang Girls School, Kuala Lumpur (1893); Junior Methodist Girls School, Kuala Lumpur (1896); Methodist Boys School, Kuala Lumpur (1898); and Convent Bukit Nanas, Kuala Lumpur (1899). See Jawatankuasa Penulisan, Sejarah Perkembangan Sekolah-Sekolah Negeri Selangor [History of the development of schools in Selangor], 63.
received financial aid from the British government and were considered grant-in-aid schools.

At the turn of the century, in 1902, a Commission was set up to "enquire into the system of English education in the Colony, especially as regards secondary and technical education." Also known as the Kynnerseley Report, this Commission noted that in 1872 there were 2,641 pupils in the Colony attending 19 English schools and 818 pupils attending 28 mixed and vernacular schools. By 1902, there were two types of English schools: those directly managed by the government, and grant-in-aid schools, each controlled by its own governing body and receiving government aid in proportion to the number of children attending the schools. The Commission recommended the opening of commercial, technical, and science classes.  

Method and Content of the English School

The English schools provided seven years of elementary education, beginning with Standard I through Standard VII, preceded by two years of preparatory studies. However, many of the pupils did not complete Standard VII. They dropped out once they had an adequate command of English to see them through the job market. Those who passed the Standard VII

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examinations could continue studying in the secondary schools.

The curriculum of the Singapore and Melaka Free Schools in the 1840s reveals that the main purpose was to teach children "reading and writing English" and the vernacular languages whenever possible, as well as the common rules of arithmetic. In Singapore Free School the following subjects were taught in secular instruction from first to fourth class: Roman history, astronomy, English grammar, spelling, composition, reading, writing, history, mathematics, and geography. The same lessons were taught in the Pulau Pinang Free School, with the omission of history, geography, and astronomy. At the secondary level, natural science, Latin, and modern languages, either French or German, were added.

The decade between 1860 and 1870 saw the climax of the educational warfare between humanists and naturalists in Great Britain. It concluded after heated arguments, including one by John Stuart Mill in his Inaugural Address at St. Andrews University in 1867, with the conviction that both science and literature ought to be included in the school curriculum. A result of this debate was the emphasis on science and an increasing secular orientation of British education. By 1899, the secondary schools were preparing pupils for the Junior and Senior Cambridge Local

examinations. The Queen's Scholarship was introduced in 1899 "to allow promising boys an opportunity of completing their studies in England, and to encourage a number of boys to remain in school and acquire a really useful education." 29

The Commission of 1902 found that the teaching of history and geography did not bear upon the history and geography of the region; mathematics was of too high a level; Latin was undesirable and should be taught only under special circumstances and as an optional subject; the modern languages did not include Dutch, which was widespread in the region; and subjects for study in botany and zoology were not of the local flora and fauna but rather that of Great Britain.

By 1939, all levels of schooling offered the following subjects: English in all its branches, arithmetic, geography, history, handwork (drawing, arts, and crafts), hygiene, physical training, and mathematics. Science—physics, biology, and chemistry—was taught only in government secondary schools.

The aim of English education was to produce skilled manpower, such as junior clerks, for administrative service and employment in commercial houses. Although it was suggested that a sound liberal education should be offered,

29 Ibid., 45.
in practice the English schools were vocational. Pupils were studying primarily to obtain good occupations.

Method and Content of Malay Schools

Malay vernacular schools provided four years of education beginning with Standard I and terminating with Standard IV. Subjects taught in vernacular schools were reading and writing the Malay language in both the Romanized and Arabic letters, arithmetic, and geography. The reading books were *Pelayaran Abdullah* [Abdullah's travels], *Hikayat Si Miskin* [Story of a poor man], and *Hikayat Abdullah* [Abdullah's story]. Writing was tested by dictation and written composition on slates. Pupils in Standard IV were given "an extra subject" to choose from, such as sanitation, agriculture, physiology, and physical geography (natural philosophy).

The aim of Malay vernacular education could not be better expressed than by the British administrators themselves. The aims were multifaceted. They were dependent on the advisers, and there was no clear British educational policy. However, there seemed to be some

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30 The Arabic scripts known as jawi has been the predominant language media for the Malays and has been in existence synonymous with the presence of Islam in the region. The Malay Annals and Hikayat Abdullah [Abdullah's story] were written in jawi. The Romanized scripts known as rumi came about with the presence of the British who introduced it for convenience since they could not read jawi.
general principles that guided the advisers, which could be observed in the manner in which they ran the states. The first goal of education clearly expressed by Raffles was to confer the benefits of civilization on the Malays and "to diffuse among them the light of knowledge and the means of moral and intellectual improvement." Raffles lived during an era of new humanitarianism in England that advocated that commercial intercourse with indigenous races did not mean mere exploitation but also entailed a moral obligation to help them advance in intellectual and moral civilization. This was further reinforced by Sir Frank Swettenham, the Governor-General of the Federated Malay States in 1906, who maintained that

the Government has never desired to give to the children a smattering, or even a larger quantity, of knowledge which will not help them to more useful and happy lives than they now lead. To the Malay the principal value of school attendance is to teach him habits of order, punctuality, and obedience.

The goal of civilizing the Malays is ironic when the English themselves had observed that "the Malays undoubtedly must be numbered among civilized peoples."

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The second aim of education was to maintain order and stability. Sir George Maxwell held that

the aim of the Government is not to turn out a few rather well-educated youths, nor yet numbers of less well-educated boys; rather it is to improve the bulk of the people and to make the son of the fisherman or peasant a more intelligent fisherman or peasant than his father had been, and a man whose education will enable him to understand how his own lot in life fits in with the scheme of life around him.\[^{34}\]

The fear of "over-education," experienced by the British in India was a constant reminder to the different states to be prudent in their educational policy.

The third aim of education, implicit in the above statements, was to preserve the Malays' status quo as simple rural folk. A legislative proceeding explicitly states that

it is no real education that qualifies a pupil in reading, writing and arithmetic and leaves him with a distaste, or perhaps even a contempt, for the honourable pursuits of husbandry and handicraft. It will not only be a disaster to, but a violation of the whole spirit and traditions of, the Malay race if the result of our vernacular education is to lure the whole of the youth from the kampong to the town.\[^{35}\]

This aim was consistent with the British commitment to "minimum interference" in the affairs of Malay commoners.

The British often were caught in a dilemma with their Malay policy. They were torn between the attractiveness of

\[^{34}\]Chief Secretary's Report, Federated Malay States, 1920, quoted in Wong and Gwee, Official Reports on Education, 2.

preserving Malay elite life, that reminded them of the English gentlemen, and the needs of innovation and development for the ordinary Malays. They often ended in doing justice to neither goal. This ambiguity was reflected in the High Commissioner's concern for the "provision of adequate facilities for technical and literary education of Malays (in English) to enable them to take their proper place in the administrative and commercial life of these states."  

The fourth aim of Malay education was to create literacy so the Malays would not be cheated in business transactions. According to the Annual Report on Education for 1921 Malay vernacular education has broadly three functions to perform: (a) to teach the dull boy enough reading, writing and arithmetic to help him keep his accounts with the village shopkeeper or his employer; (b) to prepare the intelligent boy for that English education which is necessary if he is to aspire to well-paid business or Government posts; (c) to give the bright boy with a bent for manual work the groundwork for prosecuting such work profitably.

Finally, Malay vernacular education was to provide a sufficient supply of low ranking service personnel such as policemen and peons (office boys) to assist in the efficient operation of the British administrative services.

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36 Ibid.

37 Quoted in Chelliah, A History of the Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements, 78.
Malays' Apathy for Secular English and Malay Education

Similar to education in the Straits Settlements, the most frequent complaints of British administrators regarding education in the Malay States during the nineteenth century were the poor attendance in the Malay schools (see Tables 3-1 and 3-2) and the conspicuous absence of Malay students from English schools (see Table 3-3). Table 3-1 shows that although the percentage of students' daily attendance improved in the Straits Settlements from 1872 to 1892, it was still below 80 percent. The condition of Malay vernacular education in the Federated Malay States was even more depressing, for by 1893 there were only a small number of schools, with a small daily attendance, in comparison to the Straits Settlements which had fewer Malay population (see Table 3-2). Worse still, there was no Malay student attending English school in the Straits Settlements by 1901, as shown in Table 3-3.

Table 3-1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Ave. Daily Attend.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2,230</td>
<td>1,771</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>7,218</td>
<td>5,826</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-2

Malay Vernacular Education in the Federated Malay States, 1893

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>Ave. Daily Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perak</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>1,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selangor</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Sembilan</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3-3

Attendance at English School in Straits Settlements by Race, 1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Ave. Daily Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europeans</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eurasians</td>
<td>976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>16,144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>3,422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The British did everything they could to induce the Malays to attend the Malay vernacular schools. In some states, such as Johor and Selangor, the schools held a religious session in the afternoon. In others, such as Perak, in order to attract parents the schools were made distribution centers for anti-malarial medicines. In Selangor, the teacher "out of his own pocket money" provided a free daily meal to his students.

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Several factors have been advanced for the Malays' apathy toward the Malay vernacular school. First, Malay parents were suspicious of the school since it did not offer Islamic religious instruction. They found this unsettling, because to them the purpose of schooling was to acquire religious knowledge. Their concern was strengthened by the fact that the Malay vernacular school was first opened as a subdivision of the English school, and in the 1890s jawi (Malay in Arabic script) was omitted from the curriculum and replaced by rumi (Malay in Romanized script). They regarded this as an attempt at Anglicisation of the Malay language.

Second, despite free instruction and government-provided books and slates, it was difficult for Malays to see the relevance of secular education to their simple, rural lives. Malay parents refused to send their children to school "because of fear of losing a helping hand with the household chores."39 The nature of the village industry, such as padi cultivation, fishing, and handicrafts, did not require knowledge of reading and writing but needed instead intensive labor.

Third, the Malays possessed their own Qur'anic schools which taught them the basics of their religion and to read and write in their own language. The effectiveness of these schools can be seen in the education of Munshi Abdullah, one

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of the early Malay literary figures whose work had been alluded to in previous chapters. Finally, Malay vernacular schools often were inaccessible to the rural Malays, since they were built in urban areas.

The above considerations reveal that the Islamic religious schools in some ways had influenced the progress of Malay schools in the nineteenth century. In addition, the deep attachment of the Malays to the Qur'an determined the nature of Malay vernacular schools. The Malay school was at first only a supplementary to the Qur'anic school. But it later emerged independently from the latter. However, a few states had to hold Qur'an classes in the afternoon in order to persuade the Malays to attend vernacular schools.

Colonial Education: Early Twentieth Century to World War II

Similar to the situation in the Straits Settlements, the growth of Malay vernacular education in the Federated Malay States was very slow at the dawn of the twentieth century (see Table 3-4). However, significant progress was made in subsequent years through the British policy of compulsory attendance.

A few British advisers began to make school attendance compulsory for children between ages six and fourteen. Failure of parents to comply with this regulation was
considered an offence liable to a fine. Several school
districts in Selangor and Sungei Ujong (Negeri Sembilan)

Table 3-4
Progress of Malay Schools in the
Federated Malay States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>1898</th>
<th>1907*</th>
<th>1916</th>
<th>1924</th>
<th>1931</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perak</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selangor</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Sembilan</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahang</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>168</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>534</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Awang Had Salleh, *Pelajaran dan Perguruan Melayu di Malaya* [Malay learning and teaching in British Malaya], 5,8,14.

*The figures for 1907 are from Chai Hon-Chan, *The Development of British Malaya 1896-1909*, 272.

began this move. It was made a state law in Sungei Ujong in 1899. Finally, new enactments whereby all male children
between the ages of seven and fourteen were required to
attend a minimum of half a school year, except for normal
holidays and specified holidays such as padi harvesting
season, were introduced. This enactment was implemented in
Negeri Sembilan in 1900, Pahang in 1908, Perak in 1916, and
Selangor in 1923. Johor and Kedah introduced a similar
enactment in 1915.

Although the compulsory attendance law did not specify
"Malay" children, a former Director of Education for the
Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States
commented, "In fact, the intention of all the enactments was
to compel the attendance of Malay boys, and they have been
used solely for this purpose."^ 40

These enactments had their effect, and by 1920 more
than 90 percent attendance was common. This period also saw
a surge of interest in secular education, making the
enactments no longer necessary. The attitudes of Malays
changed toward the first quarter of the century when they
realized the benefits that schooling accrued. Malay parents
demanded the establishment of more schools in their villages
and were willing to build their own schools as long as the
government could provide the teachers. However, the
government could not meet this demand.

English and Malay vernacular education were introduced
into the Unfederated Malay States (consisting of Kedah,
Kelantan, Trengganu, Perlis, and Johor) a bit later than in
the other parts of Peninsular Malaysia. Their development
began when those states became British Protectorates in
1909. Kedah had its first Malay school in 1897, and by 1910
it had 20 such schools. Kelantan had its first Malay school
in 1903. Terengganu did not have a Malay vernacular school
until 1915. A British Advisor expressed his shock at the
neglect of Malay schools in Terengganu, while it was the

^40 H. R. Cheeseman, "Compulsory Education," Education in
Malaya (Kuala Lumpur: 1948), 39-40, quoted in Philip Loh
Fook Seng, The Malay States 1877-1895: Political Change and
Social Policy, 173.
foremost state in religious education.\footnote{Annual Report Trengganu, 1915 quoted in Awang Had Salleh, Pelajaran dan Pengajaran Melayu di Malaya Zaman British [Malay education and teaching in British Malaya], 6.} This situation is not at all shocking and is a logical conclusion of events. With such an advanced network of pondoks whose graduates could pursue their studies in Makkah and Pattani, the populace naturally had no need for a foreign system of education. Perlis had five Malay schools in 1913. Only Johor was successful in getting the Malays to attend Malay schools, and by 1913 it had 56 Malay schools. This is probably caused by the state support for both Malay and religious education.

English education in the Unfederated Malay States developed much later and slower than elsewhere in Malaya. The first English school in Kedah was set up in 1908 through the efforts of individuals who realized the importance of English education. It was called the Government English School.\footnote{Jawatankuasa Penulisan, History of the Development of Schools in Kedah (Alor Setar, Kedah: Jabatan Pelajaran Kedah), 133.} In marked contrast to English schools elsewhere in Malaya, that were mostly founded by missionaries, English schools in the Unfederated Malay States were established by the government. These states were not penetrated by missionaries probably because they had an advanced network of pondoks and were less accessible geographically.
The appointment in 1903 of R. J. Wilkinson, a Malay scholar, as the new Federal Inspector of Schools brought significant progress and a new era in Malay vernacular education. Wilkinson was aware that the Malay vernacular schools were not producing a highly educated class and were not fulfilling their task. He noticed that progress in these schools was hampered by poor, unimaginative teaching and lack of suitable books. Wilkinson realized that the Malays were not unappreciative of literary works, but deterioration in the Malay literary impulse was caused by "the unsympathetic and even pedantic view of native books" adopted by many Englishmen, which had created "a certain antagonism between the new schools and the old learning." Wilkinson firmly advocated that rumi (Malay in Roman letters) should gradually replace jawi (Malay in Arabic letters) so that it would be easier to teach the language to non-Malays and the English administrators and to maintain uniformity throughout Malaya. He also was responsible for the publication of classical Malay literature in rumi adapted from the jawi texts for use in the classroom.

Wilkinson's farsightedness in Malay education again was evident in his proposal for "the establishment at a suitable locality in the FMS of a residential school for the education of Malays of good family, and for the training of Malay boys for admission to certain branches of the

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43W. R. Roff, The Origins of Malayan Nationalism, 133.
Government service. His vision was a departure from the previous policy of reserving special educational opportunities exclusively for Malays of royal or aristocratic birth. He left the position of federal inspector before his idea was put into practice, and when the school opened in 1905 as the Malay College Kuala Kangsar, social distinctions were made an integral part of its policy. The college was modeled after English public schools and catered mainly to children of Malay rulers and chiefs and was referred to as the "Malay Eton." The College became a major producer of administrative elites.

In 1917 a report that has important bearing on sowing the seed of Malay nationalism was submitted by R.O. Winstedt, another Malay scholar of distinction, after making a study of vernacular and industrial education in Java and the Phillipines. The Winstedt Report recommended a "revolutionary" curriculum that provided "sound primary education for pupils who would normally spend their lives in country districts." This "new" curriculum emphasized handwork and gardening, physical training, and general games. Winstedt considered making education compulsory for Malay boys until they passed the fourth standard or completed six years in government vernacular school. The report called for the setting up of a training college for teachers to prepare them to teach this curriculum. The

\[44\] Ibid., 100.
Sultan Idris Training College was set up in 1922 in Perak and was the only tertiary institution available for graduates from Malay schools.

Concerning religious teaching, Winstedt proposed that steps be taken to hand over the teaching of the Qur'an to religious authorities, since "the Koran classes were introduced originally, I believe, to attract pupils; and such inducement is no longer required." Winstedt felt that if the desire is to improve the standard of religious knowledge, then money is better spent in providing scholarships for students to study in Egypt where the colleges "teach a liberal and enlightened form of Muhammadanism." However, no such scholarships came to pass and Malay vernacular schools became all the more secular with the omission of Qur'an classes. There is evidence that students in the Sultan Idris Training College studied Islamic religious knowledge to enable them to teach in Malay primary schools if required by the circumstances.

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Winstedt's vocational curriculum was a setback to Malay education, but the Teacher Training College grew into the seat of Malay nationalism, something Winstedt never imagined. Winstedt's Report had far reaching implications. First, it reflected the colonial conception of Malay education as that of keeping a balance between an English elite education for the minority destined to be "administrators" and an elementary but practical education in Malay for the masses required to remain as "cultivators." Second, Winstedt's influential position and six years of service in the Department of Education set the "rural bias" of Malay education until the Second World War.

The low standard of Malay education and its lack of utility in obtaining government employment caused the Malays to demand greater opportunities for English education. This was denied by the British because of fear of over-education and migration of Malay youth to towns to seek employment as junior staff. Acceding to the great demand for English education by the Malays, the British made a compromise by establishing what were known as Special Malay Classes. These classes prepared the able Malay pupils to make a crossover from Malay primary schools to English secondary schools. However the number of Malays attending English schools remained small compared to attendance in Malay vernacular schools, that is, 3,858 to 39,884 (see Tables 3-5 and 3-6).
Table 3-5

Enrollment in Vernacular Schools in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, 1924

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School type</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malay vernacular</td>
<td>39,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese vernacular</td>
<td>27,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil vernacular</td>
<td>7,317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3-6

Enrollment in English Schools According to Nationalities in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, 1924

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malays</td>
<td>3,858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>20,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>4,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European/Eurasians</td>
<td>3,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32,881</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


During this period, too, Malaya saw the establishment of several English higher education institutions such as King Edward VII Medical College (1905), The Technical College (1926), Raffles Institution (1928), The Agricultural College (1931), and the University of Malaya (1946). This opened the door to upward mobility for graduates of English schools and resulted in a greater demand for English
education. Malay vernacular education remained only at the primary level.

Up until the Second World War, the British continued their policy of having plural schools based on ethnicity. Malay vernacular education was free but of poor quality and of little economic value. The Indian vernacular schools reflected much the same as the Malay vernacular. As for the Chinese schools, since the government did not give adequate attention to them, they tended to become the seat for the propagation of Chinese nationalism and communist activities.⁴⁷ English schools provided the common ground for pupils of different races and creeds to interact. However these schools also created a cleavage between the English educated elites and the non-English educated. Opportunities for higher education were restricted only to those who attended English schools. Chinese pupils were better off than the rest of the population because they could get apprenticeships in business, since trades were in the control of the Chinese populace.

Colonial Education From World War II to Independence

Only after World War II and the Japanese Occupation of Malaya (1942-1945) did the British begin to prepare the country for self-government. The Japanese Occupation was an

eye opener to the Malays, who began to appreciate the value of Western education. The sudden and complete loss of freedom and of the protection of the British, and the superiority of the Japanese who had learned, adopted, and adapted the European methods, were some of the factors that led the Malays to understand the power of Western education. Another important event was the British proposal to form the Malayan Union in 1946. This act would transform Malaya into a British Crown Colony and gave the immigrants and Malays equal citizenship. The Malays felt their position was in jeopardy, which led to a surge of Malay nationalism and a greater interest in education. In place of the Malayan Union, the Federation of Malaya consisting of the Federated Malay States, the Unfederated Malay States, and Pulau Pinang and Melaka in the Straits Settlements was formed in 1948.

The Barnes Report on Malay Education

In 1949 a Committee on Malay Education was set up to "inquire into the adequacy or otherwise of the educational facilities available for the Malays." This committee, headed by L. J. Barnes, director of Social Training, University of Oxford, made some interesting observations. It noted that many Malay boys who had passed the Standard IV examination did not continue their study in English secondary schools owing to distance and the lack of transportation. Those who were interested in direct English
education from Standard One itself faced the problem of accommodation. The committee found the standard of Malay education to be low and attributed it to poor physical facilities, lack of accommodation, shortage of text books and general reading material, low quality of handicrafts taught, and the simultaneous introduction of both jawi and rumi in Standard One. As a result of the poor condition of Malay vernacular education and its lack of utility, many Malay parents had "almost lost their hope in the Malay schools. But since the liberation there has been an awakening."48

The Barnes Report asserted that lack of religious instruction in schools had led Malay parents to seek an alternative by providing it for their children in the hot afternoon. This was very exacting for children from six to ten years old. As a solution, the Committee proposed that jawi be dropped and religious instruction be taught instead. It suggested also that jawi be taught among the Malays as part of religious instruction. In this way non-Malays who were familiar with the romanized alphabet would not be hindered from learning the Malay language.

The Committee made a radical recommendation in view of social integration. It recommended the gradual transformation of all existing schools into national schools

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in which all children would be taught through the media of English and Malay, while Chinese and Tamil languages were to be taught as subjects. It would seem logical to have Malay as one of the media of instruction, since it was the *lingua franca* of the country and the region.\(^4^9\) This recommendation drew much opposition from non-Malays who perceived it as an attempt to eliminate their cultures and languages.

**The Fenn-Wu Report on Chinese Education**

To appease the Chinese, a two-man commission of W. P. Fenn, Associate Executive Secretary of the Board of Trustees of a dozen institutions of higher learning in China, and T. Y. Wu from the United Nations, was formed to study the problems of Chinese Education in the Federation. The Fenn-Wu Report took a contrasting position to the Barnes Report in its view of cultural integration. It recommended government assistance in the improvement of Chinese schools through better equipment, facilities, and trained teachers. It argued that if Malay was recognized as the national language and English as *lingua franca*, and Chinese had important cultural significance, then "the Chinese Malayans are likely to choose to be trilingual and should be encouraged to do so."\(^5^0\) Here Barnes' assimilationist

\(^{4^9}\)Ibid.

position of cultural integration through a national school system is contrasted with Fenn-Wu's multiculturalist position that allows for cultural diversity. Unfortunately the latter did not spell out a means for national unity.

As a compromise, the government passed the Education Ordinance of 1952. The major features of this ordinance were the promotion of a national school system by the gradual introduction of English into Malay vernacular schools and Malay and English languages into Chinese and Tamil vernaculars. It also recommended the maintenance of existing English national-type schools.\textsuperscript{51} Also, the Ordinance recommended that religious education be provided to pupils either on school premises or on suitable premises close by as part of the school lessons. Teachers should be certified by an appropriate religious authority.\textsuperscript{52}

The Razak Report

A significant milestone in the evolution of a national system of education was achieved in 1956, a year after the Federation of Malaya attained self-governing status. An education committee composed of representatives from the

\textsuperscript{51}Educational Planning and Research Division, Education in Malaysia, 1989 (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Education, 1990), 2.

different communities and led by Dato' Abdul Razak, the Education Minister, was set up to

examine the present educational policy of the Federation of Malaya and to recommend any alterations or adaptations that are necessary with a view to establishing a national system of education acceptable to the people of the Federation as a whole which will satisfy their needs and promote their cultural, social, economic and political development as a nation, having regard to the intention to make Malay the national language of the country whilst preserving and sustaining the growth of the languages and culture of other communities living in the country.\(^5^3\)

The Report of the Education Committee, commonly referred to as the Razak Report, recommended the introduction of common content syllabuses and the compulsory study of the national and English languages in all primary and secondary schools in order to orient pupils with a Malayan outlook, to inculcate national consciousness, and to foster mutual understanding among the citizens of various races and religions. Second, it recommended equal grants be provided to all schools irrespective of the medium of instruction and provision of similar training facilities to all teachers, thus ending discrimination against the vernaculars. Third, it opened the door of higher education to all ethnic groups by proposing an extension of English language instruction to all schools and the provision of equal opportunities for promotion to secondary schools.

Fourth, the Razak Report recommended conversion of existing primary schools to national schools (Malay medium) and national-type schools (English, Chinese, and Tamil medium).

On religious instruction, the report recommended that in any assisted school where not less than 15 pupils profess the Muslim religion, religious instruction to them shall be provided at public expense. Instruction in other religions to other pupils may be provided so long as no additional cost falls upon public funds and provided that no child shall be required to attend classes in religious instruction without the parents' consent.  

This particular recommendation had great repercussions on the growth of Islamic religious schools, as shall be seen later. On the issue of writing the national language, the Report recommended the use of rumi with the provision for learning jawi for Muslim pupils.  The underlying principles and proposals of this report, which was enacted as the Education Ordinance of 1957, laid the foundation of the National Education Policy. This ordinance enacted the teaching of Islamic religion in assisted schools, with the further specification that it should be taught for at least two hours each week within school hours by teachers approved by the state authority.

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54 Ibid., para. 121.
55 Ibid., para. 25.
Summary

In this chapter I describe the evolution of the national education system until Independence. The history of education in Malaya is complex, with no single unitary system. Its history began with the advent of English influence in the early nineteenth century. The British colonial government set up two dominant school systems—English and Malay vernacular—which were firmly maintained until Independence. The government effort in education was preceded and assisted by Christian missionary organizations. They established mission schools which differed from the native schools "merely in teaching a new way of life and not in the manner of their teaching."\(^5^7\) In fact, native schools such as the Qur'anic schools and the pondoks resembled those of mediaeval Europe, having similar aims and limitations. In addition to these two systems, there existed equally strong independent Islamic religious and Chinese school systems, and a less developed Tamil school system.

The colonial government introduced Western modern education which had three main features: "it is commonly identified with instruction; it is dissociated from any form of religion except Nationalism; and it teaches the means of living rather than the way of life."\(^5^8\) The English school

\(^5^7\) J. S. Furnivall, Educational Progress in Southeast Asia (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1943), 17.

\(^5^8\) Ibid., 10.
system has been favored in terms of economic return and was a training ground for administrative elites. The Malay vernacular system existed only to provide elementary, basic education, and it remained an important instrument for maintaining the dominance of the colonial masters over the natives.

Although in the beginning the colonial government schools faced deep resentment from the natives, this finally cooled because of the economic value of the schooling. The colonial government succeeded to a great extent in secularizing Malay education. According to Al-Attas, the divorce of the Malays from Islam was completed with the romanization of Malay language in jawi. The success of secular schools managed to weaken the rein that Islamic religious schools held over Muslims in Malaya. This secularization process continued in post-Independent Malaya until the emergence of a new Islamic awareness, which will be the subject of discussion in the next chapter.

S. M. Naquib Al-Attas argues that the Malay language grew more sophisticated and became an intellectual tool through the influence of Islam as witnessed in great religio-philosophical works written in jawi by scholars such as Al-Raniri and Al-Fansuri. He contended that the romanization of the language was the final step in alienating the Malays from Islam. See his Islam Dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu [Islam in Malay history and culture] (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1972).
CHAPTER 4
NATIONAL AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION AFTER INDEPENDENCE

The Creation of a National Education System

The Rahman Talib Report

In 1957, two years after attaining self-governing status, Malaya gained her independence from Great Britain. The search for a national education system that would be acceptable to all Malaysians continued after Independence. In 1960 an Education Review Committee was formed to review the National Education Policy, particularly its implementation. The Committee, which submitted its report (known as the Rahman Talib Report) in 1960, confirmed the soundness of the Policy and its general acceptance by the public.\(^1\) The Report recommended universal free primary education and automatic promotion up to Form Three.\(^2\) Free primary education led to an increased demand for English


\(^2\)In Malaysia, primary education runs from Standard One to Standard Six; secondary education from Form One to Form Five; and further education from Lower Six to Upper Six. Automatic promotion raised the school leaving age from 12 to 15 years.
education, which prior to this time had charged substantial fees.

This report preserved the two types of schools, national schools (Malay language) and national-type schools (English, Chinese, and Tamil language). It also insisted that examinations in secondary schools be given only in the two official languages of the country, namely, Malay and English. The Committee found that

the only way to reconcile the existing basic objectives of education policy which are to create a national consciousness while at the same time preserving and sustaining the various cultures of the country, is to conduct education at primary level in the language of the family and thereafter to reduce the language and racial differential in our education system. For the sake of national unity, the objective must be to eliminate communal secondary schools from the national system of assisted schools and to ensure pupils of all races shall attend both National and National-type secondary schools (emphasis mine).\(^3\)

As a result of this recommendation, it became possible for the first time in 1962 for Malay students in Malay secondary schools to sit for public examinations. This enhanced the economic opportunities available to Malay school graduates.

The report noted that religious instruction as required by the Education Ordinance 1957 was not satisfactory and its implementation encountered a major problem. The ordinance did not specify whether the state or federal government should bear the cost of instruction. This resulted in an

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\(^3\)Report of the Education Review Committee 1960, para. 175.
inconsistent implementation of the policy on religious instruction—some states required it, while others did not. Bearing in mind that, on the one hand, matters pertaining to Muslim religion rests under the Constitution with state governments, and, on the other hand, that authority on educational matters rests with the federal government, the report made several recommendations. It proposed that the federal government contribute partially to the cost of teachers for religious instruction in assisted primary schools on a per capita grant. It also recommended that the cost for religious instruction in assisted secondary schools be met by the federal government and that the Ministry of Education should make arrangement for teacher training.\(^4\)

Thus, the Rahman Talib Report ensured that Islamic religious instruction—which was made compulsory for all Muslim students in assisted schools as laid out in the 1957 Education Ordinance—be fully implemented. The report also proposed that more attention be paid to moral education and suggested that arrangements be made for non-Muslim children to receive some form of moral education.\(^5\) The recommendations of the Razak Report (discussed in Chapter Three) and the Rahman Talib Report became the major components of the Education Act, 1961.

\(^4\)Ibid., para. 283-297.

\(^5\)Ibid., para. 364-367.
Many Muslim parents found the arrangement for Islamic religious instruction in national and national-type schools to be a great relief and felt that the greatest impediment of the national schools had been removed. At last the suggestion of the Barnes Report to have secular and religious instruction confined to normal school hours was taken seriously. The recommendations sped the decline of madrasahs, an issue I will discuss later in this chapter.

National Education from the 1970s Onward

The May 13, 1969 Incident

May 13, 1969, marked a watershed in Malaysian history when a racial riot broke out in Kuala Lumpur and several other major cities. The riot was sparked by Chinese provocation of the Malays in their victory processions following the tenth of May 1969 general elections. The Malays vented their anger and frustration. A large majority of them were poor economically and intellectually. As farmers and fishermen they were often at the mercy of middlemen, and did not share the advantages of the majority of the Chinese who controlled business and the professions. As a consequence of the riots, the government began serious efforts to redress the issue of economic imbalance between the Malays and Chinese. Education was given prominence because it was one of the roots of the problem and at the same time its potential cure. The Malay community had been
hindered from succeeding in higher education and from improving their lot because of the language problem and policy inherited from the British. The National Language Act of 1963 made Malay the official language of the country. However the government had not taken serious steps to implement the Act. The Malays had difficulty getting tertiary education because instruction still was conducted in English.

In 1970, directly following the May 13 riot, the National University was established, having Malay as its official medium of instruction. A Faculty of Islamic Studies was established in this university, which provided a new impetus for Islamic religious education in the country. The government spelled out the Rukunegara, or Pillars of the Nation, which consists of five principles: Belief in God, Loyalty to King and Country, Upholding the Constitution, Rule of Law, and Good Behavior and Morality. Next it launched the two-pronged New Economic Policy which sought to reduce and eventually eradicate poverty among all Malaysians and restructure society so that identification of race and economic function and geographical location is reduced and eventually eliminated.6

The stated objectives of education were to (a) consolidate the education system and promote national

integration and unity; (b) expand education and training programmes toward meeting the nation's manpower needs; and (c) build a progressive society oriented towards modern science and technology. To accelerate the process of national integration and unity, Bahasa Malaysia as the main medium of instruction in schools was implemented in stages, and attempts were made to close the gap in educational opportunities among regions and races.

Under the Second Malaysia Plan (1971-1975), the government offered scholarships to selected Malay students to pursue scientific studies locally and abroad. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Rural Development established residential schools and junior science colleges respectively to provide science education to the rural Malays. In 1970 the government drew up a plan for the gradual conversion of the national-type English primary schools into national primary schools, with Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction. The conversion was followed through secondary schools, and by 1983 all first year courses in the universities were conducted in Bahasa Malaysia.

The Cabinet Committee Report

In 1974 a Cabinet Committee chaired by the Minister of Education, Mahathir Mohamad, was formed to review the aims and effects of the National Education Policy, especially in ensuring adequate manpower for national development and in achieving a united, disciplined, and skilled Malaysian citizenry. Five years afterward, in 1979, this Committee submitted its report. The report, known as the Cabinet Committee Report, contained major recommendations for primary and secondary education reform. The Committee found that the curriculum of the primary school was crowded and a large proportion of primary school students fell behind and mastered few skills. The Committee reported too that the curriculum was compartmentalized and there was little integration among subjects. The Committee recommended that primary education should provide basic education emphasizing basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic. As a consequence of this report, the New Primary School Curriculum (NPSC) was formulated and implemented in 1983. In the NPSC the allocation for Islamic religious education

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9Ibid., para. 193.

10Ibid., Recommendation 2a.
for Muslim students was increased to 13 percent and a similar amount of time was set aside for general moral education for non-Muslims.

The Cabinet Committee recommended that the upper secondary schools practice of streaming students into arts, sciences, and technical education be abolished and that general education be extended from 9 to 11 years. The Committee said that ethical and moral values were an important part of the curriculum. Islamic religious education and moral education should be tested in national examinations. The Committee reported that the teaching of Islamic religious education was weak on the practical side and recommended that this weakness be overcome. Concerning secondary religious schools that were taken over by the Ministry of Education from the states, the Committee recommended that these schools be provided adequate facilities in order to improve religious education and Arabic language. Acknowledging the importance of religious education, the report recommended that Islamic religious knowledge be made compulsory as an examination subject for all Muslim students in secondary schools. However, this recommendation was not carried out.

\[11\]Ibid., recommendations 35, 36, 125, and 127.
The Ministry had planned to launch the New Secondary School Curriculum in 1989 as a continuation of the New Primary School Curriculum. However when the moment arrived, a new curriculum for secondary school with a new emphasis—known as the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School—was launched instead. The Ministry explained that this change of emphasis reflected a new understanding of education. Education in the 1970s emphasized only cognitive development. The Ministry now believed that education should have broader holistic aims that included moral, religious, social, physical, and intellectual development. These broader aims were incorporated into the National Education Philosophy in 1987.

The National Education Philosophy states that

Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the society and the nation at large. ¹²

In line with the National Education Philosophy, the aim of secondary education is to further develop the potential of the individual in a holistic, balanced and integrated manner encompassing the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical aspects in order to create a balanced and harmonious human being with high moral standards.\footnote{13}

The Integrated Curriculum subscribes to the principles of lifelong learning; eleven years of general education from the previous nine years; continuity of education between the primary and secondary schools; an integrated curriculum; inculcation of accepted moral values across the curriculum; integration of the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical development; and upgrading of the use of the national language. In line with its holistic spirit, the duration for Islamic religious education was increased from three to five periods a week, and moral education was introduced for non-Muslim students.

Islamic Resurgence and Education

It is useful to review the events that led to the change in educational emphasis of the Ministry of Education as manifested in National Education Philosophy and the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School. In the 1970s Malaysia witnessed a rising tide of Islam, the wave that had swept most of the Muslim countries that formed a crescent

\footnotetext{13}{Ibid., 2.}
from as far east as Indonesia to as far west as Morocco.
This period coincided with the formation of Islamic organizations such as the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia or ABIM) in 1971 and Darul Arqam (House of Arqam) in 1969.

There were external and internal factors that brought about this religious revival. One external factor was the 1973 Organization of Petroleum Economic Community (OPEC) oil embargo. This collective act gave economic and political leverage to the Muslim nations of OPEC. The plight of the Palestinians also formed an important rallying point for Muslim solidarity. More, the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1978 and the development of the Islamic state in Pakistan stirred Islamic workers in Malaysia.

Internally, the riots of May 13, 1969, caused deeper concern among Malay politicians and leaders. As a consequence, greater efforts were demanded to meet the goals of economic equality. Affirmative action programs, such as subsidies to Malay firms, quota systems at all levels of the work force in industry, economic programs to help Malays compete in the marketplace, and, most important of all, educational programs in science and technology, were initiated to help the Malays. After a policy of downplaying Islam during the tenure of the first Prime Minister, Tengku
Abdul Rahman (1957-70), the government became more active in advancing the Islamic cause.\textsuperscript{14}

A second impetus for Islamic reassertion was the movement of Malays to urban areas. Analysts of Islamic reassertion in Malaysia agree on the significance of this urban factor.\textsuperscript{15} Urban surroundings contributed to Malays' awareness of themselves as an ethnic group vis-a-vis others. The concentration of Malays in urban areas made \textit{dakwah} (propagation of Islam), conducted by Islamic organizations such as ABIM, Darul Arqam, and Jamaatul Tabligh (originally based in the Indian subcontinent), easier.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14}It was the May 13 Incident and its consequences that led several analysts such as Chandra Muzaffar to conclude that the Islamic resurgence was a quest for ethnic expression on the part of Malays. See his \textit{Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia} (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1987) and Judith Nagata, \textit{The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam: Modern Religious Radicals and Their Roots} (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984).


\textsuperscript{16}The term "\textit{dakwah}" in general means invitation to man (Muslims and non-Muslims) to practise God's Commandments. However, in the context of Malaysia in the 1970s and 1980s, \textit{dakwah} focused more on Muslims themselves than on non-Muslims. It was a call for the Muslims to upgrade their Islamicity. There are three forms of \textit{dakwah} activities in Malaysia: those that are loosely organized and operate within members' homes and are aimed primarily at self-education; those that are more formal or structured and are aimed at conveying the Islamic message to others; and those that are a combination of the two. See Hussin Mutalib, \textit{Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics}, 74.
Nagata, this urban-based dakwah created problems of legitimacy for the traditional Malay 'ulama in the rural areas.

The third catalyst in the reaffirmation of Islam in Malaysia was the large scale movement of Malay students to universities at home and abroad. In these tertiary institutions Malay students came into contact with faculty members imbued with Islamic fundamentalist ideas. Von Der Mehden asserted that the students and faculty who had been abroad were more influential in dakwah, particularly those educated in England. However the same could be said of Malay graduates from other parts of the world where the government began sending students, such as the United States and Australia. In these countries Malay students had opportunities to interact with Muslim workers and to listen to 'ulama from the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent. It was in these countries that Malay students were exposed

17"Fundamentalist" is not an accurate term because of the negative connotation associated with it in the Christian tradition. Islamic fundamentalism is forward looking, although it calls for the return to the Qur'an and the sunnah (Tradition). It seeks to reinforce Islam as al-din wal daulah (a comprehensive way of life and a political institution) in opposition to the secular worldview of Church and State. However, for lack of a better term, "fundamentalist" is used. Milner uses the term shari'ah-minded in place of fundamentalist. See A. C. Milner, "Rethinking Islamic Fundamentalism in Malaysia," Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs 20 (Summer 1986): 48-65.

for the first time to Islamic works written by great fundamentalists such as Maududi and Abul Hasan al-Nadvi from Indo-Pakistan and Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb from Egypt. This exposure and contact accounts for the students' awareness of Islamic identity and solidarity.

Fourth, the Malaysian government under Malay political leadership in UMNO (United Malays National Organization), which is the dominant party in the ruling National Front, also helped to elevate the Islamic factor in the nation's politics. Mutalib argued that the UMNO-led government had no alternative but to support Islam for its legitimacy. It's Islamization policies had spill-over effects to similar Islamic assertiveness at the state level, leading to competition to demonstrate which state is more Islamic than the others.

Finally, the role of dakwah organizations such as ABIM, Darul Arqam, and Jamaatul Tabligh could not be dismissed in the Islamic reassertion. According to Mutalib, the activities of these organizations strengthened Islam and "one can deduce that the dakwah phenomenon (and Islamic reassertion in general) can no longer be seen as an ephemeral and transient development."^{20}

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^{19}Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics*.

^{20}Ibid., 155.
Still, there seems to be a factor that most analysts of Islamic resurgence miss: the nature of the religion itself. Scholars such as M. Kamal Hassan believe that the Islamic assertiveness is "indeed part and parcel of Islam." Jihad (striving in the path of God) is a fundamental aspect of Islam and is revealed in the Qur'an: "Allah has purchased of the believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden of Paradise. They fight in His Cause, and slay and are slain."\(^1\) Jansen understands and is able to capture this essence of Islam in his work but has difficulty in coping with it when he suggests the need for a "Luther" in Islam—a standard call of most Western scholars.\(^2\)

The nuclei of dakwah activities were local universities, where a substantial number of returning graduates from abroad were employed.\(^3\) Western-educated Malay intellectuals became the prime movers for dakwah in

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\(^1\)Al-Qur'an 9: 113. All English translations of the Qur'an use in the study is taken from The Holy Qur'an, trans. A. Yusof Ali (Brentwood, MD: Amana Corp., 1983). Words in parenthesis in this translation and in subsequent translations of the Qur'an are added by the translator in order to make the meaning clear.


\(^3\)For a detailed discussion on Islamic resurgence on Malaysian university campuses, see Zainah Anwar, Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia: Dakwah Among Students (Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1987). Anwar emphasizes the pluralistic and changing nature of dakwah.
the later half of the twentieth century, in contrast to 'ulama in the fourteenth century. Dakwah was actively pursued via talks, seminars, journals, and educational programs such as Islamic kindergartens and study groups (usrah) at all levels and districts. Translated works of the great fundamentalists mentioned above and the prominent Malaysian thinker S. M. Naquib Al-Attas became accessible and were made the subjects of these study groups. The focus was on Islam as a comprehensive way of life encompassing the socio-economic, educational, political, and legal systems, in addition to rituals. The religiosity of Malaysian Muslim intellectuals baffled Western sociologists because it casts some doubts upon their theory that links secularization and modernization. The behavior of Malaysian Muslim intellectuals renders little support to the assertion that "secularity is indispensable in making men modern."24

As a result of dakwah and in the light of Islamic resurgence, Muslims were critical of the government and its programmes. Everything was scrutinized from the light of Islamic principles. One of the major issues that came to light was education. Muslim organizations such as ABIM, Persatuan Bekas Mahasiswa Timur Tengah (The Middle Eastern

Graduates Association), and Persatuan 'Ulama Malaysia (Malaysian 'Ulama Society); intellectuals such as S. M. Naquib Al-Attas, Harun Din, and M. Kamal Hassan; and the Islamic political party PAS (Pan Malayan Islamic Party) criticized the government on two grounds.

First, they alleged that the government mainly provided secular education and put too much emphasis on material development to the neglect of Islamic values and the development of the individual personality. The consequences of this over-concern for material development and neglect of moral and spiritual development had begun to show on the products of the educational system. Discipline problems such as smoking, vandalism, and disobedience to authority had risen in schools; drug addiction had begun to spread especially among Muslim youths; and religious commitment among the younger generation began to lessen, as demonstrated by the growing numbers of students who did know how to read the Qur'an and did not perform daily prayers.

In 1981 the greatest monetary scandal in the country, involving a Malay financial institution, Bumiputra Malaysian Finance, occurred. This scandal which cost the nation one billion Malaysian ringgit (approximately US$400 million) was carried out by an executive director of the Bank.

Second, the government was reproached for neglecting Islamic religious schools which were not under the auspices
of the Ministry of Education, such as sekolah rakyat or state religious schools. These low quality and poorly managed schools were draining thousands of potential students annually. Their graduates remained unemployed because of the classical nature of the religious curriculum that did not prepare them for employment in the modern economic sector. The government also was criticized for the wage discrimination against religious teachers. Graduates from Middle Eastern universities were underpaid in comparison to graduates from Western and local universities.

In response to mounting criticisms from Islamic forces, the National Education Philosophy was formulated and subsequently the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School based on this philosophy was launched. Both the National Education Philosophy and the accompanying curriculum was proclaimed when Anwar Ibrahim was the Education Minister. This is significant because Anwar Ibrahim had been the first president of The Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM).

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Islamic Education After Independence

Impact of the National Education Policy

The trend and growth of Islamic religious schools after Independence was greatly affected by the National Education Policy. The Razak Report (1956), the Rahman Talib Report (1960), and the Education Act (1961) had several recommendations that touched directly on religious instruction. Although these recommendations were positive, in the sense that they gave importance to religious instruction in national and national-type schools, they affected Islamic religious schools adversely.

How could this be so? How did these educational reports and the Education Act, submitted between 1956 and 1961, adversely influence the madrasahs? One major impact on the madrasahs was a decline in pupil enrollment. Malay parents now were more willing to send their children to national schools than to religious schools. They saw many advantages of the national schools. First, parents realized that their children could learn religion whether they were in the national schools or the national-type English schools. This reduced the aversion some parents had in the past against government schools for their neglect of religion. Second, from the economic perspective, many parents were beginning to realize the greater job opportunities that awaited graduates of national schools
compared to religious schools. There also were greater opportunities to study further in higher education through the national or national-type schools than through the religious schools. This was true particularly for graduates from the national-type English schools. By now there existed the Technical College and The Agricultural College in addition to the University of Malaya. This new awareness increased the popularity of the national schools and stagnated and even decreased the enrollment in religious schools.

The decline in enrollment was due also to the policy of automatic promotion until Form Three, the abolition of the Malayan Secondary School Entrance Examination, and the establishment of national secondary schools. One of the sources of pupils in the religious schools had been graduates from the Malay vernacular and English primary schools who did not pursue secondary education for several reasons, such as the nonexistence of Malay secondary schools and the inaccessibility of English secondary schools because of distance, transportation, and finance. With the implementation of the National Education Policy, Malay pupils could easily continue on to secondary schools. All this accounts for the decline in enrollment in religious schools.

The second major repercussion of these reports was the transformation of the curriculum of the madrasahs. For
instance, in Perak, because of accepting financial assistance, madrasahs were bound to the curriculum from the Perak State Religious Department. This was one step taken by the department to ensure uniform curriculum within the state. Perak State Religious Department had the following objectives in mind with these structural changes: (a) to establish a single religious school system that is properly organized so that its students could further their study to higher institutions of Islamic learning; (b) to produce progressive intellectuals and 'ulama in the state; and (c) to coordinate the curriculum and system of education between government and non-government religious schools.26

For example, at the primary (ibtidai) level the Department required the following subjects to be taught: akidah (faith), ibadah (rituals of worship), budi pekerti (ethics), sejarah rasul/Islam (Islamic/Prophet Muhammad's history), bacaan Al-Qur'an (Qur'an reading), tulisan jawi/Arab (jawi/Arabic writing). This curriculum omitted balaghah (Arabic metaphors), mantiq (Logic), tafsir (Quranic exigesis), and sarf (Arabic grammar) which were taught previously.27


27Ibid., 99.
At the secondary (thanawi) level, the curriculum was revised in accordance with the National Education Policy. In most cases the Malay language replaced Arabic as the medium of instruction. Another factor that inspired the revision was realization among the boards of the various madrasahs that the latter would have to change to keep in step with shifting societal values if they were to continue to be vital institutions. Subsequently, madrasahs began to change their curriculum to include subjects that would enable their students to sit for national examinations. It was thought that having students take both the national and religious schools examinations was the best way to prepare students for both worlds—religious knowledge to prepare them for the hereafter and secular knowledge to prepare them for employment in this life. The secondary curriculum included religious subjects—tawhid (theology), fiqh (jurisprudence), tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), and hadith (Tradition), Arabic language and all its branches; and general (popularly known as secular) subjects—English language, Malay language, mathematics, geography, history, and general science.

The general subjects are required for the Lower Certificate of Education and the Malaysian Certificate of Education Examinations given by the Ministry of Education at the end of lower and upper secondary levels respectively. However, in order to find room for the new subjects, the
amount of time for the religious subjects had to be reduced. In effect, the content of the religious subjects had to be trimmed. Despite this, students of madrasahs were overburdened with too many subjects and too many examinations. At the secondary level, students had to sit for two national examinations in addition to two Islamic Studies and Arabic examinations adapted from institutions in the Middle East.

In a way, madrasahs were imitating national schools, and their students were paying greater attention to secular subjects. Since this was the case, parents reasoned that it was better for their children to enter the national schools. Some madrasahs also were known to admit students from national schools who had failed in national examinations and give them a second chance. Such action destroyed the good reputation of madrasahs.

The third major impact of the National Education Policy was the shortage of teachers in madrasahs. This situation could be attributed to several factors. First, with the introduction of Islamic education in national and national-type schools, the demand for religious teachers increased. Since teachers in the national schools were better paid and had better facilities and terms of service, most teachers from the madrasahs who qualified were lured to these schools for want of a better living.
Second, as recommended by the Report of the Committee to Consider Financial Aids to Non-Government Islamic Religious Schools (1956), many religious schools began receiving financial aid in proportion to the number of students and the level of education. However, with the receipt of financial aid from the federal or the state government, madrasahs had to offer its students the national examinations. This implied that several general subjects such as English language, Malay language, and science had to be taught. The teaching of these subjects required a different kind of teacher that the madrasah did not have access to and could not be substituted by any of the existing teachers. As a result of these circumstances, madrasahs in general experienced the problem of teacher shortage. This problem became so critical that in some madrasahs the students organized strikes to make their plight known.  

Finally, as a result of the National Education Policy, free access to education, which has been one of the great trademarks of religious schools, came to an end. States religious departments, such as in Perak, made it a policy that the entrance age for the primary level would be 10 years old in concurrence with the completion of the first three years of education in the national primary schools. Students should be between 12 to 15 years of age at the

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28Ibid., 96.
lower secondary level. This would be the appropriate age for the Lower Certificate of Education Examination conducted by the Ministry of Education.\textsuperscript{29} With this age restriction and the practice of superannuation (dismissal from school because one is too old), the policy of equal opportunity and equal access to education provided by Islamic education came to an end.

With these changes, too, the philosophy of education of the madrasah gradually began to change. The narrow understanding of the noble aim of education that emphasized the creation of Muslims who would be pious servants of God possessing good character was found to be wanting. Events of this period had caused religious scholars to reflect upon the weakness of the system and do some reformulation.

The Decline of Madrasah Education

The previous section shows that as a consequence of the National Education Policy, there were teacher shortages and a decline in pupil enrollment in the religious schools. These institutions also were plagued with acute financial problems and had to be rescued by state religious departments. These factors, in addition to the changing societal values, brought about the decline of religious schools in the 1960s. This period witnessed the near demise of pondok education in Malaysia. The handful of pondoks

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., 100-101.
that were left and had not been transformed into madrasahs could not meet the challenge of the modern age and had to close. Only a few pondoks in Kelantan survived.

This period also saw the beginning of the decline of madrasahs. Between 1967 and 1970 the number of madrasahs in Kelantan dwindled from 151 to 111. Five religious schools were closed in Kedah in 1971. There were student protests in religious schools in Kelantan (1971) and in Perak (1972), two states with large and powerful state religious departments. Students complained of poor performance in national examinations, particularly in science, mathematics, and English, which put them at a disadvantaged when seeking employment or places for higher studies. The students demanded that the schools be placed under the Ministry of Education.\(^\text{30}\)

Despite the decline and the problems that religious schools encountered, several institutions of higher education for Islamic education were established during this period. In 1959, a Department of Islamic Studies in the Arts Faculty of the University of Malaya was set up. This step was important because it opened the door to higher education for graduates from religious schools. For the first time graduates in Islamic studies could obtain a bachelor degree of the same standard as those in other

\(^{30}\)For a fuller discussion see David John Baker, "Local Muslim Organizations and National Politics in Malaysia" (Ph. D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1973), 85–86.
fields of studies. The Department of Islamic Studies was necessary because the Islamic College at Klang could not meet the demand for higher Islamic education. In 1966 there were 467 religious schools with 55,303 students throughout Peninsular Malaysia. Furthermore, the Islamic College awarded only a Diploma, which was considered a lower status than a Degree. Another institution of higher education, Yayasan Pengajian Tinggi Islam (The Islamic Higher Education Foundation) was founded in 1965 at Nilam Puri, Kelantan. The quality of the program was sound and was recognized by Middle Eastern universities. Graduates from this Foundation were accepted into the second year of the study program in Al-Azhar University, Egypt.

Islamic Education From the 1970s Onward

From the 1970s onward, Islamic education got a new lease on life. Once more the Malays, who had fallen in love with Western science and technology, took an interest in Islamic education. The forces of dakwah and other factors leading to the resurgence of Islam began to have an influence on the Muslim minds. A sizeable number of Muslim parents became discontented with the national schools and began to look for alternatives.

A significant event during this period was the founding of the National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) in 1971. This university was long overdue and was the partial realization of the aspirations of Muslims for an Islamic university. As a result of the opening of a Faculty of Islamic Studies in this University, the Islamic College that had been placed under the Ministry of Education was absorbed under this faculty.

An important development that concerns the training of teachers during this period was the setting up of the Islamic Teachers College in 1975. Recalling one of the recommendations of the Report of the Committee to Consider Financial Aids to Non-Government Religious Schools, which states the necessity of providing teacher education to teachers of religion, the founding of this college was really long overdue. At another occasion, in 1980, the status of Nilam Puri Foundation of Higher Education was elevated to that of a Faculty under the University of Malaya and from then on was known as The Islamic Academy. The Faculty of Islamic Studies at the National University, the Islamic Teachers College, and the Islamic Academy of University of Malaya provided further avenues of higher learning to graduates from the Islamic religious schools.
Establishment of National Religious Secondary Schools

As explained earlier in this chapter, the 1970s witnessed a resurgence of Islam. One impact of this phenomenon was a sudden surge for Islamic education. To keep up with the demand for Islamic education, state governments began building more religious schools through their religious departments. The Ministry of Education had set up the Islamic Education Division to oversee the development of Islamic education in the national schools. Sensitive to the mounting criticisms concerning the plight of Muslim students in religious schools, the Ministry of Education conducted a study in 1977 to find out their condition.

The study showed that there were 52 state religious schools with 14,279 students and 537 rakyat religious schools having 68,785 students. This was definitely a great increase over the 55,000 students in 1966. The state religious schools were administered and financed by states religious departments or councils. The rakyat religious schools were established by the people and had their own board of governors. Most of the rakyat schools received financial aid from either the federal government, state government, or states religious departments or councils.

The Islamic school system encountered three major problems. First, the state religious schools were poorly organized and lacked teachers. The rakyat schools were
worse off in these respects. Second, the two types of religious schools differed in their educational systems. Each state has its own policy and system. They had no uniform curriculum, syllabus, and administration. This resulted in differences in the quality and standard of certificates issued, such that one state did not recognize certificates from another. Finally, most of the teachers did not have professional training and the schools lacked educational facilities. These affected the quality of education.32

Based on these findings, The Ministry of Education attempted to persuade states religious departments and councils and the board of governors to place 150 religious schools under its administration, but succeeded in taking over only 11 of them. The Ministry met strong resistance; a major argument against such a move was the fear that this action would transform the religious character of the schools. The 11 religious schools became national religious secondary schools.33 The Ministry's intention in the takeover was to develop the pupils to become just as good,


if not better, academically as those of other schools. "We wanted them to penetrate the various professions but with their Islamic values intact. In fact, we expect only 10 per cent of them to become religious teachers."\(^\text{34}\)

The national religious secondary school (NRSS) follows the same curriculum as the national secondary school, including the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School which had just been implemented. The NRSS also consists of Form One to Form Six, with the arts and science streams offered in the upper secondary. However, it offers an additional Islamic Studies stream in the upper secondary, and Arabic language are taught to all students from Form One on. Student admission into the NRSS follows the same selective procedure as entrance into any of the prestigious residential schools and junior science colleges; it is based on academic performance in the Primary School Evaluation Examinations taken at the end of Standard Six.

The Formation of an Advisory Council (LEPAI)

Based on a study by the Ministry in 1977, and further study, a memorandum was submitted by the National Council of Islamic Affairs to the Conference of Rulers in 1981. This memorandum sought the consent of the Conference for the

\(^{34}\text{Acting Director of the Islamic Education Division of the Education Ministry, Encik Mohamad Shafie in "Religious Schools Make Mark", Special Report New Sunday Times, 7 March 1993.} \)
formation of a council to coordinate the Islamic schools. However the Conference decided to postpone the discussion of the matter until further study by the various states. Also in 1981 a Committee to Review The Religious/Arabic Education System, chaired by Mohd. Adib Adam, was formed. The committee submitted a proposal paper that was of great significant in the development of religious schools.

This proposal paper and another memorandum by the National Council of Religious Affairs became the basis for the formation of Lembaga Penasihat Penyelarasan Pelajaran dan Pendidikan Agama Islam (the Advisory Council for the Coordination of Islamic Education), better known as LEPAI, at the 126th Conference of Rulers in 1983. The main objective of LEPAI is to coordinate the teaching of Islamic education in all religious schools that are not administered by the Ministry of Education.

The functions of LEPAI are to (a) channel whatever aid, donations, or subsidies received from various sources to religious schools; (b) conduct studies and submit proposals for the improvement and coordination of the religious school system; (c) conduct teacher education programmes for Islamic education teachers in religious schools under the council; (d) formulate curriculum and syllabuses; (e) determine the appropriate textbooks for use; (f) regulate a system of examinations; and (g) issue examination
certificates. LEPAI also can advise state religious
departments on issues pertaining to Islamic education.\textsuperscript{35}

The formation of LEPAI is significant because, with the
exception of state religious schools that used curriculum
prepared by the state religious department, this is the
first attempt to coordinate the multitude of rakyat
religious schools throughout the country. However LEPAI has
a weakness. It does not have legal status which empowers it
to enforce its recommendations in the states. Presently
LEPAI is working toward the tabling of a proposed enactment,
called the Control of Islamic Religious Schools Enactment,
in state legislatures. Without legal status it will be
difficult for LEPAI to oversee that provisions such as the
following will be adhered to:

\begin{quote}
Every Board of Management shall adhere to the
curriculum drawn up by the Majlis [LEPAI], use the
text book so specified and carry out the
programme for teacher training as set out and hold
such examinations as may be specified by the
Majlis.

Failure to comply with any of the provisions
or requirements of this section shall constitute
an offence under this Enactment.\textsuperscript{36}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{35}Laporan Kegiatan Lembaga Penasihat Penyelarasan Pelajaran dan Pendidikan Agama Islam (LEPAI) Tahun 1984
[Report on the Activity of The Advisory Council for the
Coordination of Islamic Education], 1-2.

\textsuperscript{36}Provision 11 (1) and (2) in the proposed Control of
Islamic Religious Schools Enactment, quoted in Mesyuarat
Majlis Raja-Raja yang ke-154: Laporan Kemajuan dan
Perancangan LEPAI [The 154th proceeding of the Conference of
Rulers: progress and planning report of LEPAI] (Kuala
Lumpur: Bahagian Hal Ehwal Islam, Jabatan Perdana Menteri,
1991), appendix A. Mimeograph.
Categories of Religious Schools

By 1977 there were four kinds of schools dispensing Islamic education in varying proportion. They were the (a) national schools; (b) national religious secondary schools; (c) state religious schools; and (d) rakyat religious schools. The amount of time devoted to religious education and the content of its programmes vary among the different schools (see Table 4-1).

Table 4-1
Amount of Time Allocated for Religious Education by Type of Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>% of Lessons</th>
<th>Minute per Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Primary I-VI</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Secondary I-VI</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Religious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Form I - III</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Form IV-V Arts/Rel</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Form IV-V Science</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Form VI Religion</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State or Rakyat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Secondary I-VI</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Islamic education is compulsory in the national schools for all Muslim students, but it is not a compulsory examination subject. Rather, it is an elective examination subject in the same category as music, arts, religious
education (in general), and languages. In the national religious secondary schools, Islamic education is emphasized as an important foundation subject. However, specialization in Islamic studies only begins in Form Six.

In the state and rakyat religious schools Islamic education is compulsory for all students and also is a compulsory examination subject for the national and Islamic education examinations. The latter examinations are set by the state. Students must pass these examinations before they can be awarded the Islamic Education and Higher Islamic Education Certificates. The Higher Islamic Education Certificate will enable students to further their education in universities in the Middle East. The Malaysian School Certificates enable students to enter local universities.

**Demand for Islamic-Based Education**

The demand for education with a strong Islamic foundation has increased in recent years (see Table 4-2). By 1992 there were 38 national religious secondary schools (NRSS). According to the Ministry, applications for the NRSS kept increasing every year, but it could only accept 10 to 12 percent of the applicants. Those rejected would usually apply for the state or rakyat religious schools.

However, the figures in Table 4.2 could be misleading because the data for the state and rakyat religious schools
Table 4-2

Distribution of Schools and Pupils in Religious Schools in 1984 and 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious School</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>No. of Pupils</th>
<th>% Pupils Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>1,084</td>
<td>145,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rakyat</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>65,055</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


includes both primary and secondary schools. A more accurate judgment can be obtained from Table 4-3, where for 1986 the number of secondary pupils in the state and rakyat schools totals 91,464. The latest figure shows that there was a 35 percent increase in enrollment in state and rakyat religious secondary schools from 1986 to 1992 (see Table 4-4). This is even more dramatic for the national religious secondary schools, with a 53 percent increase.

The state and rakyat religious schools faced a shortage of trained teachers. In 1986 only 3.9 percent of teachers in these schools were trained in Teacher Training Colleges or possessed Diplomas in Education.\(^37\) This number is infinitely small compared to 96.2 percent of trained teachers.

\(^{37}\)Laporan Kajian Organisasi LEPAI, 19.
### Table 4-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th></th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perlis</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kedah</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>2,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Pinang</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perak</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selangor</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilayah</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.Sembilan</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melaka</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johor</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahang</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terengganu</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>12,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelantan</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarawak</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabah</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>1,820</td>
<td>91,464</td>
<td>310,389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: States religious department and councils quoted in Laporan Kajian Organisasi LEPAI, 68-69.

A = State religious schools
B = Rakyat religious schools

Teachers in the national religious secondary schools in 1990.  

These statistics clearly demonstrate that the demand for religious-based education is on the rise among Muslims...
in Malaysia. The demand for such education is greater if it can also promise a bright economic future. This is exhibited in the popularity of the national religious secondary schools. Its popularity is not surprising, since the national religious secondary schools are better equipped materially, have better-qualified teachers, and have impressive examination results in addition to stronger religious programmes. Moreover, graduates from these schools can further their education in professional fields such as engineering and medicine.

Table 4-4

Distribution of Schools and Pupils in Religious Secondary Schools in 1986 and 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious School</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>No. of Pupils</th>
<th>% Pupils Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National State</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Rakyat</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>46,964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>104,774</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Current Problems in Islamic Education

Despite the increase in the number of religious schools and pupils, the Education Division of states religious
departments and councils have not been innovative with the curriculum of their schools. The old curriculum has prevailed, with minor changes to accommodate the general or secular subjects. If there were any changes at all, they involved the general or secular subjects. These changes usually were in emulation of whatever curricular changes the Ministry of Education formulated for its national schools. For example, the Ministry implemented the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School in 1989. The religious schools would adopt this same curriculum for the general subjects out of necessity in order to prepare their students for the national examinations. It is a rare occasion when one hears of a revision of the curriculum of the religious schools for religious or Arabic reasons. As such the curriculum of religious schools remained religious-based, with no emphasis on natural science.

There has been a growing tendency among students to focus on the "secular" subjects instead of the religious subjects, whether in the national, the state, or the rakyat religious secondary schools. This is a potential problem for the future of Islamic education in the country. Even the curriculum of the popular national religious secondary schools is questionable, particularly concerning its ability to provide students interested in pursuing higher education in Islamic Studies with a strong foundation. According to
the Acting Director of the Islamic Education Division of the Ministry of Education,

Our biggest headache now is to get religious teachers among our own graduates for religious schools. . . . This is because most of the pupils who left the schools in pursuit of higher education, came back with degrees fit for other highly-paid professions such as doctors, engineers and accountants.39

What the Ministry currently is planning is to work with state governments in an attempt to produce more religious teachers. This cooperation is evident from the LEPAI statement of objectives in its Islamic Education Development and Coordination Plan for Secondary School. The purposes of this plan are:

1. To create an Islamic education system for secondary schools that is uniform.
2. To create within the national education system an Islamic education system for secondary schools that will prepare students to further Islamic Studies in higher education as a means toward producing 'ulama (translation mine).40

If this plan is implemented then LEPAI through the state and rakyat religious schools will perpetuate the misconception of Islamic education being confined to religion in the narrow sense. What LEPAI or the state religious departments or councils will do is to create


40LEPAI, Rancangan Pembangunan dan Penyelarasan Pendidikan Islam Peringkat Sekolah Menengah [Islamic education development and coordination plan for secondary school], mimeograph, [1992].
Islamic seminaries, theological, or divinity schools—something that is alien to the Islamic tradition.

However, recently in 1992 LEPAI formulated a balanced, holistic philosophy of education and drafted a broad curriculum. Although the philosophy considers the development of all human potential—intellectual, spiritual, moral, and physical—and the ensuing curriculum provides for a wider choice of specialization including the rational sciences, the tendency for Islamic schools to specialize only in religious study will persist. Given the present financial, administrative, and teacher training conditions, Islamic schools do not have the resources to shoulder the demand of this new curriculum. There is a need for some administrative and constitutional changes before this task can be accomplished.

Although LEPAI is supposed to coordinate all Islamic religious schools in Malaysia, it does not have the legal power to enforce its philosophy and proposed curriculum. Islamic education in the states is considered a religious matter and constitutionally is under the province of the state government. Presently not all the states support LEPAI's philosophy and its proposed curriculum. Some state religious schools view LEPAI's curriculum as inadequate for specialization in Islamic studies, especially its shallowness in Arabic language, and consequently would like
to maintain their existing curriculum. Under these circumstances, whether LEPAI succeeds or fails in persuading the state governments to adopt its philosophy and curriculum, the dualistic educational system will persist.

Summary

This chapter describes the growth and progress of national education and Islamic religious school systems after Independence. The pluralistic education system inherited from the British, on the one hand, gradually was replaced by a national education system that gives national unity and economic development the highest priorities. The legacy of a completely secular education finally was broken through the introduction of Islamic religious instruction in the national education system. The pace of progress of national education accelerated drastically in the 1970s after the May 13, 1969 Incident, with education being used as an instrument to redress economic imbalances among the different ethnic groups. The trend of national education changed from being academic-oriented in the 1970s to being

41 Some schools such as Maktab Mahmud could not comply with the Arabic language curriculum conceived by the Ministry of Education because they felt that it was inadequate as a foundation for students who would be pursuing Islamic and Arabic studies in the Middle Eastern universities. See Salbiah Ismail, "Perkembangan Maktab Mahmud Sebagai Sebuah Institusi Pendidikan Ugama di Negeri Kedah" [The development of Mahmud College as a religious education institution in Kedah] (B.A. thesis, University of Malaya, 1986).
holistic in the 1980s, manifested in the National Education Philosophy. Despite the curriculum reform of the 1980s and efforts at realizing a national education system acceptable to all, the inherited educational pluralism still persists. The Ministry has not been successful in taking into consideration the interests of the various communities in the national education system. This does not augur well for the shaping of a united nation.

The growth of the Islamic religious school system, on the other hand, was deeply though indirectly affected by national education policies. It experienced a period of decline as a result of these policies and a change of values among the Malays as they underwent the process of modernization. However Islamic religious education experienced a rejuvenation with the resurgence of Islam in the country. This resulted in a greater demand for religious-based education. In contrast to the national education system, the Islamic religious school system is not well-organized, not centralized, not future-oriented, and is poorly equipped and staffed. The formation of LEPAI, an Advisory Council to coordinate these schools has not helped either, because constitutionally it does not have legal power to induce the state religious schools to comply with its philosophy and curriculum. In addition, LEPAI's major concern is to produce 'ulama, and although it drafted a broad curriculum its concentration will be on Islamic
studies. Therefore, under present circumstances, there is evidence that the dualistic educational system—Islamic and national education—will persist.
CHAPTER 5
THE ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The previous three chapters have traced the roots of the dualistic educational system facing the Muslims in Malaysia. I have demonstrated that this dualistic educational system came about with the introduction of Western education. Although Western education later became the foundation of the national education system and benefited the country as a whole, especially for economic development, it proved detrimental to the Muslims. Western education presumably promoted secular values among Muslims, which created a dichotomy with Islamic values. Western education eroded Muslims' faith and substituted a firm belief in a secular worldview. It was shown in Chapter Four that in the 1970s Muslims began to reaffirm their commitment to implementing Islam and its values in national life. They yearned for an Islamic-based education system, but they were apprehensive of the existing Islamic religious school system. They believed that the curriculum of Islamic religious schools was too focused on religious practice and was not designed to produce intellectuals or professionals. In addition, the religious schools exhibited many
inadequacies, such as poor physical facilities and underqualified teaching staff.

In the following chapters I will examine the Islamic and national school systems with respect to their philosophies, aims, contents, and methods. Presuppositions and assumptions underly the aims and practices of both school systems. It is the objective of these chapters to uncover these philosophical presuppositions and assumptions. In examining these school systems I will need a frame of reference to act as a yardstick. Since this is a Muslim dilemma and predicament, the solution has to be sought in a manner consistent with the Muslim's world view. In line with that argument, I will apply the Islamic philosophy of education as the criterion of judgment.

However, before I can subject these school systems to further analysis I will need to explicate the Islamic philosophy of education. But even before this can be expounded, the essential constituents of a philosophy of education need to be identified. For this purpose I will refer to the Western framework of a philosophy of education as a basis for comparison and as a guideline, since there is insufficient original thought and works on philosophy of education in the Islamic intellectual tradition, although it is rich with works on pedagogy, such as Al-Ghazzali's Kitab al-`Ilm (The book of knowledge), Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah (An introduction to history), and Zarnuji's Ta`lim al-
Muta'allim (Instruction of the student). It is hoped that by using this methodology, the task of unifying the dual system of education will be made easier and be based on a stronger foundation.

What is Philosophy of Education?

Philosophy of education may be defined as "the analytic, synthetic and normative study of the processes, both deliberate and incidental, through which human beliefs, skills, attitudes, and behavior are acquired and developed, and the ends to which these processes are directed." It also can be conceived as the criticism, clarification, and analysis of the language, concepts, and logic of the ends and means of education. Giarelli and Zimpfer outline three purposes of philosophizing about education. First, philosophy can provide clarity in respect to the major concepts of the field, such as teaching and learning. This

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1The richness of works dealing specifically with pedagogy is evident from Totah's list of 42 Arab treatises on this matter. Totah criticizes these works because most of them, with the exception of Al-Ghazzali's, Ibn Khaldun's, and Al-Zarnuji's works were repetitious and suffered from plagiarism. In addition, these works also seem to focus on etiquette of students and teachers rather than the essentials of instruction. See Khalil A. Totah, The Contribution of the Arabs to Education (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1926), 67-77.


analytic function is necessary because the study of education is filled with conceptual and linguistic muddles, probably because of the subject's interdisciplinary nature. Second, philosophy can help in the development of an educational context which involves the assembly and organization of research and knowledge from other disciplines and the critical function of giving data some overall meaning. This is its synoptic function. Third, philosophy of education can aid in the direction of educational research, which directs education itself, since action is considered an integral part of inquiry. Providing direction is the normative function.\(^4\)

On another occasion, Giarelli and Chambliss list clarity, context, and consciousness as the objects of philosophizing about education. By consciousness, they mean "the grasping and awareness of the tensions created by problematic situations and the necessity of choice."\(^5\) The purposes thus advanced are broader than those mentioned by Frankena, who describes philosophy of education as consisting of the normative and the analytic functions only.\(^6\)


\(^5\)Ibid., 35.

T. W. Moore distinguishes between educational theory and philosophy of education. Educational theory is not a theory in the scientific sense. Such theory seeks to explain a phenomenon and to yield the laws of nature. Educational theory instead, is practical and prescriptive. Moore regards educational theory as "an organised body of principles and recommendations directed towards those concerned with educational practice." He holds philosophy of education to be a higher level activity than educational theory; its main tasks are clarifying educational concepts and examining educational theories for consistency and validity. 7

Educational theory focuses on three basic ingredients: the aim, the content, and the recipient. Assumptions are held about ends to be achieved, about the knowledge to be acquired and their methods of acquisition, and about those to be educated. First, it generally is assumed that the end or ends of education to be realized are desirable. Second, it is assumed that knowledge which forms the content of education is possible, although there are differences of opinion concerning the value and reliability of what is claimed as knowledge. Third, the student's behavior is

---

assumed to be fluid so that learning and the accompanying changes can occur and education will have a lasting effect.\(^8\)

It is a well-known principle that education is one of the means through which a particular society transmits and renews its culture and values to the next generation. According to Frankena,

\[
\text{Education is the transmission or acquisition of excellences (desirable abilities, habits, states, traits, etc.) by the use of techniques like instruction, training, studying, practice, guidance, discipline, etc.}\(^9\)
\]

Consequently, it is natural that educational principles and content are drawn from the cultural values of the society. The ends and goals of a society will determine the ends and goals of education. A society that prizes democratic ideals will dictate this value as one of its major goals of education. Analogously, Muslim society will have the Islamic ideal as its major goal of education. By the same token, since the Muslim society derives its basic principles of life from the Qur'an, it is logical that it draws the Islamic philosophy of education from the same source.

The above discussion shows that philosophy of education has significant roles to play: clarifying confusion, developing context, and providing direction for education. The essential ingredients of a philosophy of education involve three elements: the end, the content, and the

\(^8\)Ibid., 17-20.

learner or recipient. In the remainder of the chapter, an Islamic philosophy of education will be charted based on the discussion of these ingredients.

The Concept of Man

I shall begin the discussion with the concept of man in Islam. This will help to reveal the nature of the learner. Man is commonly known as a "rational animal" (al-hayawan al-natig). Man is endowed with the faculty of reason, called 'aql, which constitutes the organic unity of both ratio and intellectus. It is the spiritual substance by which the rational soul recognizes and distinguishes truth from falsehood. It is this faculty of man that elevates him above any other of God's creation and makes him the most honored of God's creatures. The spiritual nature of man is evident from the nature of his creation: "God moulded with His own Hand and when it was fully formed,

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10 The Islamic term insan or "man" used in this discussion and throughout the chapter is inclusive of woman as well. Similarly, any reference to man in the Qur'an includes woman, unless the Qur'an specifically states women because the commands pertain to them or for emphasis, such as in Chapter 33 verse 35: "For Muslim men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant. . . ."

11 Ratio is the ground or nature of a thing as determined by its relation to other things or the power to perceive relationships. Intellectus is the power or faculty of knowing. See Webster's New International Dictionary of English Language, 2d ed. (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company Publishers, 1961).
breathed His Spirit into it." In fact man is created "in the best possible form." Thus the Islamic tradition recognizes that man is constituted of body, mind, and spirit.

Man is unique among God's creatures because he has been appointed as God's vicegerent (khalifah) on earth by virtue of his acceptance of God's "trust" (amana). This trust was offered to other creatures, but they refused it because of fear of not being able to discharge its responsibilities. Man's honorable position is illustrated by the prostration of the angels before Adam. This trust has been interpreted to imply religion and duties or God's commandments.

To carry out his responsibilities, man is given freedom of choice and action, but he is accountable to God even for the minutest of behavior. Thus man's freedom is not absolute and is held in check by accountability. Man is conceived from birth to be good by nature (fitrah), a departure from the Christian conception of Original Sin.

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12 The Qur'an, Chapter 15 verse 29; hereafter written as Al-Qur'an 15: 29.
14 Ibid., 2: 30.
15 Ibid., 33: 72.
16 Ibid., 2: 34.
17 Ibid., 99: 7-8.
Muslim scholars have offered several interpretations concerning man's nature (fitrah). First, fitrah is regarded as synonymous with Islam; second, fitrah is synonymous with tawhid (the unity of God); and finally, fitrah has been interpreted as "the form bestowed on man when he was created," that is, the notion that whatever man possesses leads him to the belief in God.\(^\text{18}\) From these interpretations, it can be argued that man is born with the inclination to be religious. He is strongly linked to Tawhid (monotheism).

**The Concept of Knowledge**

What is knowledge and how does man know? Philosophers since the time of Socrates, have been preoccupied with this question. In his epistemological tract, *Theatetus*, Plato reflected upon the issue of knowledge. He examines the conception of knowledge as perception, as true judgment, and as true judgment with an account. None of these conceptions, however, proved satisfactory, and despite Plato's great effort the book did not conclude with any specific definition of knowledge. But Plato did present a way of thinking about knowledge.\(^\text{19}\) Aristotle formulated the

\(^\text{18}\)For an in depth discussion on the meaning of fitrah see Abdul-Rahman Salih Abdullah, *Educational Theory: A Qur'anic Outlook* (Makkah: Umm al-Qura University, 1982), 55-59.

first classification of knowledge in ancient times. His work inspired Al-Farabi to do the same in the Islamic intellectual tradition, which earned him the title of the "Second Teacher."  

Knowledge (\textit{`ilm}) occupies a dominant position in the Islamic world-view. Its importance is attested by the fact that its root word \textit{i-l-m} occurs about 750 times in the Qur'an, which is about one percent of its vocabulary.  

Only the words \textit{k-w-n} (to be), \textit{q-w-l} (to say), Allah (God), and \textit{rabb} (Master, Lord) appear more often. This obviously is not a matter of chance, but is a concept so significant that the Prophet wanted Muslims to pay heed. According to Rosenthal, "In Islam, the concept of knowledge enjoyed an importance unparalleled in other civilizations. It dominated over all aspects of Muslim intellectual, spiritual, and social life."  

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\(^21\)Arabic words are derived from its root word. For example, from the letters \textit{i-l-m}, arose words such as \textit{`ulama, ta`alim, ma`lum, `allama,} and \textit{`ilmu}.  


\(^23\)Ibid., 334.
Muslims agree that all knowledge comes from God, who taught man everything he knows. Even the angels acknowledge that they had no knowledge except that which was imparted by God. Muslims agree that the manner in which knowledge arrives, the faculties and senses that receive and interpret it, are not the same. Al-Attas argues that since all knowledge comes from God and is interpreted by the soul through its spiritual and physical faculties, it is most appropriate to define knowledge as the "arrival in the soul of the meaning of a thing or an object of knowledge."

In as much as man obtains knowledge through reading and reflecting upon what is read, God has given him two "books." Both "books" contain signs (ayah) of the author. The first book refers to the Holy Qur'an, a book revealed by God through His Prophet, Muhammad. The second book, also known as the "open book", refers to the world of nature, which includes man himself. If the ayahs or signs in the revealed book are the sentences themselves, the signs in the "open book" are the natural phenomena occurring in the universe. One can imagine each object in this universe as a letter or a word. Both "books" invite man not merely to observe and reflect upon the signs but, more importantly, to think of...

\(^{24}\) Al-Qur'an 96: 5.

\(^{25}\) Al-Qur'an 2: 32.

their Author. The emphasis given to thinking and reflecting upon the signs of God is manifested in the frequency of appearance of the terms f-k-r (to think), f-q-h (to understand), d-b-r (to consider), 'a-q-l (to think), and f-h-m (to understand) in the Qur'an. Al-Attas argues that

To study the word as word, regarding it as if it had an independent reality of its own, is to miss the real point of studying it; for regarded as such it is no longer a sign or a symbol, as it is being made to point to itself, which is not what it really is. . . . For as it really is, a thing or an object of knowledge is other than what it is, and that 'other' is what it means (author's emphasis).27

Thus, knowledge in Islam enables man to grasp the right meaning or the reality of the signs he observes. The "right" meaning of the object of knowledge is determined by the Islamic vision of reality and truth as projected in the Qur'an. Thus, knowledge consists of recognizing the proper places of things in the scheme of creation that will lead man to recognize God, its magnificent creator. Recognition alone however, is not sufficient, for it does not impel action (`amal). Recognition must be accompanied by acknowledgement so that there will be action.

The above discussion demonstrates that the ultimate aim of `aql (mind) is to recognize and acknowledge God's existence and proper place in the scheme of creation. But `aql cannot be the sole source of knowledge, for whether by the use of intellect, sense-perception, or intuition, it is

27 Ibid.,17-18.
relatively limited. This is specially true in the realm of the Unseen, as in the nature of soul or ruh. Thus 'aql has to be supplemented by revelation. Similarly, revelation needs to be understood through the use of 'aql. Prophet Muhammad explicated and clarified the principles obtained in the Holy Book, but it still requires 'aql to work with these principles in order to resolve problems that emerged through the evolution of time and in the absence of the Prophet. Thus 'aql and revelation are complementary.

Islamic religious and intellectual traditions reveal that Muslim thinkers have given due attention to knowledge and have formulated several classifications of knowledge or sciences. This is especially true after contact with Greek and Hellenistic sciences in the early ninth century, which stimulated the flowering of Islamic intellectual sciences. Among the noteworthy classifications were those thought out by Al-Farabi (870 - 950 A.D.), the Brethren of Purity or Al-Ikhwan Al-Safa, Ibn Sina (980 - 1037 A.D.),

28 Al-Qur'an 17: 85.

Henceforth "science" is used in this chapter to mean a body of systematized knowledge, and not in its usual sense, that is, knowledge concerned with the physical world and its phenomena, or knowledge obtained and tested through the scientific method.

30 The Ikhwan Al-Safa was a group of Muslim scholars who kept their identity a secret for security reasons. The group was believed to exist in the ninth century A.D., and the Brethren wrote their famous tracts called Al-Rasail Al-Ikhwan Al-Safa wa-Khullan Al-Wafa [The tracts of the brethren of purity and the loyal friends] in 963 A.D.
Al-Ghazzali (1058 - 1111 A.D.), and Ibn Khaldun (1332 -1406 A.D.) (see Appendix).

According to Al-Farabi, the sciences were classified in order to achieve several objectives. First, the classification was intended as a general guide for students in the choice of subjects that would be beneficial to them. Second, the classification enabled students to understand the hierarchy of the sciences. Third, its various divisions and subdivisions were helpful in determining the extent to which specialization may be legitimately pursued. Finally, the classification informed students of the subjects they must master before they can claim mastery in a particular field.31

Al-Farabi's classification does not include the religious sciences such as Qur'anic exegesis and reading, Tradition (hadith), law (shari'ah), or theology as a separate division. Instead he incorporated them under metaphysics and the science of society. The religious sciences always have occupied a dominant position in the curriculum of Islamic education, and what Al-Farabi and later philosophers did was to introduce new dimensions of knowledge. They sought to integrate religious knowledge within the scheme of the unity of knowledge in general.

Al-Ikhwan Al-Safa's (The Brethren of Purity) scheme of knowledge represents an improvement over Al-Farabi's, since it provides a more comprehensive picture of the constituents of religious knowledge. Also in the Ikhwan's classification the division between knowledge from reason or intellect on the one hand, and that from revelation, on the other, began to emerge. The Ikhwan believed that knowledge can be acquired in three ways: by speculation; by hearing, as in the case of language; and by insight, or through seeing and rational deduction.\(^\text{32}\) They continued the Aristotelian tradition of arriving at Truth with the help of reason. Their scheme of knowledge greatly influenced Ibn Sina's classification. The latter added some new dimensions under the category of practical philosophy, the most important of which is political science. The division of knowledge into two broad categories--revealed and intellectual--began to emerge gradually.

The debates between philosophers about the superiority of the intellect over revelation culminated during the life of Al-Ghazzali. Al-Ghazzali defended the superiority of revelation in his work *Tahafut al-Falasifah* [Incoherence of the philosophers]. He also convincingly established revelation and intellect as two different sources of

knowledge. Al-Ghazzali laid out four different classifications of knowledge:

1. Theoretical and practical sciences;
2. "Presential" (huduri) and intellectual (husuli);
3. Religious (sharʿiyah) and intellectual (ʿaqliyah) sciences;
4. Fard ʿain (obligatory on every individual) and fard kifayah (obligatory on all individuals) sciences.

Religious or revealed science is essential for man's guidance and salvation. Therefore its acquisition has been made fard ʿain, that is, obligatory to every Muslim, men and women. The intellectual science, such as medicine, is indispensable for the welfare of man in this world, but it will suffice if there arise a sufficient number of men in the community to acquire it. When this occurs, the obligation to pursue this knowledge would cease to be binding upon the rest of the community. Therefore the acquisition of intellectual sciences is made fard kifayah, that is, obligatory to all Muslims as a community. Al-Ghazzali further divided fard kifayah knowledge into praiseworthy and blameworthy sciences. Praiseworthy sciences are those that are beneficial to society, such as medicine and arithmetic. Blameworthy sciences are those

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that are harmful to the individual and society, such as magic and astrology.

By the time of Ibn Khaldun, the dual sources of knowledge had gained acceptability. This is evident in Ibn Khaldun's classification of the sciences into the revealed or transmitted sciences (al-'ulum al-nagliyah) and the acquired sciences (al-'ulum al-'agliyah).

Upon examining the various classifications, several inferences can be made. First, the classifications increase in scope and content with the expansion of knowledge. For example, Ibn Sina's classification covered two aspects, theoretical and practical knowledge, instead of the usual theoretical knowledge. In practical knowledge he included ethics and household management--two new contents (see Appendix). Similarly, medicine was another new science added in Al-Ghazzali's scheme of knowledge. Second, the categorization of knowledge into two broad divisions--religious and intellectual sciences--has its origin from the beginning of Islamic intellectual tradition. This division is a reflection of the distinction between revelation and reason. Third, the ideas of hierarchy and unity of the sciences form the philosophical basis of these classifications. The idea of hierarchy itself is rooted in the Qur'an, which contains numerous references to such notions as hierarchy of creation and hierarchy of believers.

The holistic or integral nature of knowledge is evident
in these classifications, and this is a reflection of Islam's tawhidic or monotheistic world-view. The scope of epistemological concerns is not only confined to ethics and spirituality but also extends to the secular sphere. The Islamic intellectual tradition does not admit compartmentalization of the sciences because that would be a denial of Divine wisdom and guidance in a particular branch of knowledge which also originates from God. It does not support the idea of pursuing a particular branch of knowledge in the secular sphere to the exclusion of revealed knowledge and vice-versa. The idea that God is the source of all knowledge entails the unity of all the sciences. Studying the sciences in isolation according to their epistemological sources will result in disharmony and disequilibrium.

Thus, as early as the ninth century, Muslim philosophers succeeded in correcting historical theories of knowledge that separate knowledge from action and theory from practice. These separations originated in Greek classical philosophy, which despite introducing the element of reason, had used it to justify the separations. The Greeks regarded thought and knowledge highly, but held practice and action lowly. This was reflected in separate systems of education for the elites and the masses. The Muslim's success in uniting the two was manifested in the
reflowering of experimental science and the flourishing of scientific thought and knowledge.

George Sarton, in his monumental *Introduction to the History of Science*, recorded the period between 750 A.D. and 1100 A.D. as an unbroken succession of influence belonging to the culture of Islam: Jabir, Khwarizmi, Razi, Masudi, Wafa, Biruni, and Omar Khayyam—Arabs, Turks, Afghans, and Persians—chemists, algebraists, clinicians, geographers, mathematicians, physicists, and astronomers. Only after 1100 A.D. did the first Western names—Gerard of Cremona and Roger Bacon—appear on the scene. Even then, the honors were still shared for another 250 years with men like Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Nasir ad-Din at-Tusi. In this respect Muslim philosophers preceded John Dewey, who attempted to dissolve the dichotomy between thought and practice in his *The Quest for Certainty*, which has been acclaimed by Herbert Schneider as "the best statement of Dewey's fundamental position."^35


For a contemporary Islamic classification of the sciences, Al-Attas's summary, presented below, is relevant. 36

I The Religious Sciences

2. The Sunnah: the life of the Holy Prophet; the history and message of the Prophets before him; the hadith and its authoritative transmission.
3. The Shari'ah: jurisprudence and law; the principles and practice of Islam.
4. Theology: God, His Essence, Attributes and Names and Acts (al-tawhid).
5. Islamic metaphysics (al-tasawwuf); psychology, cosmology and ontology; legitimate elements of Islamic philosophy including valid cosmological doctrines pertaining to the hierarchy of being.

II The Rational, Intellectual, and Philosophical Sciences

1. The human sciences
2. The natural sciences
3. The applied sciences
4. Technological sciences

In addition to the above sciences, Al-Attas recommends the inclusion of several new disciplines "to ensure logical continuity and cohesion in the successive educational progression from the religious sciences to the rational, intellectual and philosophical sciences and vice-versa." 37

These disciplines include (a) comparative religion from an

36 Al-Attas, The Concept of Education in Islam, 42.
37 Ibid., 43.
Islamic perspective; (b) Western culture and civilization as a means for understanding Islam in relation to other cultures and civilizations; (c) linguistic sciences that extend to Islamic languages other than Arabic; and (d) Islamic history—its thought, culture and civilization, the development of its sciences, its philosophy of science, and Islam as world history.\(^{38}\)

In sum, from the Islamic perspective knowledge can be classified into two major categories: (a) revealed or god-given knowledge (\textit{`ilm al-naqliyah}) and (b) acquired knowledge (\textit{`ilm al-`aqliyah}), which also includes rational, intellectual, and philosophical sciences. The pursuit of the former is obligatory for every Muslim, while the pursuit of the latter is obligatory only to some Muslims in the community.

Nevertheless, there is a unity of knowledge in Islam, since knowledge comes from one source. Knowledge leads man to recognize and acknowledge the existence of God. There also is a close relationship between knowledge and belief (\textit{iman}). Islam holds strongly to belief that is anchored in true knowledge, for without that knowledge man would find justification for believing anything, ranging from simple superstitions and blind imitation to elaborate systems of misguided theologies. Knowledge is related intimately to action, and the logical outcome of knowledge is good deed.

\(^{38}\)Ibid.
This is so because knowledge leads to true belief, which in turn produces good action (amal salih).³⁹

The Aim of Education: Muslim Philosophers' View

It is interesting to observe how the goals and objects of education vary with different societies throughout civilization. In addition, for any particular society the goals and aims also change over time to accommodate changes that take place. For instance, the Spartans had military competence, discipline, physical fitness, and nationalistic spirit as their objectives of education. The Sophists aimed at the power of rhetoric and success in life. The Greeks with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle as their proponents aimed for a culture of intellect, temperance, courage, wisdom, and justice. Plato envisioned a harmonious state with its citizens discharging their duties according to their stations in life.⁴⁰ The Renaissance is acclaimed as a humanistic era which saw the ends of education in physical skills, good manners, well-disposed characters, refinement of tastes, and the knowledge of man and the universe.

³⁹For a more detailed discussion of the characteristics of knowledge in Islam, see Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, The Concept of Knowledge In Islam and Its Implications for Education in a Developing Country (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1989), 62-95.

⁴⁰See Plato's Republic, where he proposed different levels and kinds of education for the guardian, the artisan, and the philosopher-king.
Education during the Protestant Reformation aimed at capable and wise citizenship based on a religious life. The Enlightenment brought to light the importance of natural science, and the goals of education shifted to the material world. The aims of education then were free development of personality, general efficiency, observation of facts, and knowledge of causes and effects of things. The Industrial Revolution brought yet another transformation in educational ends. With the power over nature wielded from the accumulation of scientific knowledge, education aimed to free man from non-rational beliefs including religious dogmas and the authority of the Church. The goals of education turned to the development of the individual according to a state's ideology—democratic, socialist, or communist. Economic interests also began to find a place in education, and the aim of producing skilled manpower became a dominant theme, manifested in the importance of vocational education.\footnote{For a discussion of Western education from Greek education to the nineteenth century age of ideology, see Gerald L. Gutek, \textit{A History of Western Educational Experience} (New York: Random House, 1972).}

The above discussion provides a glimpse of the evolution of the goals of education in Western society. A survey of the views of Muslim philosophers, from the dawn of Islam to the present, concerning the aims of education similarly would be useful in framing the aims of education.
in Islam. Trends, if any, will be evident through such an exercise.

Al-Farabi maintains that the goal of the city of excellence is the pursuit of happiness. He equates happiness with theoretical perfection which entails practical as well as theoretical philosophy. Consequently, according to Al-Farabi, knowledge of such things as the end of human existence and the way political communities should be organized lie within the scope of theoretical perfection. He argues further that "the highest deliberative excellence, the highest moral excellence, and the highest practical art are inseparable from theoretical excellence." Al-Farabi states that the function of the intellect is to ensure that people reach the ultimate degree of perfection. Hence Al-Farabi believes that the cultivation of the intellect should be the highest aim of education.42

The Ikhwan al-Safa's aim of education is reminiscent of Plato's idea of education as prescribed in the Republic. According to the Ikhwan, the aim of education is to bring the attribute of the "knower" from potentiality to actuality. The Ikhwan said, "knowledge exists naturally in the soul of the learner, but it will not become actual knowledge except by the effect of the teacher." The Ikhwan's educational curriculum aimed at creating an

individual who would be broad-minded and not be affected by narrow provincialism and sectarian urges. He would judge all matters, including religious concerns, with his intellect. The Ikhwan asserts, "Our brothers, God support them, must not be the enemy of any science, or leave any book, or be prejudiced against any sect, because our opinion and doctrine contains all doctrines and sciences."^43

The curriculum of the Ikhwan was comprehensive in nature and scope, extending to all human knowledge, traditional and rational. It also considered matters of this world as well as the hereafter. The significance of the effect of the environment on the the learner also was taken into consideration. According to the Ikhwan, who classified knowledge into three types, mathematical science is established for the sake of livelihood and well being in this life; traditional science is established for the treatment of the soul and for well being in the hereafter; and philosophical science aims at elevating the human being to the stage of perfection.^44 Therefore, the Ikhwan's ends of education take into consideration the vocational, the spiritual, and the intellectual aspects of man.


^44 Ibid., 65.
Similar to Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina held that the ultimate aim of education is the cultivation of the intellect. He argues that the intellect of man is unique and distinct from other creatures. Ibn Sina asserts that another important aim of education is to prepare children for callings in life. He said, "when the child is through from learning Al-Qur'an and the principles of the language, he is then to choose what his vocation will be, and he is instructed accordingly."45

However, the importance accorded to the intellect by prominent Muslim philosophers from the early ninth century on, that had resulted in knowledge explosion especially in the intellectual and philosophical sciences, experienced a turn around by the twelfth century. The mu'tazilah, a theological school that upheld rationalism and was aligned with many Muslim philosophers of the period, had provoked the orthodox Muslims for two major reasons. First, the school's close association with the caliph influenced the latter to make rationalism a state doctrine which was preached in mosques and madrasahs and became the distinguishing mark of the educated. Access to state power led the mu'tazilah to become repressive against those who did not concur with their doctrine, in particular, against those who did not believe that the Qur'an was created.

Second, and more fundamental, despite asserting the mutual compatibility of revelation and reason, the mu'tazilah gave primacy to reason over revelation in their works. For example, the mu'tazilah had little use for the Tradition of Prophet Muhammad, which they doubted for the reliability of the accounts. They rejected anthropomorphic representations of God, in contrast to the belief held by their opponents, the 'Asharis, who emphasized literalism and anthropomorphic representations of God. By denying such attributes, and insisting on God as pure essence, the mu'tazilah were accused of stripping Him of content and making Him difficult for humans to comprehend and worship.

The excesses of the mu'tazilah led to a revolt by the orthodox which terminated in victory for revelation. Hellenistic and secular sciences, especially philosophy, became a suspect and were equated with heresy.\(^{46}\) The decline of intellectual and philosophical sciences following this event was simultaneous with the ascendance of an ossified religiosity. As a consequence of the above, rational sciences were excluded from the madrasahs and only taught by individuals in bookshops, libraries, and

The aims of education too, experienced a shift in emphasis.

Al-Namari, a scholar in the twelfth century, mentions a variety of aims and objectives of education—religious, social, intellectual, and vocational. In Jami' Bayan al-Ilm [A collection of explanations of knowledge] he states,

Seek learning, for it (a) is conducive to religion; (b) awakens the intelligence of men; (c) is a companion in lonesomeness; (d) is useful in social contact; (e) brings money, "jalib lil-mal."  

Al-Namari's contemporary, Al-Zarnuji, emphasizes the religious factor in education. He asserts, "it is meet for the student in his quest for knowledge to strive for the good will of God, the future life, the removal of ignorance from himself and from the rest of the ignorant, the conservation of religion, and the survival of Islam."

Al-Ghazzali's aims of education can be deduced from his classification of the sciences. The end of education is to produce God-conscious (taqwa) men who obey God's commands and avoid His prohibitions and who would also be useful to

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48 Khalil A. Totah, The Contribution of the Arabs to Education (New York: Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1926), 84.

the community. Al-Ghazzali is concerned with the formation of good character (akhlaq), the cultivation of virtue, and the eradication of ignorance.\textsuperscript{50} Al-Ghazzali, also known as Hujjatul Islam (the defender of Islam), succeeded in checking the growth of the idea that intellect is superior to revelation. He thereby dealt a serious blow to the development of philosophy in Islamic thought because of his severe criticism of the subject. However, it is significant to note as well that Al-Ghazzali also criticizes the jurists, especially their motives for studying jurisprudence. He argues,

we see no Muslim practising medicine, but on the contrary all rave in jurisprudence, especially in controversy and polemics. . . . Could there be any other reason for this except that medicine does not lead to management of religious endowments (awqaf), [execution of] wills, possession of the money of orphans, and appointment to judicial and governmental positions through which one exalts himself above his fellowmen and fastens his yoke upon his enemies?\textsuperscript{51}

Another famous Muslim thinker and sociologist who also believes in the limitation of human intellect and the negative effect of philosophy on faith is Ibn Khaldun. He considers education to be a social institution that grows gradually according to the needs of the community. According to Ibn Khaldun, education has four goals: (a) to

\textsuperscript{50}Khalil A. Totah, The Contribution of the Arabs to Education, 86.

\textsuperscript{51}See his Kitab al-`Ilm (The book of knowledge), Section 2.
enable the pupil to plan for actions that may promote the interests of society; (b) to try to go beyond sensory knowledge; (c) to develop good habits, for which religion is essential; and (d) to ensure a means of livelihood.\textsuperscript{52}

Iqbal, a well-known Muslim philosopher in the early twentieth century, emphasizes the proper development of the individuality of man. He maintains that an individual should be exposed to all kinds of formative and challenging experiences. Otherwise his individuality will shrink and wither.\textsuperscript{53} Iqbal underscores the importance of freedom, which allows for experimentation with the environment, for the exercise of choice and discrimination in the use of methods and substance, and for learning by direct, first-hand experience. Despite his emphasis on the individual, Iqbal did not ignore the role of the community and its culture in the give-and-take dynamics with the individual. He writes a poem about their mutual relationship:

The Individual exists in relation to the community.
Alone, he is nothing!
The wave exists in the river,
Outside the river it is nothing!\textsuperscript{54}

Iqbal subscribes to the view that there must be harmony between the material and the spiritual elements in man,

\textsuperscript{52}Sayyid Sajjad Razavi, \textit{Islamic Philosophy of Education}, 105.


\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., 56.
which educational theory should consider. He valued intellect, but he criticized contemporary thought for overstressing it at the expense of Intuition or Love. From Iqbal's writings, the characteristics of the "good man" can be inferred. First, the good man is creative and original, for creativity is the most precious and distinctive gift of man. He must be able to use his intelligence to harness the forces of Nature for his own good and also to increase his knowledge and power. Secondly, the good man "lives his life in the name of the Lord," dedicating his powers and knowledge to working out His purpose and thereby deserving himself for the position of God's vicegerent on earth.\footnote{Ibid., Chapter Seven.}

Al-Attas, a well known contemporary Malaysian Muslim thinker, asserts that the purpose of seeking knowledge is to inculcate goodness in man as man and as an individual self. Thus he argues that the end of education would be to produce a good man (al-insan al-salih). This is in marked contrast to an education that aims at producing good citizen—a common educational aim in the West. Al-Attas defines a good man as someone who has adab. He believes the Prophet meant education when he said, "My Lord educated [addaba] me and so, made my education [ta'dib] most excellent." Adab is the discipline of body, mind, and soul. It is the discipline that insures recognition and acknowledgement of one's proper place, station, and condition in life. It leads to self-
discipline in carrying out one's role in accordance with that recognition, positively and willingly. Justice prevails when adab is actualized. In practical terms, adab is the acquisition of

the good qualities and attributes of mind and soul; it is to perform the correct as against the erroneous action, of right or proper as against wrong; it is the preserving from disgrace (emphasis mine).³⁶

The emphasis on adab is vital because it contains the element of action (‘amal). Thus education that aims at the creation of a good man will ensure that knowledge (‘ilm) is put to good use. An oft-quoted Muslim prayer goes, "Our Lord, grant us useful knowledge (‘ilm nafı‘an)." Al-Attas does not neglect society by offering the good man as the end of education, for he contends that good society arises from a community of good men.

Finally, in 1977 a group of 313 Muslim scholars from forty countries assembled in Makkah at the first World Conference on Muslim Education. They deliberated and reached a consensus on the aims of education in Islam. They resolved that

Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of Man through the training of Man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses. The training imparted to a Muslim must be such that faith is infused into the whole of his personality and creates in him an emotional attachment to Islam and enables him to follow the Quran and the Sunnah and be governed by the Islamic system of values willingly and joyfully so that he may proceed to the realization of his status as Khalifatullah to whom Allah has promised the authority of the universe.\(^5\)

I have reviewed the various aims of education as formulated by notable Muslim philosophers and thinkers, past and present. The focus is mainly on the individual and less on state formulated systems. The themes are religiosity—God-conscious men having good characters—and intellectualism—putting knowledge to use in the service of God. During one period, intellect was given the highest place in education; at another time, revelation was uppermost. In the next section I present the ends of education in Islam from its primary source, the Qur'an. I draw on the interpretation of contemporary Muslim scholars such as S. M. Naquib Al-Attas and S. Ali Ashraf.

**The Aim of Education: The Qur'anic View**

The Qur'an explicitly states that the Universe and Man are not created without a purpose. "Not for [idle] sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is

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between!"  

Rather, God created Man for two important purposes. First, He created Man to serve Him. "I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me." "Service" is an all encompassing term, not confined only to ritual worship. It includes every movement of a man's life so long as he is conscious that those acts are done to please God and are not contrary to His command. This purpose of man is reinforced by another verse: "Say: 'Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are all for Allah the cherisher of the Worlds'."  

Second, God created Man to be his vicegerent on earth. "Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth.'" Being a vicegerent implies that man inherited the earth from God and consequently should tend its prosperity and maintenance in accordance to the Will of God. Man is not supposed to destroy the earth—something the angels feared man would do. Thus, being a vicegerent entails two responsibilities. First, man has to conduct his life on earth in accordance to Divine Will and Guidance which is known through revelation. God says, "And if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear nor shall they  

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58 Al-Qur'an 21: 16.  
59 Ibid., 51: 56.  
60 Ibid., 6: 162.  
61 Ibid., 2: 30.
grieve." Secondly, man can utilize the whole Universe for his benefit through the use of knowledge which he has acquired through reason, his sense perception, and experience. "And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth: Behold, in that are signs indeed for those who reflect."63 "It is He who hath created for you all things that are on earth (2:29)."

It can be argued that the end of education can be derived from the mission of prophets. On one occasion in the Qur'an, God explains that the mission of a prophet was "to rehearse to them [men] His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom (62:2)." This implies that from the perspective of a teacher, a prophet's aims in education will be to enable men to recognize and acknowledge the existence of God through reading His Signs in the Universe (the Open Book) as well as in the Holy Book. Another aim of education will be the purification of man's soul, mind and body so that he comes close to personifying the Perfect Man (who in the case of Islam is Prophet Muhammad).

Prophet Muhammad asserts clearly in a Tradition that he has been sent to perfect moral characters. He says also, "the best amongst you are those who have the best manners

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62 Ibid., 2: 38.
63 Ibid., 45: 13.
and characters." Prophet Muhammad also was praised by God for having beautiful conduct. In another Tradition, his wife reported that he was truly a living embodiment of the Qur'an. She added that his moral character (akhlāq) was the Qur'an.

With the purpose of the creation of man and universe and the objective of the prophetic mission as premises, I conclude in the same tone as Al-Attas that the ultimate aim of education in Islam is to produce a good man. This man is a man of ḍabab who recognizes and acknowledges that he has been created to serve God and be His vicegerent on earth with all the ensuing implications. To attain this end, education should cater to the balanced growth of man in all aspects of his nature: intellectually, spiritually, morally, and physically. Good moral character ought to be one of the fruits of a balanced education.

Another important aim of education, which has not been spelled out, but is implicit, is a social aim. Man is a social animal and does not live in isolation. Similarly, moral values do not develop in isolation. The difficulty will be in keeping a balance between individual freedom and societal control. In Islam this tension is removed because the individual and society cherish the same ideals. Both

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64 See Muwatta of Imam Malik for the first Tradition and Sahih Bukhari, 4: 759 for the second one.

individual and society observe the same set of divine rules. In fact most Islamic injunctions, in particular the five pillars of Islam, include a social aim in addition to a personal aim. For example, the performance of the five daily prayers is encouraged in a congregation rather than individually. Similarly, alms giving, which is to purify one's wealth, also is intended for social justice by meting out alms to deserving groups in the community such as the poor, students, and converts.

Individuals enjoy some freedom but not complete freedom. Restrictions on man's freedom are not imposed by society but by Divine laws. Thus, the friction with society is avoided. Individuals have complete freedom in affairs involving technical, scientific, or non-religious affairs, but they do not have the freedom to create new religious principles. Freedom in technical matters is clearly illustrated in a Tradition (Hadith) whereby Prophet Muhammad advised the Makkans against their common practice of grafting the date palms in the hope that it would increase the yield. However, the reverse happened (that is, non-grafting decreased the yield) and when it was reported to the prophet he said, "you have better knowledge [of a technical skill] in the affairs of the world."\(^{66}\) Another Tradition underscores the priority of the Holy Qur'an and

Tradition in determining religious principles. Similarly, society cannot impose on individuals regulations that contradict the two principal sources of Islamic law—the Qur'an and the Tradition of Prophet Muhammad. Individual inputs through ijtihad and democratic deliberations are sought in determining the course of action society will take.

Another educational aim implicit in the concept of vicegerency is the utilitarian aim. Man will not be able to fulfill his vicegerency if the knowledge he acquired could not be utilized to harness the forces of nature for good ends.

**Content of Education**

The content of education follows naturally from the concept of knowledge and the aims of education. The curriculum should encompass both the perennial or revealed sciences and the acquired or intellectual sciences, with the Qur'an forming the basis of these sciences. All these sciences are Islamic as long as they develop within the

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67When Muadh was sent to Yemen as governor, he was asked by Prophet Muhammad how he would decide on affairs presented before him. He replied that he would make decisions based on the Qur'an. When asked what if it is not in the Qur'an, Muadh replied that he would refer to the Prophet's Sunnah (Tradition). When asked what if the issue is not found in both the Qur'an and Tradition, Muadh replied that he would make his own ijtihad (judgment or independent inquiry). The Prophet was pleased with Muadh's responses. See Sunan Abu Daud and Tarmizi.
Islamic paradigm and are harmonious with Islamic concepts and values. There is no compartmentalization into secular (rational) or religious sciences. Both serve to facilitate men to reach intellectual and moral perfection. Both sciences reveal the Signs of God and have utility.

On the one hand, "secular" (rational) sciences strengthen faith in God through the study of His creation and the discovery of its law which enables men to produce better technology. On the other hand, "religious" sciences inculcate faith directly through reflection on the Holy Book and provide moral guidance for man to conduct his affairs in society. Both kinds of sciences need intellect: to help discover natural laws and in drawing principles from the Scripture and the Tradition and their application in changing circumstances. Thus these sciences are essential to a certain degree for ordinary men, but for scholars and specialists, they must be probed in greater depth.

The form of the curriculum is easier to understand and visualize if the relationships between man, knowledge, and the curriculum are understood. The curriculum is a reflection of the hierarchy of knowledge, which in turn is a reflection of the nature of man (see Figure 5-1). Revealed knowledge, especially shari`ah (law), which is obligatory for all men, should form the core of the curriculum. It corresponds to the soul of man which is spiritual and permanent. Since it forms the core of the curriculum, it
Fig. 5-1. The corresponding relationship between man, knowledge, and the curriculum. Adapted from S. M. Naqib Al-Attas, ed., Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education, 40-41.
should be required at all levels of education. This arrangement does not imply the neglect of the intellectual sciences, for it is obligatory for some men to specialize in them. By the legal principle of Islamic jurisprudence (Usul al-Fiqh) that anything which leads to the obligatory is itself obligatory, it can be deduced that the teaching of these subjects is obligatory. Moreover, since it is not known who among the students will specialize in those fields, it is imperative to teach everyone the basics up to a certain level.

Similarly, equal opportunity should be provided for all children to gain adequate experience in the revealed sciences. Since Arabic language is the gateway to the Qur'an and the religious sciences, it should be accessible to every student. Arabic language is important not only for intellectual development, but also for spiritual development. Understanding, or better still, mastery, of Arabic will enhance a Muslim's communication with God, for Qur'anic recitation, prayers, and the Qur'anic verses recited in prayers are in Arabic. Understanding what is recited adds more meaning to a prayer or recitation. Only in this way can the Qur'an truly be a guidance. A good repertoire of Qur'anic verses committed to memory also will enhance the quality of prayer, for it will add variation to the verse recited and a reminder of different injunctions each time.
This explains the significance of memorization of the Qur'an as an important part of the Islamic school curriculum.

In sum, Islamic education will have a core discipline and electives. The core disciplines will consist of both revealed and intellectual sciences. The classification here is used more for the sake of convenience rather than compartmentalization. The revealed sciences that are included are: (a) the Qur'an--its reading and understanding, (b) the Tradition (Sunnah)--history and message of Prophet Muhammad and those preceding him, (c) law (shar'iah)--the principles and practice of Islam, (d) theology (tawhid), (e) Tasawwuf--knowledge of things that will refine the soul and character, and (f) Arabic language. The intellectual sciences include (a) natural science--biology, chemistry, and physics--and its history and philosophy, (b) mathematics and its application in Islamic law besides in applied sciences, (c) human sciences--history, geography, economics, and literatures, and (d) technical or vocational sciences. The core also must include physical and health education for a healthy physical development and essential languages such as English, for social communication and for the pursuit of knowledge. These components have to be tailored to suit primary and secondary educational needs and capabilities.
Methods of Education

Instructional Methods Found in Islamic Tradition

There are no prescribed instructional methods in Islam for achieving the objectives of education. A survey of the history of education in Islamic tradition shows a variety of methods employed. It is unmistakeable that the development of the memory was a constant feature of Islamic education which is centered around the Qur'an. Ibn Qutaibah Al-Dinouri was reported to have remarked in his work Uyunil Akhbar that "the first rule of learning is silence, the second, good listening, the third, memorizing, the fourth reflecting, and the fifth, propagating." Memorization was not meant to be unreasoning rote learning but is reinforced with intelligence and understanding. Repetition was encouraged as a means to commit texts to memory.

Mudhakara, which is the reciprocal action of aiding one another to memorize, also was common. Despite memorization, committing materials to writing also was recognized as most important in the process of learning, since memory alone could not be trusted. Lecture or muhadarah was

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frequently employed, and Ibn Khaldun outlined the effective threefold repetition method of teaching scientific subjects, beginning with the summary and finishing with the details in the final repetition.\(^7^0\)

Other frequently used methods of instruction are the scholastic method of dialecticism (jadal), divergence of opinion in the law (khilaf) and disputation (munazarah).\(^7^1\) The methods of discussion and debate were so useful that according to Al-Zarnuji, "an hour posing questions is worthier than a month's repetition of learning."\(^7^2\)

Examination was not integral to the curriculum but it was the practice of teachers or professors to award licences to teach (ijaza) to students who had completed their courses of study and were held to be competent in knowledge, teaching, and disputation.\(^7^3\) Thus, there were no examinations, but teachers did evaluate students.


\(^7^1\) Makdisi presents a detailed description of the scholastic method of learning in medieval Islam in his Rise of Colleges, 105-33. This method is greatly employed in Islamic legal studies.

\(^7^2\) Al-Zarnuji, Ta'lim al-Muta'allim-Tariq at-Ta'allum [Instruction of the student: the method of learning], 49.

Instructional Methods Found in the Qur'an

A few instructional methods are referred to in the Qur'an, or can be drawn from it. The Qur'an recommends that instruction be carried out from the simple to the more complex. Bukhari, one of the compilers of the Prophet's Tradition, explains rabbani as "the good instructor who starts teaching people simple subjects or knowledge before teaching big ones."\(^{14}\)

Second, the Qur'an encourages variation in methods. It uses different methods to convey God's Word. Among the verbal methods used are telling stories, asking questions, and using metaphors. Telling stories, especially historical ones, is a favorite theme in the Qur'an. Frequently the stories recur in varying length in different chapters. Personal glorification is not the focus of the stories, since the identity of the individuals or the nation is not revealed. The purpose of the narrations is for reflection.\(^{15}\) Although the stories recur, this does not mean that the same story is simply repeated. Frequently the recurrence highlights different points of the same story. From this it can be inferred that repetition is necessary,


\(^{15}\)Al-Qur'an 12: 111 asserts, "There is in their stories instruction for men endued (endowed) with understanding . . . ."
but it must be with variations. Otherwise, repetition can result in boredom.

Asking questions is a common instructional technique in the Qur'an and resembles the technique used by Socrates. This is surely an effective method of provoking thought. Sometimes the questions take the form of a response to a statement (e.g., Qur'an 2: 30), sometimes they serve as a starting point (e.g., Qur'an 107: 1), and sometimes they take the form of a dialogue which finally leads to the discovery of truth (e.g., Qur'an 21: 52-67). According to Al-Zarnuji, it is necessary to pursue knowledge by means of discussion, argument, and questioning because they are a kind of consultation which aims at establishing the truth. However, he cautions that in applying this method, fairness, circumspection, and avoidance of violent dispute must be observed.\(^7^6\)

The Qur'an also makes use of metaphors or similes in conveying its lessons. This method is most convenient when the idea to be presented is abstract. For instance, to show the weakness of partners associated with God, a similitude to the spider's web, which is flimsy, is drawn.\(^7^7\)

The third instructional method found in the Qur'an is the empirical method. The importance of observation is significant from the way in which one of Adam's sons learned


\(^{7^7}\)Al-Qur'an 29: 41.
how to bury his dead brother by watching a similar demonstration from a bird. In other places men are encouraged in the Qur'an to travel and witness objects or events directly so that they will see how God originated creation, see the effects of those who rejected the Truth, and acquire wisdom. Still, in other verses the Qur'an urges its reader to observe closely and reflect on natural phenomena—from as near as the human body itself, to phenomena on earth such as the growth of plants and the differing kinds of crawling animals, to as far as the heavens. The Qur'an is so meticulous in details that it describes the formation of the human fetus from the instant of placing the "sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed" to the stage where God "clothed the bones with flesh." The importance of reflection and thought is evident from the frequency of the Qur'an's call to think (f-k-r, `a-q-l), to understand (f-q-h, f-h-m), and to consider (d-b-r), as has been discussed earlier in the section on the concept of knowledge.

Another significant instructional method found in the Qur'an is induction. This is evident in the story of how

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78 Ibid., 5: 34.


80 See Al-Qur'an 23: 12-14.
Prophet Abraham reached the principle of the Unity of God after observing the star, the moon, and the sun.\textsuperscript{81} 

The method of seeing and demonstration establishes the importance of experience and provides a strong basis for the use of audiovisual methods in learning. Clearly, the method described above provides a strong basis for the importance of the scientific method in Islamic education. In addition, it affirms the importance of field trips, excursions, student activities, and scientific observations as an integral part of the school curriculum.

The fourth method that is greatly emphasized by the Tradition is memorization, in particular, memorization of the Qur'an. Those who memorize the Qur'an and frequently read it are promised intercession by it on their behalf on the Day of Judgment.\textsuperscript{82} In the Qur'an there is no such direct injunction, but believers are instructed to "stand [to prayer] by night, . . . and recite the Qur'an in slow, measured rhythmic tones."\textsuperscript{83} To be able to read the Qur'an in prayer implies that it must have been memorized.

The discussion of instructional methods is incomplete without notes about the teacher, the most important agent in learning. The most effective teacher is the one who is most creative and innovative. However, the most effective

\textsuperscript{81}Al-Qur'an 6: 76.

\textsuperscript{82}Sahih Muslim, 1: 1757.

\textsuperscript{83}Al-Qur'an 73: 3-5.
teacher in moral development is the one who is exemplary, who internalizes those values to be passed on to the students. A teacher should do what he teaches or preaches because students also learn through the eyes and not just through the mind. The Qur'an is emphatic on this point. It says, "Do ye enjoin right conduct on the people and forget (to practise it) yourselves, and yet ye study the Scripture? Will ye not understand?"\textsuperscript{84}

A Muslim teacher cannot adopt the attitude of Rousseau, whose belief in the child's good-nature forbade him to interfere with the child's education. For Rousseau, early education should be purely negative. The child is not taught virtue and truth, but instead his heart should be sheltered from vice and his mind from error.\textsuperscript{85} A Muslim teacher who is engaged in moulding the child's character cannot remain silent while his students are choosing the wrong course. According to Al-Ghazzali, the teacher must be sympathetic to the students and treat them as his own children. He should not withhold any advice from the student, and he should dissuade them from their evil ways through suggestion and with sympathy rather than through

\textsuperscript{84}Al-Qur'an 2: 44.

\textsuperscript{85}In his Emile, Rousseau says, "God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil"; "From the outset raise a wall round your child's soul." See Emile trans. Barbara Foxley (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1911), 5-6.
sharp reproval. He cannot adopt a neutral attitude in matters of faith. He must guide the students.

However, a distinction needs to be made between Muslim and non-Muslim students. It should be clarified that this attitude in faith is meant only for Muslim students, since Islam does not compel anyone to be a Muslim. However, the teacher should be equally concerned with the moral development of non-Muslim students, since this is for the benefit of society. In one respect it can be argued that the Muslim teacher uses indoctrination because he has a tendency to impose his values on students. However this claim is untrue if the teacher uses reason to guide his students. Indoctrination is blind following.

In sum, teachers' duties toward students, as discussed by scholars such as Ibn Al-Mukhaffa, Al-Zarnuji, Ibn Juma'a, and Al-Ghazzali, include the following. Teachers are to be kind to students and treat them as their own children. They ought to follow the Prophet's example in spreading knowledge without expecting any reward or remuneration but to seek the pleasure of God. Teachers should not concentrate on the students' learning only but also give attention to their conduct. In case of misbehavior, students should be admonish gently. Teachers should support precepts by

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86 See his work, Kitab al-`Ilm, Section V, 144-153.

87 Al-Qur'an 2: 256 states, "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error. . . ."
practice because practice is understood by the eyes and these are more numerous than the minds which comprehend precepts. Teachers ought to encourage their students to use their own minds and make their own judgments instead of merely imitating them. Teachers also should treat their students equally, with no distinction made between the children of the rich and the poor.\footnote{Ahmad Shalaby, \textit{History of Muslim Education} (Beirut: Dar Al-Kashaf, 1954), 145-47.}

Another concern in education is authority. Authority in general has been associated with something repressive. But this need not be so. A teacher in accordance to the level of his knowledge possesses authority over a group of young learners, but this does not imply that he is authoritarian. According to Peters, "what is needed is not the abandonment of authority but its rationalization as a form of social control."\footnote{R. S. Peters, \textit{Ethics and Education} (Atlanta, GA: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1967), 169.} Prophet Muhammad's teaching provides an excellent example of freedom of discussion and deliberation in dealing with an issue. For instance in deciding the strategy to use during the battle of the Trench (\textit{Khandaq}), and also in deciding to accept the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Prophet sought the opinions of His trustworthy companions and accepted their wisdom. If Prophet Muhammad is their model, then Muslim teachers should inculcate the spirit of consultation (\textit{shura}) that was
practised by the Prophet and enjoined in the Qur'an. Students also should be encouraged to ask questions, even about faith, in order to clarify their doubts. The clearing of doubts lead to strengthening faith.

The pursuit of knowledge is not considered an individual affair but rather a cooperative enterprise. Al-Ghazzali condemns those who "guard their knowledge and dislike the idea of sharing it with others," those who regard knowledge as equivalent to power and position such that they get furious if they are contradicted, or those who confine their knowledge to the "circles of nobility and wealth and deem the poor classes unworthy of it."\(^{90}\) Al-Zarnuji shares the same opinion, evident in his statement that "it is obligatory that the possessor of knowledge be sympathetic and helpful rather than jealous."\(^{91}\)

The methods of education are infinite—restricted only by a teacher's imagination. The major considerations in adopting a method are its ability to motivate and sustain the learner's interest in the subject concerned and that it does not contradict any of the Islamic principles, except in special circumstances. For example, the exposure either in person or through audio-visual means of certain parts of a man's or a woman's body is forbidden. However, this prohibition is relaxed in the case of medical students.

\(^{90}\)Al-Ghazzali, *Kitab al-`Ilm*, 164.

Summary

In this chapter, the Islamic philosophy of education has been presented using a Western framework of philosophy of education. Three essential ingredients of a philosophy of education—the end, the content, and the learner—are examined from an Islamic perspective. A review of the various classifications of sciences by great Muslim philosophers was conducted for the purpose of determining a common trend of ideas about education and its contents. Finally, the Qur'an was appealed to in order to adjudicate these classifications and to establish the Islamic philosophy of education. The Qur'anic perspective on aims, contents, and methods of education was subsequently discussed.

The chapter shows that the Islamic philosophy of education aims to produce persons who, while serving God, are equipped to bear the responsibility of vicegerency. Moral character is embedded in the notion of a good man. In order to fulfill this aim, Islamic education should develop to perfection students' intellectual, spiritual, physical, and moral faculties. Islamic education is equally concerned with theory and practice and knowledge and action. To achieve its aims, literacy and the pursuit of knowledge are highly encouraged. The basic content of Islamic education consists of revealed knowledge, rational and
philosophical sciences, and elements of physical education and vocational skills.

The educational methods are limitless, restricted only by two considerations--the learner's ability and consistency with religious principles. Traditionally, memorization with understanding, repetition, mudhakarah (reciprocal action to aid in memorizing), note-taking, lecture, the scholastic method of dialecticism (jadal), differences of opinion in the law (khilaf), and disputation (munazarah) were common instructional methods employed in Islamic education. The Qur'an provides some pointers in methods of learning. Among them are teaching from the concrete to the abstract, the simple to the complex, and variation in methods--story telling, memorization, asking questions, audio-visual, giving metaphors, induction, and deduction. The scientific method of direct observation and sense experience is greatly encouraged.

Although it uses the Western framework of philosophy of education as its base, the study shows that the Islamic philosophy of education is unique and different from that of the West. What is evident is that the Islamic philosophy of education is imbued with Divine principles as well as natural laws.
CHAPTER 6
THE CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC SCHOOL SYSTEM EXAMINED

In this chapter I shall examine the contemporary Islamic school system. I shall begin by examining primary education and will follow with secondary education. I shall discuss the educational aims, content, and methods of each level. A detailed analysis of the entire system will be given at the end of the chapter.

Primary Education

Traditionally, primary education consists of Qur'anic classes held in the homes of teachers or in mosques. As noted in Chapter Two, Qur'anic education developed into an integral part of Malay vernacular schools until it was pushed to the fringe by British administrators. Thereafter in some states, Qur'anic education was considered a supplementary study with classes held in the afternoon. But in some other states such an arrangement did not exist and the traditional mode persisted. After the Education Act of 1961, which introduced Islamic education into the national education system, most states except Johor and Selangor,
stopped having supplementary classes. Probably these states felt that Islamic education offered in the national schools is adequate. However, in the late 1970s and early 1980s most other states, such as Perak and Melaka, launched this supplementary program. Although other states, such as Negeri Sembilan, did not launch this program, its State Religious Department prepared a curriculum guide for independent bodies or individuals who organized the rakyat (people) schools.

Since the religious primary schools are supplementary, they are held in the afternoon between 2:30pm and 6:00pm for students who attend the morning session of the national schools and in the morning between 8:30am and 12:00am for those who attend the afternoon session of the national schools. In some states the school age for Islamic primary education runs parallel with that of national primary education; that is, pupils in Standard One of the national schools attend Standard One of the Islamic schools. However, in other schools this is not the case. In some states only pupils in Standard Three of the national schools are admitted into Standard One of the Islamic schools.

Attendance in Islamic schools is not compulsory and is left to the choice of Muslim parents. A study in 1987

reported that 667,214 pupils attended the Islamic primary schools. This represents only 60 per cent of the total Muslim pupils' enrollment in national schools throughout the country. According to the same study, most of the teachers in the Islamic primary schools are temporary or part time. They are paid monthly allowances ranging from RM$30.00 to RM$500.00 (about US$12.00 to US$200.00). Most of them have not had any form of teacher training. Some schools have their own buildings, while others held classes in mosques or other public premises. Thus, there is no single organized system for the country, with some states being more systematic than others which have left primary education to private individuals or organizations.

Consequently, as a result of the study, the federal government agreed with a proposal submitted by the Committee on the Progress of Islamic Affairs in 1988 to finance nation-wide a Qur'anic and Fard 'Ain Classes Program (Kelas Pengajian Al-Qur'an dan Fardhu 'Ain or KAFA). The KAFA Program was to be organized by all states religious departments in coordination with LEPAI (The Advisory Council for the Coordination of Islamic Education). However, the KAFA program never got off the ground.

Footnotes:

2 Draf Kurikulum dan Sukatan Pengajian Al-Qur'an dan Fardhu 'Ain (KAFA) [Draft of the curriculum and syllabus of Qur'anic and fard 'ain studies (KAFA)] (Kuala Lumpur: Bahagian Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Jabatan Perdana Menteri, 1993), 3-4, mimeographed.

3 Ibid., 6.
Aims of Primary Islamic Education

The aims of education for the Islamic primary schools are religious, with ethical virtues being of the highest concern. This is illustrated by the objectives of education in the Syllabus of Negri Sembilan Rakyat (People) Religious Primary School:

1. To fulfil the duty of providing proper education to children as ordained by God;
2. To educate and train children to internalize Islamic teachings and values so that Islam will become a way of life;
3. To encourage children to further their education until higher education in Islamic studies;
4. To build the foundation for God-conscious men who are responsible to society (translation mine).^4

In another state, Melaka, the objectives of education in the Islamic primary school are:

1. To enable pupils to recognize Qur'anic alphabet and symbols and thus to read the Qur'an by themselves;
2. To inculcate the foundation of faith in God and Prophet Muhammad;
3. To enable pupils to perform acts of worship such as prayers and fasting;
4. To imbue pupils with Islamic morality and characters (translation mine).^5


The Qur'anic and Fard 'Ain Classes Program (KAFA) had a slightly different concern. It is concerned with the well-being of the nation's Muslims. It is concerned with efficiency, uniformity, and the minimum skills for reading the Qur'an. These can be inferred from its purposes, which are:

1. To ensure that all Muslim children in the nation can read the Qur'an properly, will have the fard 'ain basics, and will obtain proper practical training to enable them to become good, practising Muslims;
2. To ensure that all Muslim pupils who completed primary education achieve a uniform level of Islamic education, in particular, the ability to read the Qur'an;
3. To reinforce the foundations of Islamic education taught in the national schools;
4. To establish a uniform and integrated system of Qur'anic and Fard 'Ain Classes that is also efficient throughout the country (translation mine).

It was specified that the aim of the KAFA program is to produce Muslims who internalize and practise Islamic teachings, who are strong physically, emotionally, and spiritually, in an effort to attain happiness in this world and in the eternal hereafter.  

The discussion of aims shows that the goals of primary Islamic education are confined mainly to only one domain of

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6Draf Kurikulum dan Sukatan Pengajian Al-Qur'an & Fardhu 'Ain (KAFA) [Draft of the curriculum and syllabus of Qur'anic and fard 'ain studies (KAFA)], 7.
human nature. Its primary goal is spiritual—geared toward the ability to read the Qur'an properly in Arabic and to perform religious worship correctly. There is no conscious consideration of the needs to nourish the pupils intellectually, socially, and physically. Whatever is gained in these other aspects is rather accidental. It is assumed that these other goals of education are achieved through national education. It is assumed, too, that this major religious aim fits appropriately the nature of Islamic primary education, being only a supplement to the total primary education of a child.

Content and Methods of Primary Islamic Education

The syllabuses of five states (Selangor, Melaka, Johor, Pulau Pinang, and Negeri Sembilan) and of KAFA were examined for this study. The examination reveals that the syllabuses of all these states include the same subjects, although they are not centralized. There is variation in when the subjects are introduced and in the number of minutes allocated per week. The syllabuses consist of: (a) recognizing Arabic letters and spelling words (Mugaddam); (b) Qur'an reading and its method (tajwid); (c) divine attributes (tawhid), (d) law, especially those pertaining to worship (figh); (e) ethics (akhlag); (f) history of Islam (tarikh); (g) Malay language in Arabic script (jawi) and writing (khat), (h) a rudimentary of Arabic language, and
(i) dictation (imla'). However, in Johor, trades (muamalat), marriage (munakahat), mysticism (tasawwuf), and inheritance law (fara'id) also are included in the higher levels.\(^8\)

Comparing these syllabuses with the one drafted by KAFA again reveals a difference in emphasis. KAFA states that its emphasis will be on the practical aspects of reading the Qur'an and writing and reading jawi (Malay language in Arabic script). By practical aspect is meant the practice of the lessons learned, such as doing the actual ablution and performance of one of the five daily prayers, either individually or in congregation in school itself.

The importance attached to the various subjects taught can be gauged from the amount of time allocated weekly to each subject at the various grades, as shown in Table 6-1. From the table it can be inferred that a significant portion of the time in primary school is devoted to learning to read

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in Arabic with special emphasis on the Qur'an, learning to read the Qur'an in the proper note (tajwid), and memorizing

Table 6-1

Distribution of Subjects in Minute per Week According to Grade (Standard) in Primary Religious Schools, Selangor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Grades*</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. 1-2(min.)</td>
<td>Std. 3(min.)</td>
<td>Std. 4-6(min.)</td>
<td>Total(min.)</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Qur'an (Mugaddam)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Qur'an</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology (Tawhid)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law (Fiqh)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing (Khat/Jawi)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral (Akhlag)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read. Metd. (Taiwid)</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictation (Imla')</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*A class period for each grade in religious schools, primary (Standard) or secondary (Form), may vary from 30 to 40 minutes.

and understanding some of its chapters and verses. This is evident since 27.9 percent of study time is spent on
muqaddam, Qur'an, and tajwid. This proportion grows by a third to 37.1 percent, if Arabic is added.

Writing and dictation involve writing in jawi and Arabic. Although jawi is written in Arabic letters, it differs from Arabic in three ways: (a) it has five additional letters to cater for the Malay phonemes⁹, (b) it has five vowels in contrast to Arabic which has three short and three long vowels¹⁰, and (c) it is Malay language. Thus if these two subjects (writing and dictation) are added, the total time devoted to Malay language in jawi is 16.2 percent. However, it has to be noted that fluency in jawi does not mean fluency in reading or writing in Arabic. It only aids in reading Arabic because of the similar letters. In fact jawi at times can be confusing because, firstly, its vowels are similar to the long vowels in Arabic; secondly, Arabic or Islamic terms that have been coined are retained in their original form and not spelled in the usual jawi;¹¹

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⁹ The five letters are: cha (喳), pa (仆), nya (няти), nga (ز), and ga (قا).

¹⁰ The five Malay vowels are alif (ا) for the English equivalent of 'a' and 'e', waw (و) for 'u' and 'o', and ya (ى) for 'i'. The three short Arabic vowels are fatihah (ا), dammah (ء), and kasrāh (ـ), and the three long vowels are the letters alif (ا), waw (و), and ya (ى). For example (ى) is read as ba, while the letter (ا) is read as baa because of the long vowel alif (ا). However, the letter (ى) is only read ha in jawi. There are no long vowels in jawi.

¹¹ For example, the Arabic term "kalimah" (كلمة) which means "word" has been coined, but it is not spelled (كلمة) as it ought to be in jawi.
and third, it easily misleads the reading of Arabic word when the short vowels are not marked.

In the following section I will present the content of each subject in detail in order to give readers a flavor of these subjects.

**Pre-Qur'an (Mugaddam)** is taught in the first three years. The syllabus covers the recognition of 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet, its spelling with the six kinds of vowels, and reading words, phrases, and sentences. It begins with simple words and culminates in reading verses and short chapters (usually in the thirtieth section of the Qur'an) in Standard Three. It also includes memorization of some very short chapters.

**Al-Qur'an**, as implied by its name, means proper reading of the Qur'an beginning with section (*juzu'*) one until the end of section ten.

**Theology (Tawhid)** consists of memorizing and understanding the six articles of faith: the attributes of God, the characteristics of prophets, angels, the Books of God, the Day of Judgement and the Hereafter, and free will and predestination.

**Law (Fiqh)** at this level is concerned with knowledge of four of the five pillars of Islam: the declaration of faith, prayer, fasting, and alms-giving (*zakat*). Pilgrimage to Makkah (*Haji*) is not included. However the bulk of the curriculum is devoted to knowledge of the requirements for
prayers, which consist of purification (thaharah) from the different types of physical impurities, the sequence of ablution, and memorization of the necessary recitations for prayers which are in Arabic.

Writing (Khat) emphasizes Arabic calligraphy and jawi, beginning with simple words to phrases and sentences in Mugaddam text, Arabic language text or texts from the other subjects.

Ethics (Akhlaq) deals with manners toward others, such as teachers, parents, and friends; ethical values, such as obedience to God, the Prophet, and righteous leaders, honesty, fulfilling promises, sympathy and kindness to man as well as animals, importance of seeking knowledge, respect for scholars or men of knowledge; knowledge of tasawwuf (self-purification or mysticism); knowledge of praiseworthy virtues such as temperance, gratitude, sincerity, repentance, and asceticism; and knowledge of blameworthy traits such as greed, ingratitude, love of the world, and envy.

Method of Qur'an Recitation (Tajwid) covers all the rules of reading the Qur'an from proper elongation with two beats (mad) to the origin of the sound of the 28 Arabic letters (makhraj).

History (Sirah) relates the history of Prophet Muhammad from his birth to the farewell pilgrimage and his death.
Arabic language deals with simple vocabulary such as words for numbers, for things in the classroom, for items in the home, and for clothing.

Dictation (Imla') covering dictation in Arabic and Malay from texts used in class.

Most of these subjects, such as theology, law, history of Islam, and ethics, are taught in simple language and in the most elementary form appropriate to the students' levels. In accordance with a spiral curriculum, students will encounter the same themes again and again in increasingly complex forms. There does not seem to be a big difference between the contents of the state syllabus and that of the KAFA Program. In the KAFA Program the syllabus for Al- Qur'an ensures that all thirty sections, instead of just ten, are read throughout the six years. The Arabic language is more basic, only covering some common vocabulary, pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions. Law (fiqh) covers a little bit more to include Friday and congregational prayers, shortened (gazr) and combined (jama') prayers, and prayer over the dead. The emphasis of the KAFA Program is on fluency in jawi. Even khat is devoted to jawi instead of Arabic words or phrases. It can be presumed that the importance attached to jawi is the result of the policy of the Ministry of Education which emphasizes the use of jawi in Islamic Studies.
The most frequent instructional methods are reading, narrations of stories from the Qur'an and the Tradition, lecture, dictation of notes, and memorization. The only practical activity is training for ablution and performance of prayers. Theology involves some understanding and thinking. The Qur'an basically is read in Arabic, with little understanding, and subsequently some verses are memorized for recitation in prayers.

This examination shows that primary education is one-sided because it emphasizes only revealed knowledge. It does not afford a complete education and thus contradicts the Islamic notion of education.

Secondary Education

It was shown in Chapter Four that there are four agencies involved in the dissemination of Islamic religious education at the secondary level—State, Rakyat (People), National, and National Religious schools. Since the rakyat (people) schools usually follow the curriculum set by the state religious department, our examination will be confined to the curricula formulated by states religious departments. Examination of the curriculum of the national and national religious schools will be postponed to the next chapter.
Aims of Secondary Islamic Education

Chapters Two and Four have shown how the Islamic educational institutions have evolved from the Qur'anic school to the pondok and later to the madrasah. It was shown also that the subjects offered evolved from merely Qur'an reading and instruction on prayers in the Qur'anic school to Islamic religious subjects in the pondok and Islamic religious subjects with a sprinkle of a few "secular" subjects in the madrasah. Changes in content reflect changes in the philosophy underlying the curriculum. Thus it was observed that the aim of education underlying the Qur'anic schools was to produce good Muslim individuals who by definition were able to read the Qur'an and performed prayers. With the introduction of the pondok, the aim of education expanded slightly from just producing good Muslim individuals in the above sense to the goal of producing religious teachers, functionaries, and scholars. Hence at this stage, social and vocational purposes of education began to be recognized. Since the Muslim society was primarily rural and self-subsistent, these purposes suited their needs adequately.

The madrasah ushered a new phase in Islamic education in Malaysia. In addition to religious subjects, a few "secular" subjects such as mathematics, geography, history, and Malay language, were added to the curriculum. There were also instructional innovations such as dividing the
student body into several groups containing students with homogeneous abilities and having a fixed schedule of lessons. These innovations definitely reduced the teacher-student ratio and improved the efficiency and quality of instruction.

These "secular" subjects were different from the religious subjects in their pedagogical approach. This could be due to their different epistemological sources. If the religious subjects depended greatly on the method of understanding and memorization, the "secular" subjects opened opportunity for the exercise of the intellect or mind. Mathematics requires rigorous logical thinking, including deductive and inductive proofs. Geography opened vistas for understanding the environment and how it affects culture and the growth of civilization. The introduction of these subjects made it possible for analysing, interpreting, synthesizing, and evaluating data. Thus the intellectual aim of education was brought to the fore. This does not mean the denial of the capability of developing the intellectual potential of man through religious studies. However, the most common approach taken in delivering the religious subjects was rather rigid and dogmatic, especially when the idea that the "door of ijtihad is closed" is preeminent and firmly held by religious teachers and leaders.
Innovative ideas were hard to come by since they were frowned upon.

After Independence, particularly in 1963, as a result of the government policy requiring students from secondary religious schools to sit for public examinations, the scope of vocations expanded and the vocational aim grew into importance. Tertiary education became possible for graduates from the religious secondary schools. The aim of education during this period covering until the early 1970s were thus to produce Muslims who (a) could further their education in colleges or universities, or obtain employment with the government; and (b) have good character, are God-conscious, and would perform their duties to God.

In the 1970s, the resurgence of Islam caused Muslim society to reflect once more upon the secondary religious schools. A survey of syllabuses formulated in the late 1970s and early 1980s from the various states, notably Johor, Pulau Pinang, Selangor, and Kelantan, did not show any goals or objectives of education. Whatever goals they had were implicit. These syllabuses contain the various

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12"Closing the door of ijtihad" is a common phrase describing a phenomenon in Islamic intellectual thought that occurred after the establishment of the few major schools of law (out of the flourishing and thriving numbers) by the tenth century. Muslim scholars propagated the idea that there was no more need for ijtihad (intellectual exertion by qualified individuals). Thus ijtihad was stifled. This is unfortunate because according to a Tradition (hadith), a scholar who does ijtihad is praised and rewarded: one reward if his judgment is wrong and two rewards if his judgment is correct.
subjects offered at each level, subject descriptions, and the amount of time allocated to it in a week. There is strong reason to believe that the framing of the National Education Philosophy in 1987 sparked the idea of examining and drafting a philosophy of education for the religious schools. This conviction is based on the evidence that in two papers from two different states (Kelantan and Selangor) presented at a national seminar on Islamic Education in 1992, the philosophy of education has been clearly spelled out. In addition, the philosophy closely resembles that of the National Education Philosophy in form and spirit.

According to Kelantan Islamic Foundation (Yayasan Islam Kelantan) which is responsible for the dissemination and development of Islamic education in the state of Kelantan, its philosophy is contained in the meaning of the terms tarbiyah (upbringing), ta'alim (instruction), ta'adib (discipline), irshad (guidance), and tadris (teaching). It believes that Islamic education is an ongoing effort toward developing the potential of Muslim individuals as servants of God and His vicegerents on earth, in a holistic and integrated manner. It aims toward producing individuals who are spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, physically, and religiously balanced, based on the teachings of Islam, the society, the nation, and the world wide Muslim community (ummah) (translation mine).\(^{13}\)

Hence, in accordance with its philosophy, the Kelantan Islamic Foundation states that its aim is to produce Muslims who possess firm faith and good moral characters, possess knowledge that could be translated into good deeds and who are capable of building the Muslim family, society, nation, and a world wide community (ummah) (translation mine).\(^{14}\)

This philosophy expresses a new dimension—vicegerency of man, and includes another important concept, that is, education as an ongoing effort. This conforms to the call of the Prophet to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.

The Education Division of the Selangor Religious Department maintains that education is an effort towards developing the potential of Muslim Mukmin [faithful] in a holistic and integrated manner in order to create individuals who are balanced spiritually and physically, based on the Qur'an and Tradition (Hadith) (translation mine).\(^{15}\)

The ends of education are "to produce Muslim individuals who are knowledgeable, possess good characters, will perform good deeds, and are capable of developing society and the nation."\(^{16}\)

\(^{14}\)Ibid., 2.


\(^{16}\)Ibid.
This philosophy stated clearly its source of principles and practices, which is revelation. It is unclear whether the other epistemological sources of knowledge based on the Open Book is considered by this philosophy. The statement only emphasizes the spiritual and physical aspects and makes no mention of the intellectual aspect.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, LEPAI, the Advisory Council for the Coordination of Islamic Education, also formulated its philosophy of education, which closely resembles the National Education Philosophy and in some ways the two statements of philosophy given above. It states,

Education is an ongoing effort towards developing the potential of individuals in an holistic and integrated manner based on the Qur'an and the Tradition (al-Sunnah). This is designed to produce individuals who are intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and physically balanced and harmonious, pious and God-conscious (taqwa) based on a firm belief in Allah. Such an effort is designed to create an Islamic society with moral excellence, knowledgeable, united, and responsible. This effort aims also to produce individuals capable of achieving personal well-being in this world and in the hereafter as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and prosperity of the society and nation as vicegerents of Allah (translation mine).\(^\text{17}\)

The individual envisioned in this philosophy is balanced in more aspects than the two previous statements. The

philosophy also emphasizes both the individual and society, although special reference is made to an Islamic society.

LEPAI outlines that its aims are to create:

1. Muslim individuals who are pious, God-conscious, harmonious, knowledgeable, skillful, and responsible towards the religion, society, and the nation;
2. A section of society which specializes in religion so as to enable them to serve society as leaders, missionaries, educators, administrators, managers, and skilled workers in the public and private sectors;
3. An Islamic society that possess a high level of mental capacity, of fortitude, and of physical exertion as well as aspires to develop the community (ummah) and struggles to uphold the glory of Islam (translation mine).[^18]

Although the philosophies and aims of education presented above are from different bodies, they closely resemble each other in words, sequence, and contents. It is rather difficult to accept this as mere coincidence. They could be adapted from the philosophy of education drafted at the First World Conference of Muslim Education in Makkah in 1977 or the National Education Philosophy formulated in 1987. I believe that they have been adapted from the latter, for the National Education Philosophy has been more widely publicised in the country than has the Makkah Conference and Islamic education agencies revealed their philosophies only after 1987. The formulation of a philosophy of education is in itself an achievement, for it reveals a willingness to examine the goals and direction of

[^18]: Ibid., 3.
Islamic education. This represents a significant break from the previous practice of just following tradition without any pause to examine the relevancy of the course of studies offered for the present.

The philosophies and aims of education presented above sometimes seem ambiguous. However, close scrutiny of these aims of education read in the proper spirit leads me to infer that the formulators have the following concerns in minds. First, education should be holistic and integrated and should give equal attention to the mental, physical, and spiritual faculties of man. This concern grew out of the tendency for Islamic education to give greater attention to the spiritual faculties at the expense of intellectual development. Second, education should be based on a firm belief in God with the Qur'an and the Tradition providing the guiding principles. Third, education should produce a balanced individual who is not only knowledgeable and skillful but also possesses moral excellence; who not only will be concerned with this life but also with the afterlife. Fourth, an educated individual would not live in isolation but instead contribute to the physical, material, and spiritual well-being of society and nation, thereby rightly assuming his role as the vicegerent of God.

These aims are good and parallel the concerns of an Islamic philosophy of education as outlined in Chapter Five. Yet a close examination of the aims as presented by LEPAI
reveals an inherent contradiction. LEPAI states explicitly that it aims to produce individuals who could assume their roles as God's vicegerents. However it contradicts itself when it maintains that its major concern is educating specialists in religion. LEPAI seems to downplay the education of specialists in other departments of life who also are necessary for the holistic and balanced development of a society and a nation. These are the specialists who would exert their intelligence, creativity, knowledge, and energy in making proper use of the natural resources endowed by God for mankind. Muslim philosophers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Iqbal envisioned this to be the purpose of intelligence. LEPAI's philosophy of education will not seem contradictory if its statement of concern for the education of specialists in religion arises simply from the concern that there will be students and teachers for Islamic and Arabic studies in the future. Hence its statement is to be understood as a protective device rather than a statement of negation of the other facets of life.

Aims alone are inadequate for full judgment of an educational effort. The content of education or the curricula and the methods are equally important, for they are the means by which these aims are achieved. Hence, in the following section I will evaluate the content and methods of secondary education.
Content and Methods of Secondary Islamic Education

Similar to the content of primary education, there is not much variation in the content of secondary education among the various states despite their not having a centralized agency. The same subjects are included in the curricula, with variation as to the quantity of time allocated for each. This apparent uniformity without the presence of a centralized body may be explained in two ways. First, since almost all of these schools prepare students for higher education in Islamic Studies in universities locally and in the Middle East, their course of studies are determined by the requirements of those institutions. Thus, in one sense those universities determine the Islamic and Arabic components of the Malaysian religious curriculum.

Second, these schools are required by the Malaysian Ministry of Education to prepare students for local public examinations. Thus, in effect the Ministry determines the general (secular) studies component of the curriculum. An analysis of the curricula from Johor and Kelantan reveals that approximately 60 percent of study time is allocated to Arabic and Islamic Studies, while 40 percent is devoted to "secular" or general subjects (see Tables 6-2, 6-3, and 6-4). It is significant that Arabic language consumes 30 percent of total study time weekly. That percentage is a huge chunk considering that language is only an instrument for communication and for acquiring knowledge. The
proportion would be understandable if one were to specialize in Arabic language, but this is not the case. The disproportion is more conspicuous if comparison is made with Malay or English languages. Similarly the time allocation for mathematics or sciences in the Lower Secondary is too little to serve as a strong foundation for further education in the sciences. As a matter of fact, it has been the practice of religious schools not to offer a science-based education that will allow their students to specialize in the natural and applied sciences in higher education because of their narrow definition of Islamic education.

LEPAI drafted its own curriculum for Secondary Religious Schools in 1987. However, a committee formed in 1992 to evaluate the curriculum recommended its revision because of some shortcomings. The committee found that most of the verses selected for Qur'anic exegesis were concerned with law and very little with personality, societal, and scientific development; the approach to teaching Arabic language is inappropriate by contemporary standard; Qur'anic lessons cover only selected verses and not the entire Qur'an; and Islamic Studies did not consider the new curriculum introduced by the Ministry of Education.
Table 6-2

Distribution of Subjects (Periods per Week) According to Grades (Forms) for Lower and Upper Religious Secondary Schools, Kelantan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>pre*</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Islamic Studies (82)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Al-Qur'an/Tajwid</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Exegesis (tafsir)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tradition (hadith)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Law (fiqh)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Theology (tawhid)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. History of Islam</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ethics (akhlq)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. History of Is. Law</td>
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<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Principles of Law</td>
<td></td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Science of hadith</td>
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<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| B. Arabic language (76)       |      |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 1. Reading (qira'at)          | 2    | 3  | 3  | 3  | ...| ...| 28 |
| 2. Essay (insha')             | 5    | 5  | 5  | 4  | 4  | 3  |    |
| 3. Dict. & writing (Imla' & Khat) | 5 | 3  | 3  | 3  | ...| ...|    |
| 4. Comprehension (Muthala'ah-Nusus) |      | ...| ...| ...| 3  | 3  |    |
| 5. Grammar (Nahu)             |      | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  |    |
| 6. Metaphors                  |      | ...| ...| 2  | 2  |    |    |

| C. General (112)              |      |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 1. Malay language             | 3    | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 41 |
| 2. English language           | 3    | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  |    |
| 3. Malay literature           |      | ...| ...| ...| 2  | 2  |    |
| 4. History                    | 2    | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  |    |
| 5. Geography                  | 2    | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  |    |
| 6. Science                    | 2    | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  |    |
| 7. Mathematics                | 2    | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  |    |
| Total (270)                   | 45   | 45 | 45 | 45 | 45 | 100|    |


*This is a year of preparatory class.
Table 6-3

Distribution of Subjects (Periods per Week) According to Grades (Forms) for Lower and Upper Religious Secondary Schools, Johor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Grades (Forms)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Islamic Studies (45)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Exegesis (tafsir)</td>
<td>... ... 2 2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tradition (hadith)</td>
<td>... ... 3 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Law (fiqh)</td>
<td>2 2 2 4 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Theology (tawhid)</td>
<td>2 2 2 ... 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. History of Islam</td>
<td>2 2 2 2 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Principle of Law</td>
<td>... ... ... 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Religious Knowledge</td>
<td>1 1 2 ... ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Arabic language (69)</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Reading (qira‘at)</td>
<td>2 2 2 ... ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Essay (insha‘)</td>
<td>3 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dict. &amp; Writing</td>
<td>2 1 1 ... ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Comprehension</td>
<td>3 3 2 3 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Grammar</td>
<td>6 6 6 6 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Metaphors</td>
<td>... ... ... 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Arabic Literature</td>
<td>... ... ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. General (76)</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Malay language</td>
<td>3 3 3 2 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. English language</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Malay Literature</td>
<td>... ... 2 2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. History</td>
<td>2 3 3 2 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Geography</td>
<td>2 2 2 2 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Science</td>
<td>3 3 3 ... ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mathematics</td>
<td>4 3 4 2 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (190)</strong></td>
<td>40 40 40 35 35</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Pejabat Pelajaran Agama Johor, (1) Sukatan Pelajaran Menengah Rendah Agama [Syllabus for lower secondary religious school]; (2) Sukatan Pelajaran Menengah Tinggi Agama [Syllabus for upper secondary religious school], mimeographed.
Table 6-4

Distribution of Subjects (Periods per Week) According to Grades (Forms) for Post-Secondary Religious Schools, Kelantan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Grades (Forms)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Six</td>
<td>Upper Six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Islamic Studies(27)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Law (fiqh)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Principles of Law</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Theology (tawhid)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Logic (mantiq)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Exegesis (tafsir)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Science of Qur'an (&quot;ulum al-Our'an)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Tradition (hadith)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Sc. of Tradition (mustahlah hadith)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. History of Law (tarikh tashri'i)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ethics (akhlag)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Arabic Language(26)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Comprehension (muthalaah &amp; nusus)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Essay (insha')</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hist. of Arabic Lit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Grammar (nahu-sarf)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Metaphors (balaghah)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. General (37)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Malay language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Malay Literature</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. English language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hist. of Islam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. General Paper</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Economics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (90)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEPAI's newly revised curriculum is comprehensive in the sense that it takes into account activities in the classroom as well as those outside the classrooms. It represents a major improvement and is a departure from the reputation of a curriculum for seminaries, for which religious schools are popularly known. This new curriculum is concerned with both kinds of knowledge—revealed and intellectual.

In its new curriculum, LEPAI classifies subjects according to core and elective subjects. The core subjects consist of the revealed sciences, the natural and human sciences, and languages that are recognized as important tools for communication and acquiring contemporary knowledge. The components of Islamic and Arabic language studies include most if not all of the subjects currently studied in religious schools (see Table 6-5).

The distribution of subjects in number of periods weekly according to grades (levels) is shown in Table 6-6. The content of the intellectual sciences and Malay and English languages follow those set by the Ministry of Education. The rest of the contents are determined by curriculum experts of LEPAI. LEPAI also states explicitly that students in the upper secondary will be given the freedom to choose from any of the Islamic studies, pure sciences, humanities, or vocational/technical streams that will be made available. These streams resemble those of
### Table 6-5

Core and Elective Subjects for Lower and Upper Secondary Religious Schools under LEPAI Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Subjects</th>
<th>Elective Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Islamic studies</td>
<td>1. Reading (nusus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Arabic language studies</td>
<td>2. Writing (khat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. English language</td>
<td>4. Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mathematics</td>
<td>5. Living Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. History</td>
<td>7. Humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Physical and Health Education</td>
<td>8. Natural sciences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Components of Islamic Studies

1. Qur'an-reading and method *(tajwid)*
2. Law and its principles *(fiqh and usul figh)*
3. Theology *(tawhid)*
4. Tradition *(hadith)*
5. Qur'an Exegesis *(tafsir)*
6. History of Prophet *(sirah)* and Islamic civilization
7. Ethics *(akhlag/tasawwuf)*

#### Components of Arabic Language Studies

1. Grammar *(nahu and saraf)*
2. Comprehension *(muthala`ah)*
3. Memorization *(mahfuzah)*
4. Short Composition *(ta`abir)*
5. Essay *(insha)*
6. Metaphors *(balaghah)*
7. Literature *(nusus adabiah)*
8. Dictation *(imla)*

### Table 6-6

Distribution of Subjects (Periods per Week) According to Grades (Levels) for Secondary Religious Schools under LEPAI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Grades (Levels)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Second.</td>
<td>Upper Second.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Islamic Studies</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Arabic Lang. Stud.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Malay Language</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. English Language</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. History</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Phy. and Health Ed.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Living Skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Periods/Week</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


'This is for the Islamic Studies stream.

the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools of the Ministry of Education. However LEPAI does not mention where students will pursue the pure sciences or vocational/technical streams--whether in the Islamic or the national Schools. At the post-secondary level, LEPAI plans for three streams: theology (usuluddin), law (shari'ah), and Arabic language. There are no science or technical streams at this level because those who wish to specialize in these usually go to specialized institutions after upper secondary level. Students will be required to take the following
electives: economics, general paper,\textsuperscript{19} and history of Islam. Malay language will be the medium of instruction, except for Islamic and Arabic studies, which will have Arabic as their medium.

It is evident that the contents of Islamic and Arabic language studies under LEPAI curriculum have been trimmed from the more frequent 60 percent in state religious schools to 50 percent. However, the reduction is still minimal. It is amazing how Arabic language consumes 20 percent of the total study time notwithstanding the fact that Islamic studies are conducted in Arabic itself in post-secondary level. This disproportion and inequilibrium is more noticeable when one considers that only 14 percent of study time in the lower secondary is devoted to foundational subjects such as science and mathematics. In fact, geography is omitted.

However, LEPAI's curriculum is an improvement over those of states' curricula because it provides flexibility of choice in the upper secondary in addition to a strong grounding in Islamic education. Thus, there is a ray of hope that religious schools can begin to produce distinguished scientists and technologists in addition to religious scholars. In addition, the curriculum provides for physical and health education, which are essential for a

\textsuperscript{19}General paper is a subject that covers general knowledge about contemporary issues in the world.
healthy body and mind, and living skills, which is a composition of industrial arts, agricultural science, home economics, and commerce. The introduction of living skills is significant because to date the religious school did not offer students a wide variety of vocational skills. Students were prepared only for religious vocations or whatever employment public examination certificate they could qualify for.

It seems the religious schools subscribe to the kind of educational dualism resembling that of Plato, which separates the education of the elites from that of the masses, and the intellectual from the practical, with the former regarded more highly than the latter. John Dewey attempted to synthesize this duality of theory and practice in his great work Democracy and Education, and so did Ibn Sina in his classification of sciences. The perfect Muslim (Prophet Muhammad) himself, was an embodiment of theory and practice: he planned strategies for war, for education, and for economic justice, and he executed them as a soldier, as a teacher, and as an alms (zakat) collector.

What LEPAI is doing is adapting very closely the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools formulated by the Ministry of Education, which we shall discuss in the next chapter. In fact, the Education Division of Terengganu Religious Department already has embarked on a modified version of this Integrated Curriculum. It offers core,
additional, and elective subjects. The Terengganu curriculum seems to have a little more time for science, but it neglects physical and health education.

Similarly, the Education Division of the Selangor State Religious Department also is currently working to adapt the Ministry's Integrated Curriculum in toto with the provision of some subjects to enable students to sit for state religious examinations. As in LEPAI, the curriculum allows for the choice of four streams in the upper secondary—Islamic studies, sciences, humanities, and technical.  

Although LEPAI's curriculum is formidable and attractive, there is no guarantee that it will be adopted by all the states. First, its implementation will be expensive especially in the areas of science and technology. Not all state governments can bear the costs of such an enterprise. As it is, most states receive federal aid through the Ministry of Education (see Table 6.7). The situation will be worse for the rakyat (people) religious schools which are primarily dependant on federal aid. The two states mentioned above, Terengganu and Selangor, are rich and their religious school systems are fully backed by the state governments. Second, some states still feel that LEPAI's

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20Bahagian Pendidikan dan Pelajaran JAIS, "Sekolah Agama Menengah/Arab Negeri Selangor: Wawasan dan Cabaran Masa Depan" [Selangor Secondary Religious/Arabic Schools: Vision and Future Challenges], Appendix A.
### Table 6-7

**Financial Sources of Religious Schools According to State, 1986**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Sch. Type</th>
<th>Financial Sources (RM$)***</th>
<th>Total (RM$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perlis</td>
<td>SRS*</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RRS</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>79,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kedah</td>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>1,182,837</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RRS</td>
<td>3,010,363</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Pinang</td>
<td>SRS*</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RRS</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perak</td>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RRS</td>
<td>587,990</td>
<td>215,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selangor</td>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>32,476,482</td>
<td>499,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RRS</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>4,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilayah</td>
<td>SRS*</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persek.</td>
<td>RRS</td>
<td>204,000</td>
<td>102,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negeri</td>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>3,730,092</td>
<td>5,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sembilan</td>
<td>RRS</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melaka</td>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>2,067,965</td>
<td>264,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RRS</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>320,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johor</td>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>24,858,500</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RRS</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>451,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahang</td>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>14,069,400</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RRS</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>680,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terengganu</td>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>19,005,604</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RRS</td>
<td>49,680</td>
<td>63,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelantan</td>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>10,807,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RRS</td>
<td>4,650,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Laporan Kajian Organisasi LEPAI, 22.

SRS: State Religious School
RRS: Rakyat (People) Religious School

*No State Religious School
**Treasury of State Religious Department
***RM$1.00 is approximately US$2.50

Curriculum is inadequate for specialization in Arabic and Islamic studies and instead will change "the religious
characteristic" of the religious schools.\textsuperscript{21} They believe that the state-controlled schools are necessary to maintain the quality of religious education. Third, some administrators in states religious departments feel that Islam and religious education are simply state matters whose autonomy is guaranteed by the Constitution. They feel that LEPAI's curriculum is a form of encroachment by the federal government.

Despite these changes and improvements, LEPAI and the other states religious departments do not seem to tackle the root of the problem. They do not see the system of education as a whole. They are dealing with the secondary level, which is just a part of the whole, and it is not certain that this solution will be effective in the long run in meeting the stated objectives.

Methods of education are important in ensuring that content is delivered effectively. There are two kinds of methods available in the religious schools. First, the Islamic and Arabic Studies invoke traditional and bookish methods resembling the educational methods of traditional medieval schools in both the West and the Muslim world. They consist of reading, lecture, dictation, and memorization. The Socratic method, which was discussed in Chapter Five, is rarely used. Lecture and dictation are the

most frequent method. Al-Qur'an, law, history, and Tradition have to be memorized at great length. Only theology and logic provide some room for thought.

Second, the "secular" or general subjects involve a variety of approaches according to the various disciplines: mathematics, science, geography, history, and languages. This component of the curriculum is vital for inculcating thinking skills. However because of the great influence of the bookish tradition and poor teaching in science that is caused by lack of facilities and scientific equipment, the discovery method and thinking skills never get developed. In most cases the results of experiments are rarely discovered by pupils. They are often given or taught as facts or information to be memorized in preparation for public examinations which are held at the end of primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, and higher secondary levels. These examinations are important for promotion to the next higher level.

Analysis of the Islamic Religious School System

The Islamic religious school system has contributed its share to the growth of education in Malaysia and has helped in producing religious leaders, scholars, and teachers. However, this system has remained stagnant for some time and does not function well in changing times.
First, the greatest misconception throughout the study of the religious school is found in the misunderstanding over the concept of "secular." Secularization has been equated with the notion of Westernization or modernization. Thus, everything brought in by the West was regarded as secular and potentially will rob the Muslims of their faith in God. This was the fate of the intellectual sciences. Although these sciences have roots in Islam, they have been left out of Islamic education for too long. Islamic philosophy of education did not regard the intellectual sciences as "secular" but as essential because the sciences can strengthen faith. If the natural and applied sciences remain underdeveloped in the Muslim world, it will be difficult for individuals to fulfill the Islamic responsibility to be vicegerents of God. According to Abdus Salam, the Nobel Prize winner for physics in 1979 and the only Muslim to have won such an acclaimed international award,

There is no question but today, of all civilizations on this planet, science is weakest in the lands of Islam. The dangers of this weakness cannot be over-emphasized since honourable survival of a society depends directly on its strength in science and technology in the condition of the present age.\(^2^2\)

Thus the concept of secular has to be distinguished from that of modernity. Secularization is the deliverance of man "first from religious and then from metaphysical control over his reason and his language." It is what Max Weber called the "freeing of nature from its religious overtone." Secularization involves three integral components: the disenchantment of nature (from its religious overtones), the desacralization of politics (from sacral political power and authority), and the deconsecration of values (that renders all cultural creations and every value system transient and relative). If this is what secularization entails, then those committed to Islamic values would reject it.

But modernization does not necessarily lead to secularization. Modernization and development have been used synonymously to mean economic growth. One way of distinguishing these terms is to apply the term "development" to economic growth processes and the term "modernization" to various social-cultural processes concomitant with it. Berger et al. defines modernization as

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24Harvey Cox, The Secular City, 21.
the institutional concomitants of technologically induced economic growth. This means that there is no such thing as a "modern society" plain and simple; there are only societies more or less advanced in a continuum of modernization (author's emphasis).\(^{23}\)

The primary carriers of modernization or the primary agents of social change are institutions of technological production and bureaucracy. There is a tendency for modernization to cause alienation through the growth of the impersonal megastructures and to divide an individual's life into private and public spheres.\(^{26}\) Yet this is not the same as secularization because in the context of modernization, the division does not necessarily refer to that of the profane and the sacred. It relates more to a social context--individual freedom and an imposing society.

Some sociologists, such as Berger, equate modernization with secularization.\(^{27}\) They argue that secularization is needed to initiate the rationalizing process which is a prerequisite to modernization. That is why sociologists are baffled when the theory that equates modernization with secularization does not work in the case of Malaysia, as I

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have shown in Chapter Four. Al-Attas argues that Islam laid the philosophical foundation for this rationalistic spirit much earlier but did not encounter secularization.²⁸

Thus, it is a misnomer to call the natural sciences and the humanities secular disciplines. They can be regarded in every sense as being grounded in Muslim tradition.

Second, there seems to be a misunderstanding over the concept of the continuity of education, or education as an ongoing effort. It is peculiar that the Islamic school system begins seriously only with secondary education. There is no continuity of education from primary to secondary. Primary education is only supplementary. This is inconsistent with an Islamic holistic educational philosophy. This discontinuity poses its own problems. For example, formal teaching of Arabic language, which is an important instrument, only begins in secondary school. The problem worsens when within a few years students have to do Islamic studies in Arabic. Paradoxically, the lack of proficiency in Arabic is reflected in the huge percentage of time devoted to it in the curriculum. The problem of language could be resolved if it was introduced seriously and taught by qualified teachers using proper methodology early in the primary school. Then a more appropriate time could be allocated to natural sciences and the humanities in secondary level. In addition, the schools need to

²⁸S.M.N. Al-Attas, Islam and Secularism, 172.
reconsider their objectives in preparing students for higher education. Should they prepare students to study at local or foreign higher institutions of learning? Is the quality of Islamic and Arabic studies in the local institutions inferior to that of the other parts of the Muslim World?

Third, the aim and methodology of teaching the Qur'an and Arabic language needs to be reexamined. It is ironical that children are taught intensively at an early age to read in Arabic, but they are not taught the Arabic language! They simply are taught to recite in Arabic to enable them to read the Qur'an and later on, are equipped with the proper method of recitation so that they can recite the Qur'an in a beautiful melody. Next they are taught to memorize some verses of the Qur'an. One need not deny the spiritual values attained by reciting the Qur'an, especially in prayers, but one may question whether this fulfills the objective of studying the Qur'an. Very early, about the ninth verse, the Qur'an declares: "This is the Book; In it is guidance sure, without doubt" (2:2). At other places the Qur'an declares itself as The Criterion between truth and error (25:1) and The Cure (of ills).

It can be argued that in order to be guided or to know the Criterion for truth, one needs to know the Qur'an, and in order to understand the Qur'an, one needs to know the Arabic language. Some Muslim scholars even classify learning Arabic language as a fard `ain, that is, obligatory
on every Muslim. From a pedagogical point of view, it will be easier to memorize something that is understood. Also the spiritual value of the Qur'an is enhanced with the knowledge of the verses recited. Thus, knowing Arabic language facilitates memorization of the Qur'an, if memorization is a highly-valued activity. More time ought to be spent in learning Arabic in the primary years than in reading through the Qur'an. Pedagogically and philosophically, the curriculum of the Islamic religious schools needs revision.

In this context, to lessen the complication of learning Arabic, jawi need not be taught at all in the primary school. It should be offered only at the secondary level as an elective. Many Malays are sentimental about jawi and believe that jawi is Islam. It is time for them to honestly reflect on the objective of learning jawi—-are they holding on to jawi for cultural reasons or for pragmatic reasons? Arabic words can be transliterated using Romanized letters, although sometimes improper transliteration can result in improper pronunciation and improper meaning. One always can write Islamic treatises in rumi, and thus there should be no reason why students are forbidden to write notes or

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29 It was recommended at the First World Conference on Muslim Education that Arabic language with all its branches "should become compulsory subject in all countries of the Muslim World." See Ministry of Higher Education, Recommendations of the Four World Conferences on Islamic Education (Makkah, Saudi Arabia: World Center for Islamic Education, 1983), 19.
examinations on Islamic studies in rumi, as is the current practice in most religious schools. Jawi is required only in Islamic studies, whereas the other subjects require rumi. Most books, magazines, and newspapers in the Malaysian market--including literatures on Islam--currently are published in rumi. Thus it is only natural for the younger generation to be more proficient in rumi than in jawi. The need for jawi is lessened especially since most of the old jawi Islamic literatures have been translated into rumi as asserted by a scholar of Kitab Jawi (Jawi literature),

the younger generation of Malays read and write in Rumi and many religious books are now written in Rumi. . . . Some Kitab Jawi are simply rewritten in Rumi without change, for example, Kitab Hikam [The book of laws] by Ibn 'Ata'Allah and Kitab Perukunan [The book on articles of faith] by Abd-al Rashid Banjar. 30

Fourth, the methods of teaching Islamic studies is still dogmatic and backward looking rather than forward looking. For example, philosophy, which was forbidden by Al-Ghazzali 900 years ago for reasons pertinent to his time, is still prohibited although circumstances have changed. Al-Ghazzali warned of the bad effects of philosophy for the reasons that it led some philosophers of his day astray from faith. But what is not emphasized is that he regarded the exact sciences such as mathematics, as very important, and he reproached ignorant Muslims who

30 Mohd Nor bin Ngah, Kitab Jawi: Islamic Thought of the Malay Muslim Scholars (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1983), vii.
condemned them. He believed that such prejudices injured Islam, which would be accused of supressing reason by denying scientific proofs.  

Even the sentiments of Ibn Khaldun that philosophy can do great harm to religion are echoed. This overlooks the fact that he also said that the science of logic "sharpens the mind in the orderly presentation of proofs and arguments so that the habit of excellent and correct arguing is obtained."  

It is very difficult for students of Islam to express their opinions freely especially when they are faced with apologetic defences based on such authority figures in Islam. Innovation is feared causing old inadequate methods of teaching to continue. For instance, memorization of the Qur'an and the Tradition is still predominant in Islamic studies. The objectives of teaching those subjects have to be reexamined. If the Qur'an and the Tradition are needed for deriving Islamic principles to be applied in solving problems, it of course will be faster to retrieve them from one's own memory. However there is nothing wrong if one retrieves the Qur'an and the Tradition from a book or a computer database that is now readily available. If the purpose is to preserve the Qur'an in its pure form in order to avoid fabrication then memorization of the Qur'an will be

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relevant. If memorization of the Qur'an is for the purpose of prayers, then a few short chapters of the Qur'an would suffice for the novice to memorize. What ought to be inculcated is love for the Qur'an so that the child will continue to read it on his own to quench his thirst for knowledge, guidance, and a spiritual communion with God.

Fifth, even if the proportion of time allocated to the intellectual and human sciences equals that of the revealed sciences, this does not mean that integration has been achieved. The dichotomy still exists. Science, which in Islam is believed to reveal many of the signs of God, His glory, and attributes is still taught separately from theology (tawhid) and the Qur'an. According to Ibn Rushd (Averroes), "knowledge of anatomy increases faith in God." The Islamic law of inheritance (fara`id), which involves ratios and proportions, requires knowledge of mathematics. Local and world history will provide a clearer context for the history of Islam. Islamic law, which is comprehensive, covering areas such as economics, health, social institutions such as marriage and the family, and crime, is maintained separately from those disciplines. Thus the

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33Although the Qur'an is not a scientific text, it does contain some interesting accounts of scientific phenomena. See Maurice Bucaille, The Bible, Qur'an and Science (Indianapolis, IN: American Trust Publication, 1979).

34Quoted in A. S. Tritton, Materials on Muslim Education in the Middle Ages (London: Luzac & Co. Ltd., 1957), 175.
curriculum must attempt to synthesize these dichotomies. In the same vein, the curriculum ought to be able to connect whatever is learned to contemporary situations and to other subjects taught.

Sixth, physical and health education, arts education, music education, and co-curricular activities are missing from the curriculum of the Islamic school system. These subject disciplines are important and their absence contradicts the Islamic philosophy of education which recognizes the physical, moral, and spiritual aspects of man. The condition of these disciplines is so poor that according to one Muslim scholar, "it would not be an overstatement to say that the field of art is a 'disaster area' today in Muslim education and Muslim life." Muslims have been taught to despise the arts, to regard poetry as mere play on words, visual arts as distractions from prayer and meditation, and music as stimulant to fornication. Contrary to the above teachings, the scholar argues that art has important functions to play in Muslim society, such as its ability to reinforce the message of tawhid (unity of God), to open the door to depths of meanings, to intuitions, which are difficult to achieve through discursive explanation, to provide psychological refreshment amidst the stress of daily living, and to contribute to the unity of

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Muslim lives by integrating leisure occupation, relaxation, and entertainments with other aspects of lives. Islamic arts also can aid in the Islamic education of children whether they are in Western nations or in the Muslim world.35

Seventh, the Islamic curriculum lags behind in practice and has over emphasized theory. Consequently it does not prepare its students for a wide variety of vocational skills. It resembles liberal education during the Western medieval period. Thus LEPAI and some other states religious departments have taken the right step by planning to have four streams of study in the upper secondary level as a step towards specialization. This also ensures that the fard kifayah sciences such as medicine, which are essential for the development of the community, are not neglected as they have been.

Eighth, pedagogical methods ought to be expanded in accordance to changing times. One noticeable feature of the Islamic school system is its under emphasis of critical thinking and creative intelligence. What transpires occupies the lower rung of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives for the cognitive domain, such as knowledge which includes recognition, or recall, and comprehension. Very little passes beyond these. It is rather rare that an exercise on applications, analysis, synthesis, and

evaluation are made.\textsuperscript{37} Even the various disciplines of Islamic studies such as ethics and history, require reflection and critical thinking. R. M. Hare, a well-known moral philosopher, argues that there are two levels of moral thinking: the intuitive and the critical levels. The intuitive level uses relatively simple principles which are insufficient, especially when confronted with a new situation. This is more so when the principles conflict. At this stage, critical thinking is required.\textsuperscript{38}

Although logic is taught in the Islamic school system, it does not seem to be effective. I concur with Wan Daud who says that Islamic education should include training in the task of thinking, even if it meant the teaching of philosophy. Philosophy should not be dismissed just because of its accidental effects that had caused furore among Muslim theologians in its history. It has to be recognized that the "development of the disciplines of jurisprudence, theology, ethics, history, and even mystical writings, is due to logical and philosophical thinking."\textsuperscript{39} According to Nasr, the teaching of Islamic philosophy is urgent because "it is the means of protecting the Truth (al-Haq) and


\textsuperscript{39}Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, The Concept of Knowledge in Islam, 107.
providing ways for repelling the attacks which are made against it from all sides." He even considered teaching Islamic philosophy a religious duty.\textsuperscript{40} The Socratic method of teaching should be encouraged in addition to the lecture method in order to develop critical thinking. Another pedagogical method that has not been well-utilized is learning by seeing and experiencing. This method can take the form of nature walks, field trips, and excursions to the actual scene to be learned. These activities are very stimulating and enjoyable for younger children. Older students also should have opportunities to participate in social or voluntary works that ought to be made as part of the curriculum. It is insufficient just to hold spiritual training camps, for all the theories learned have to be translated into action; faith and action go hand in hand in Islam.

Finally, the Islamic school system must find ways and means to provide incentives to students to specialize in Islamic and Arabic studies. It is not sufficient to argue that the reward will come from Allah in the hereafter. Students specializing in the revealed sciences should also be awarded scholarship for higher education locally and abroad, as do students in the natural and applied sciences.

\textsuperscript{40}Seyyed Hossein Nasr made a very strong case for the teaching of Islamic philosophy in his work, \textit{Traditional Islam in the Modern World} (New York: KPI, 1987).
The physical conditions of Islamic school need to be improved greatly to look attractive to parents and potential students. The security of jobs for graduates from religious schools is another matter that need to be looked into.

Summary

This chapter has highlighted the changes that have occurred and those that presently are taking place in the Islamic school system. The changes are not only structural, but, more significantly, are philosophical, which affects the content and methods of education. The Islamic school system has evolved from a simple Qur'anic class with the sole objective of literacy in the Qur'an and knowledge of prayer, to a secondary school system which is beginning to reexamine its philosophy to be in consonance with changing times and the Islamic philosophy of education. It aims to produce a good person who will have a balanced and holistic growth intellectually, spiritually, and physically. Thus all aspects of human nature are accounted for and developed. Education will assist man to fulfill his mission in life, which is to be a true servant and a vicegerent of God on earth.

This chapter reveals that the current content and methods of Islamic religious education in Malaysia have many shortcomings. There is still confusion over the definition of secular and religious subjects which leads to a narrowly
defined curriculum that omits the intellectual sciences. Discontinuity of education—the absence of a formal primary schooling—has led to poor foundational skills in Arabic in secondary education. There is ambiguity surrounding the purpose of teaching the Qur'an and jawi. Jawi is given priority over Arabic, which is the vital instrument in learning the revealed knowledge. The separation of theory and practice which resulted in the bookish content of the curriculum has very little practical or vocational skills to pass on. Pedagogical methods over emphasize authority, thereby, leaving inadequate room for the exercise of creative intelligence and critical thinking. There is little material incentive to attract students to specialize in the revealed sciences in comparison to the natural and applied sciences. Finally, the constitutional arrangement of state autonomy over Islamic religious education causes complication in effort to bring about changes to the curriculum.

The study shows that the most recent changes in philosophy of education is beginning to have an impact in the school curriculum. This reexamination of philosophy has been sparked by the formulation of the National Education Philosophy and the implementation of the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools by the Ministry of Education, which is the subject of the next chapter. The Islamic school system is currently going through a
transition, although not at a uniform rate. It is undeniable that LEPAI plays a significant leading role in the development and unification of the Islamic school system.
CHAPTER 7
THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM EXAMINED

It was seen in the last chapter how the Islamic school system has evolved from a simple to the complex system it is today. It also was shown how the content and methods of education in the system have changed. Some underlying assumptions, such as the secular nature of Western subjects and the equation of Islamic education with revealed but not intellectual knowledge were examined. In this chapter, I will examine the national education system for its philosophy, underlying assumptions, and presuppositions. I shall begin by examining the aims of education, followed by an analysis of content and methods for both primary and secondary levels. This examination will focus also on the aims, content, and methods of Islamic education in the national education system.

Aims of Education

The evolution of the philosophy of national education can be studied in three stages: (a) colonial or pre-Independence period, (b) from Independence to the Cabinet Committee Report of 1979, and (c) post-Cabinet Committee Report.
Colonial or Pre-Independence Period

It was shown in Chapter Three that the aims of education during this stage were to spread the Christian Gospel, to maintain political stability and the status quo by preventing "over-education," to provide basic literacy so the natives could be protected against petty swindlers, and to provide vocational skills especially for lower occupations such as the police force and junior clerical staff. Officially, the British intended to provide "the incalculable benefit of a sound, moral and liberal education" which was also purely secular, with religious instruction confined to voluntary classes.¹

Although the British stated that their intention was to provide a sound, liberal education, which would mean the development of the power of thinking, understanding, and judgment, this was not the case in practice. Instead they concentrated in the Malay Vernacular schools on basic literacy, local crafts and agriculture, and a sprinkling of subjects in the humanities. However, they did maintain the liberal tradition by offering liberal, English education for the leisure class or elites with the opening of the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar. The British had cultivated the Western liberal tradition in Malaysia with an elitist

¹Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council to enquire into the state of Education in the Colony (Woolley Report), 1870, in Wong and Gwee, Official Reports on Education, 14.
educational system that presupposed the dichotomy of theory and practice in education. They inculcated the notion that theory was for the elites and vocational skills for the masses.

The British succeeded in transplanting Western, secular education in Malaya by introducing Malay vernacular and English schools and by converting several Qur'anic schools into Malay Vernacular schools. Their secular educational attitudes, policies, and aims of education left a deep imprint on later educational policy in Malaysia.

*Independence (1957) to the Cabinet Committee Report (1979)*

Chapter Four indicated that in the second stage of educational development, education was geared toward two objectives. First, education aimed at achieving national unity through the establishment of a national system of education. The national system would have a common curriculum and Malay as the national language. Second, the goal of education was to produce skilled manpower for economic and national development. This was a continuance of the policy inherited from the British. This aim was heavily emphasized in the five-year Malaysia Plans beginning in 1966. The First Malaysia Plan (1966-1970) emphatically remarked that "unless the educational system is geared to meet the development needs of the country, there will be a misallocation of an important economic resource, which will
slow down the rate of economic and social advance.\(^2\) To achieve this goal, efforts were made to (a) provide educational facilities, particularly at the secondary level; (b) improve the quality of education and to spread educational opportunities to correct the imbalance between rural and urban areas; (c) diversify educational and training facilities, especially those relating to agricultural and industrial science and technology; and (d) accelerate teacher training in order to produce qualified teachers.\(^3\)

In the Second Malaysia Plan (1971-1975), which was implemented following the May 13, 1969 racial riots, national unity and integration became the overriding concern through the gradual implementation of Bahasa Malaysia (Malay language) as the main medium of instruction at the primary level in all English medium primary schools. The educational system was restructured toward science, mathematics, and technology-oriented courses to meet the demand for scientific and technical manpower. Educational and training opportunities for the Malays and other indigenous people were expanded to meet the long-term objective of a racially balanced employment structure. Curricular and extra-curricular activities were developed to


\(^3\)Ibid., 166.
inculcate discipline and social responsibility as well as to promote national identity and unity.

A survey of the Third through the Fifth Malaysia Plans reveal the same objectives for education. The Fifth Malaysia Plan (1986-1990) states that "the overall objective of education and training is to promote national unity." There was an increasing emphasis on science and technology-oriented disciplines to meet the demand of manpower for economic development.

Post-Cabinet Committee Report

In the third stage of educational development, there began an awareness that the educational system had been giving unbalanced attention to cognitive development through its concentration on academic and theoretical subjects. There was little room for affective or emotional development, or moral or ethical considerations, in the curriculum. Moral and spiritual values began to be recognized as important dimensions of a holistic human development. The Cabinet Committee Report of 1979 set new directions and dimensions for national education. Its review and criticisms of the educational system were comprehensive and led to reforms. As a result of the Cabinet Committee Report, the New Primary School Curriculum

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was drawn up and implemented in 1983, to be followed subsequently by the New Secondary School Curriculum in 1989.

The New Primary School Curriculum is based on the rationale that at this level basic education should be the thrust of education. Thus, the goal of the New Primary School Curriculum is "to help each pupil attain an overall and balanced development in the physical, spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional and moral domains." Its specific objectives can be grouped into three basic considerations, namely, communicative, man and his environment, and individual self-development. In the communicative area, the aims are to acquire a good command of oral and written Malay as the national and official language, English as the second language, and arithmetic or computational skills. The second concern aims at recognizing and understanding man and his environment—how they affect each other and therefore the need for interest and sensitivity towards the environment. The aim of the third concern, self-development, is to provide opportunities for individuals to develop their personal talents and potentials and inculcate interest in aesthetic and recreational activities within the context of the national

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An offshoot of this aim was the introduction of moral education for non-Muslim pupils, who up to this time had not been provided with any formal instruction in moral values. The freedom given to non-Muslims by the Education Act of 1961 to hold their own religious instruction after school hours had not been appreciated and utilized.

It was a significant move indicative of change when the Education Minister changed the name of the ministry from "Kementerian Pelajaran" to "Kementerian Pendidikan" in 1987. There was a rationale behind this move. Although both terms pelajaran and pendidikan translate into "education" in English, there is a conceptual difference. Pelajaran emphasizes instruction and teaching, while pendidikan is more comprehensive, covering the teaching of facts as well as moral upbringing. This change in the understanding of education was translated into the National Education Philosophy that was formulated in the same year.

The formulation of the National Education Philosophy was historic because up to this point a national philosophy of education never had been stated explicitly by the Ministry of Education. Whatever philosophy of education the nation had was derived from the nation's economic plans and political moods. This explains the utilitarian bias of the

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aims of education. The newly formulated educational philosophy states,

Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the society and the nation at large (emphasis mine).

This philosophy is considered timely in view of the fact that there is a growing concern that education has been too much focused on the cognitive domain at the expense of the affective domain, especially the moral and spiritual aspects. For instance, the Cabinet Committee Report (1979) recommended that the pool of manpower for national development be not only skilled and knowledgeable, but also disciplined, honest, and dedicated to their work. Workers not only should be efficient, but be able to think and act morally and ethically. The report complained of early streaming that occurred in secondary schools, resulting in

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early specialization and a rigid, compartmentalized vocational curriculum. It criticized the curriculum of technical schools for offering students little study of the social sciences. The Committee also criticized the Form Six curriculum that was so rigid that it did not allow students in the science stream to get exposure in the arts and humanities and vice-versa.

Examining the National Education Philosophy closely shows that it aims to produce a "good man," who is also a good Malaysian citizen. According to this philosophy, a good man must possess the following characteristics. He should

1. Have a firm belief in and obedience to God;
2. Be knowledgeable;
3. Possess living skills;
4. Possess high moral standards;
5. Be responsible to his self, society, and nation;
6. Contribute to the well-being of society and nation;
7. Have a balanced personality.

As a consequence of this fundamental change in the national philosophy of education, the New Secondary School Curriculum, which was to be implemented following the graduation of the first batch of New Primary School Curriculum pupils, was modified, renamed the Integrated

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9Ibid., para 211.
10Ibid., para. 77.
Curriculum for Secondary School (also known as KBSM), and implemented fully in 1989. The Integrated Curriculum contains the following principles:

1. Continuity of education between the primary and secondary schools;
2. General education for all students;
3. Subject disciplines;
4. Integration of the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical aspects;
5. Emphasis on values;
6. Upgrading the use of Bahasa Malaysia [Malay language];
7. Lifelong education.\textsuperscript{12}

The educational aims expressed in the three phases of development discussed above reveals the enormous transformation that has taken place in the national philosophy of education. It has evolved from a contorted Islamic philosophy of education, to a Western liberal and secular philosophy, and finally to a holistic philosophy of education including both modern and religious knowledge.

The educational reform spearheaded by transformations in the philosophy of education is attempting to remove secularization and its effects from national education.

The change in the direction of education resulting from the formulation of the National Education Philosophy also can be observed in the Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991-1995), which states that the thrust of education and training will be human resource development. It states further that education and training programmes will be expanded "not only

\textsuperscript{12}Curriculum Development Centre, The Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School, 3-4.
to equip individuals with the appropriate knowledge and skills but also to produce responsible citizens with strong moral and ethical values." Hence, for the first time moral and ethical values were stated as important in national economic development.

Content and Methods of Education

Primary School

To see the changes that have been made in the New Primary School Curriculum, it is necessary to look briefly at what was present before it came on the scene and then compare the two curricula (see Table 7-1). The New Primary School Curriculum is divided into two phases: Phase I for Standards I, II, and III, and Phase II for Standards IV, V, and VI. As can be seen in Table 7-1, the new curriculum strongly emphasises communicative and computative skills in Phase I. It gives importance to moral and spiritual development by increasing the time allocation for Islamic education (from 8 percent to 12.5 percent) and by introducing moral education for non-Muslim pupils (from 0 percent to 12.5 percent). The study of man and his environment has been reduced by about 5 percent and is delayed to the upper levels of the primary school. For the first time, music has been introduced as a formal subject.

Table 7-1
Proportion of Educational Components in the Old and New Curricula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Curricula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Old(%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Communicative Skills</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(languages and mathematics)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man and the Environment</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Science and social studies)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-development</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Arts, music and phy. ed.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic/Moral Education***</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:


*** Moral education was introduced only with the new curriculum.

In the New Primary School Curriculum, the emphasis in Islamic education is on competency in reciting the Qur'an and knowing basic information about Islam. The specific objectives are to learn Arabic alphabet; to acquire proficiency in Qur'anic recitation; to memorize and understand some short chapters of the Qur'an; to inculcate and understand the articles of faith—belief in God, His Prophets, the angels, the Holy Books, and the Day of
Judgment; and to learn and practice the pillars of Islam, in particular, prayer and its method. Proficiency in reading and writing jawi (Malay in Arabic script) is stressed.

Moral education for non-Muslims focuses on twelve values identified with religious traditions and universal norms. The objective of moral education is to produce students with good character who will make decisions responsibly based on individual, family, and societal values.

The subject of man and his environment covers the elements of geography, science, history, civics, health education, and similar things. It revolves around several themes such as the process of life in man, animals, and plants; adaptation to the environment; man's utilization of the environment for his livelihood as a trust and a responsibility; and the effects of interaction between man and man and man and his environment. Special attention is given to the Malaysian environment in order to inculcate understanding, appreciation, and love for the country and its diverse communities. Among the objectives to be achieved is acquisition and application of scientific skills such as objective empirical observation, inductive and deductive reasoning, and precise prediction in solving problems involving individuals, the communities, and the environment. Although the subject of man and his
environment has not been formally prescribed in Phase I, it is taught indirectly through subjects such as languages.

Music has been a controversial subject among a certain section of Malays since its formal inception in the curriculum. This group perceives music as forbidden (haram) by the Shari'ah (Islamic law), although there are differences of opinion about it among Muslim scholars. The aim of music education is for pupils to develop an interest in and appreciation for music, songs, and dances of the Malaysian culture. Specifically it is taught to enable pupils to recognize and read musical notes and terminologies and, later, to compose melodies according to their abilities. Arts education also is taught to sharpen visual and hand coordination skills; to appreciate the harmony.

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14Singing and music has been declared forbidden (haram) by some scholars because of its close association with drinking parties and night clubs. They state that singing constitutes the kind of idle talk mentioned in the Qur'an (31: 6): "But there are, among men those who purchase idle tales, without knowledge (or meaning), to mislead (men) from the Path of God and throw ridicule (on the Path)." Others forbade singing by women on the ground that women's voices are considered as forbidden. However, according to the jurist Abu Bakr al-'Arabi (1165-1240 A.D.), "No sound hadith [Tradition] is available concerning the prohibition of singing." Another jurist Ibn Hazm (994-1064 A.D.) says, "All that is reported on this subject is false and fabricated." The contemporary expert on jurisprudence (fiqh), Yusof al-Qaradawi states that Islam permits singing under the condition that it is not in any way obscene or harmful to Islamic morals. The subject matter of the song, the manner and occasion of singing, and its effect on singer and listeners' passion must be studied before permission is granted. See Yusof al-Qaradawi, Al-Halal wal Haram in Islam [The lawful and the prohibited in Islam] trans. Kamal El-Helbawy, M. M. Siddiqui, and Syed Shukry (Indianapolis, IN: American Trust Publications, 1980), 300-304.
existing in nature; for creativity; for aesthetic values; and to preserve, enrich, and appreciate Malaysian arts.

The method of teaching in the new curriculum emphasizes creating and reinforcing pupils' interests in all subjects so they are motivated to develop and continue their interests. In contrast to the old curriculum that was teacher-centered, and which limited pupils' participation to listening and observing, the new curriculum is supposed to be child-centered and encourages active pupil participation. The seating arrangement prevalent in the old curriculum, where pupils sat facing the front of the classroom, was changed. Instead, several groups of students of homogeneous abilities are formed within each class in order to cater for their differences, allow for more active participation, and teach cooperation. The image of the teacher as authoritative is to be transformed to that of a guide and coordinator. A new feature of the New Primary School Curriculum is its provision for enrichment and remediation programs for students who require them. An integrated approach where several common skills from several subjects are acquired simultaneously through the study of a single subject, is stressed in the curriculum.

Secondary Education

An examination of Table 7-2 shows that the Old Curriculum for Secondary School did not give adequate
## Table 7-2

Distribution of Subjects per Week in Lower Secondary National Schools under the Old Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject/Activity</th>
<th>Lower Sec.(%)</th>
<th>Upper Sec.(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Languages</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay &amp; English</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Education/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil's Own Language</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Science</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Science</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure Science</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicraft</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-vocational(one only)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music, Religion,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language,etc.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Pupil takes either geography or history.

Attention to moral and spiritual development. Only about seven percent of the teaching periods in secondary school were devoted to Islamic education, and no such amount of time was allocated to the moral and spiritual development of
non-Muslims. The curriculum heavily emphasized the intellectual sciences. Although it is not stated explicitly, the old curriculum for upper secondary schools did have a core. The core subjects were: Malay language, English language, Islamic education, civics, mathematics, additional science, physical education, and the co-curriculum (see Table 7-2, where these subjects are underlined. Provision for non-Malay pupils to learn their own languages was provided through the subject known as Pupil's Own Language, but only if there were at least 15 students and there was a request for it.

If the amount of time spent teaching a subject is an indication of its importance, then it seems odd that physical education (12 percent) was given more importance than Islamic education (7 percent). Arabic language was not offered at all. Students were exposed to only one form of vocational skill in the lower secondary, and this was discontinued in the upper secondary unless they went to vocational or technical schools. The arts stream seems more rounded than the science stream, which neither offers its students any vocational skills nor sufficient courses in the humanities (see Table 7-3). Thus the claim of early specialization is verified and the need for general education can be surmised.
### Table 7-3

**Distribution of Subjects According to Streams in Upper Secondary National Schools under the Old Curriculum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Streams</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Sciences</th>
<th>Core</th>
<th>Vocational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: An extrapolation from Table 7-2.

The Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools was designed to rectify these shortcomings. It also was designed to achieve the aims of the National Education Philosophy.

Changes in the curriculum for lower secondary school can be observed by comparing Tables 7-2 and 7-4. Notice that (a) history, geography, art education, and moral education have been added to the core subjects; (b) pre-vocational subjects have been maintained but transformed into living skills whereby students are exposed to all instead of only one skill within the three years; (c) civics has been omitted, but the integrated curriculum asserts that it is infused in all subjects; (d) the allocated time for physical education has been reduced by half, while that for Islamic education, science, and mathematics has been increased.
Table 7-4

Distribution of Subjects According to Number of Periods per Week at Lower Secondary National School in the Integrated Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>No. of Periods Weekly*</th>
<th>Percent*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay Language</td>
<td>6 (5 + 1 Literature)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>5 (4 + 1 Literature)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Education or Moral Education</td>
<td>4 (3 + 1 Practical)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical &amp; Health Ed.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* To avoid complication, only percentages and total number of periods for Malay students have been computed.

Besides introducing moral education and increasing the allocated time for Islamic education (see Tables 7-4 and 7-5), the Integrated Curriculum emphasizes the inculcation of universal values in all disciplines instead of confining it to only moral or Islamic education. It identifies 16 universal values that do not conflict with any of the religions, cultures, and norms of Malaysian society. They are: compassion/empathy, self-reliance, humility/modesty, respect, love, justice, freedom, courage, cleanliness of body and mind, honesty/integrity, diligence, cooperation,
moderation, gratitude, rationality, and public spiritedness. Similarly, the use of Bahasa Malaysia (Malay language) is to be upgraded as the language of learning and scientific intercourse. It is required to be taught across the curriculum, thereby making every teacher sensitive to its proper usage. The new integrated curriculum requires every discipline to use the National Education Philosophy as its frame of reference in forming its aims and objectives. Finally, the integrated curriculum gave an important boost to co-curriculum, which is to play a role in fostering relationships among students and between school and the local community.

The greatest flexibility of the Integrated Curriculum is in the content of upper secondary level (see Table 7-5). Besides having a common core of subjects, students are free to choose at least two electives and not more than four from any of the four groups—humanities, vocational/technical, science, and Islamic studies. However, one elective must be from group II (vocational/technical). This is to prepare students with a vocational skill. Thus, students preparing to specialize in the sciences can take further courses in the humanities or Islamic studies. For example, students preparing to specialize in the sciences do not have to take the science subject in the core requirement, but instead

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Table 7-5

Distribution of Subjects According to Number of Teaching Periods per Week in Upper Secondary National School Under the Integrated Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>No. of Periods Weekly</th>
<th>(% of core)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Subjects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay language</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Education/</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical &amp; Health Ed.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Arabic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elective</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group I</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay Lit.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Lit.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Educ.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add'l. Arabic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group II</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational/Technical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elem. Econ.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agric. Sci.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Econ.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add'l. Math.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mech. Eng.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Eng.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elect. Eng.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng. Draw.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng. Tech.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group III</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add'l. Sci.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group IV</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Qur'an &amp; Tradition</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Law</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Worldview</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

have to take all the subjects under Group III (science) plus additional subjects from the other groups. Similarly, those intending to specialize in Islamic studies do not have to take Islamic education in the core requirement but instead are required to take all subjects under Group IV (Islamic studies) plus additional subjects from the other groups. This flexibility gives students the opportunity to explore their interests and expand their horizons.

Comparison of Tables 7-2 and 7-5 reveals changes between the old and the integrated curricula for secondary schools. Moral education and history have been added to the core requirement. Moral education is compulsory for all non-Muslim students, and Islamic education is compulsory for Muslim students. The importance of history, especially in forging a united nation, is underscored by its addition in the core requirement. Communicative Arabic language has been offered as an additional subject, while additional Arabic language is offered under the humanities. However all the additional languages are optional and are offered only if there is sufficient demand and enough teachers to meet the need.

With the addition of the Islamic studies group, there are now four groups of electives (streams?) instead of the previous three. The addition of Islamic studies is significant because it enables students in national schools to specialize in Islamic studies in higher education. Until
now, only students from the 38 national religious secondary schools could specialize in Islamic studies. To date, 106 Islamic Stream Classes (Kelas Aliran Agama) have been introduced in the national secondary schools since the inception of the integrated curriculum.¹⁶

The aim of secondary Islamic education in the national system is similar to that of the Islamic school system. Its specific objectives are to (a) improve the skills of reciting the Qur'an, as well as its understanding, memorization, and internalization; (b) understand the concept of worship (ibadah) and enable students to practice it; (c) understand and reinforce the concept of tawhid (unity of God) and its implications in life; (d) understand and draw useful lessons from the Prophet's Tradition and life as well as that of his companions; and (e) inculcate good morals.¹⁷ Islamic education is divided into two major components: Qur'anic reading (tilawat al-Qur'an) and religious sciences (ulum al-shari'ah). The latter consists of faith (aqidah), Islam as a way of life (din), worship (ibadah), and Islamic history (sirah) and civilization.


In reference to methodology, the Integrated Curriculum exhibits an awareness that there is a great need for a higher level of intellectual development than there is at present. It admits that although the previous curriculum emphasized the cognitive domain, it was not balanced. The old curriculum emphasized only the lower rung of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives in the cognitive domain, such as knowledge of facts, memorization, recall of facts, and understanding. Very little exercise is given to cognitive skills at the upper levels, such as application, synthesis, analysis, and evaluation. The exercise of the lower rung does not produce a critical, innovative, creative, and an intellectual personality.

Therefore, the general method of the new curriculum is to avoid teacher-centered teaching, with students regurgitating just what the teacher says. It wants to avoid a one-way flow of ideas which creates a monotonous monologue. Another pitfall the new curriculum wants to avoid is excessive teacher authority which can stifle creative ideas because students do not feel it proper to express ideas that differ from that of their teachers. The new curriculum encourages discussion and inquiry. The approach is child-centered. Among the teaching strategies

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it proposes are role playing, simulation, discovery/inquiry, survey and questionnaire, discussion, Socratic method of questionning, and problem solving through the scientific method.

An important emphasis is on holistic teaching. No body of knowledge is considered independent and value neutral. Values, languages, skills, and knowledge cut across the curriculum, that is, they are infused in all subject disciplines. Hence, a teacher's role is more comprehensive and not confined to delivering a specialized body of knowledge.

**Analysis of the System**

**Aims of Education**

The aims of education in Malaysia certainly have evolved, climaxing in the formulation of the National Education Philosophy. This is laudable, for without an articulate philosophy the direction of education might change frequently according to the whims of the policy maker. Sometimes changes are for political or economic reasons, and the interests of the learners may be ignored. All educational curricula presuppose a philosophy or a theory. If the educational philosophy is implicit, its principles and policies cannot be adequately judged. According to Gutmann, "we cannot make good educational policy by avoiding political controversy; nor can we make
principled educational policy without exposing our principles and investigating their implications.\textsuperscript{19}

In an effort to understand the National Education Philosophy, a clear understanding of the phrase "based on a firm belief in and devotion to God" is crucial. Malaysia comprises several religious groups whose understanding of the concept of God differ.\textsuperscript{20} Muslims believe in the Unity of God, Hindus in its plurality, Christians in its Trinity, while Taoists and Buddhists do not believe in a transcendent Supreme Being.

Thus for the benefit of all Malaysians, the phrase "belief in and devotion to God" needs to be interpreted with some latitude. It must not be interpreted narrowly just to refer to the monotheistic God of the Muslims, for this would exclude adherents of other religious beliefs. Moreover, it would be contrary to the spirit of Islam to impose its principles upon non-Muslims, especially religious principles. In Islam there is no compulsion in religion. The Qur'an states clearly,


\textsuperscript{20} The statistics on the distribution of religion in Malaysia are as follows: Muslim 53\%, Buddhist 17\%, Confucianist 12\%, Hindu 7\%, Christian 6\%, Tribal/folk 2\%, other 1\%, and no religion 2\%. See Malaysia, General Report of the Population Census 1980, vol. 1 (Kuala Lumpur: Department of Statistics, 1983), 152.
Let there be no compulsion in religion; Truth stands out clear from Error. Whoever rejects evil and believes in God, hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And God heareth and knoweth all things.\(^{21}\)

A whole short chapter of the Qur'an is devoted to the matter of non-compulsion and tolerance in religion:

Say: O ye that reject Faith! I worship not that which ye worship, Nor will ye worship that which I worship. And I will not worship that which ye have been wont to worship, Nor will ye worship that which I worship. To you be your Way, and to me mine.\(^{22}\)

The Qur'an lays out distinct principles for religious teaching, which, instead of compulsion or force, should be done with wisdom, neither dogmatic nor offensive, but gentle and considerate. It states in a wonderful passage,

Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; And argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious; For thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His path, and who receive guidance.\(^{23}\)

Hence, there is sufficient evidence from the Qur'an to show that the phrase about belief in God stated in the National Education Philosophy need not be interpreted as implying exclusively belief in the monotheistic God of Muslims.

The phrase can be taken broadly to mean belief in a Supreme Deity that manifests itself differently in different

\(^{21}\)Al-Qur'an 2: 256.

\(^{22}\)Al-Qur'an, Chapter 109.

\(^{23}\)Al-Qur'an 16: 125.
religions. This understanding should take into consideration the adherents of all religions. Further, although these religions manifest themselves differently and subscribe to different doctrines, they have a common concern. Every religion has a fundamental moral core, with values such as love, justice, truth, and tolerance to guide its followers toward a good life. "Religion entails morality, and to give a person a religion includes giving him the appropriate moral training." It is the essence of religions to have an overarching belief, be it Allah, the Holy Trinity, Brahma, or whatever, that grounds the moral law. Actions in accord with these teachings are considered to be moral, otherwise they are immoral and sinful. Thus, by focussing on moral values, the interests of those who profess a belief in a Supreme Deity and those who may not are taken into consideration, for morality is needed by any person to live with others.

Perhaps the experience of the United States in translating the relationship between religion and morality in education may serve as a lesson. The identification of the core of religion itself as being essentially moral, and at the same time the impossibility of finding a common base

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24Edwin Cox, Problems and Possibilities for Religious Education (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1983), 90. This view is also true in Islam. According to Al-Faruqi, "In Islam, ethics is inseparable from religion and is built entirely upon it." See Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, Tawhid: Its Relevance for Thought and Life (Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations, 1983), 73.
for moral education that is agreeable to all religious believers, is why the United States "turned from religion to 'civic education' as the practical focus for moral instruction"—an idea that can be traced back to the ancient Greeks. 25 Similarly, as a nation with a pluralistic religious interest, it is proper to interpret the Malaysian National Education Philosophy to have moral concern as its focus for religious instruction--based on 16 values that have been agreed to by the different religious communities. The phrase "belief in and devotion to God" needs to be interpreted in the broader manner described above. In this sense, it can be argued that the National Education Philosophy is in accord not only with Islam but with other religious believers as well.

The aim of national education is to produce a good Malaysian citizen possessing a belief in God; knowledge; living skills; high morals; responsibility and contribution to self, society, and nation; and a balanced personality. Although the philosophy is aimed specifically at producing the Malaysian citizenry, it can be universally applied to produce a "good man"—independent of place and time. The aim does not contradict any of the Islamic principles of

education discussed in Chapter Five. The National Education Philosophy parallels the Islamic philosophy of education in its aim to develop all aspects of an individual—physical, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional—in an integrated and holistic manner.

The National Education Philosophy also agrees with the spirit of Islamic philosophy because it contains implicitly the fundamental goals of Islamic education—servantship and vicegerency. A close scrutiny of the National Education Philosophy shows that although these two concepts are not mentioned explicitly, their elements are present. The concept of servantship entails total submission and devotion to God and His commandments. This is entailed in the integrated development of the individual, especially his moral and spiritual development. The concept of vicegerency implies the responsibility of governing the earth in harmony and the maintenance of its prosperity according to Divine Will. The element of vicegerency is present in the National Education Philosophy in the phrase, "to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the society and the nation at large."

These two concepts, though not mentioned explicitly in the National Education Philosophy, are expressed distinctly as goals in the Islamic education component of the
Integrated Curriculum. The aim of Islamic education in the Integrated Curriculum is to develop a Muslim who is knowledgeable and a believer who performs good deeds, and possesses excellent moral character based on the principles of the Qur'an and the Tradition. This is in an effort to fulfill his role as a responsible and God-conscious (taqwa) servant and vicegerent of God (emphasis and translation mine). 26

I do not agree with Wan Daud who contends that although the National Education Philosophy does not contradict the spirit of Islam, it cannot be said to be Islamic because the concepts of servantship and vicegerency are not explicitly stated. 27 This is the closest the National Education Philosophy can get to an Islamic philosophy if we bear in mind the multi-religious and plural nature of the country. To have reached a consensus among the various communalities to develop a harmonious nation anchored in the belief in God and to state this intention explicitly in a national education philosophy is an achievement in itself, though there may be no explicit mention of these other concepts.

The National Education Philosophy for the first time makes the development of high moral character an explicit preoccupation of the educational enterprise. This might appear odd, since education always has been concerned with


27 Wan Muhd Nor Wan Daud, The Concept of Knowledge in Islam, 102.
values and character development, especially indirectly through the "hidden curriculum," that is, "the unplanned learnings of the school"\textsuperscript{28} or the lessons of history and literature. An explicit emphasis on good morals is not redundant, especially when one considers the overemphasis on intellectual training and the relative neglect of moral training. This aim of national education also concurs with the Islamic philosophy of education, which, as discussed in Chapter Five, gives important consideration to the development of moral excellence. In these many respects, the aims of the National Education Philosophy parallels the aims of an Islamic philosophy of education.

A close examination of the National Education Philosophy shows that it neglects the importance of national unity, which has been an uppermost concern of education prior to this time. It seems as if the formulators of the philosophy have forgotten the May 13 incident. Vision 2020, a guideline for Malaysian national development envisioned by Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, the prime minister of Malaysia, singles out national unity and the development of a Malaysian race as two of the nine challenges that have to be overcome before Malaysia can be an advanced nation.\textsuperscript{29}


\textsuperscript{29}Vision 2020 was officially announced at the opening ceremony of the Malaysian Trade Council on February 28, 1991. In his paper, "Malaysia: The Way Forward," the Prime
Racial polarization in Malaysia is still high and has not gotten any better. School children are segregated early in life through primary education, especially those attending national-type Chinese and Tamil schools, which use Mandarin and Tamil respectively as the medium of instruction. Increasingly, Malay children are beginning to attend Islamic primary schools set up by various Islamic organizations and the Islamic political party. The national primary schools have not been successful in drawing a majority of Chinese and Tamil children, whose parents feel that their children would lose their culture, in particular their language, if they attended these schools. There also is a tendency for Chinese students to continue their secondary education in "conforming schools," which are former national-type (Chinese) secondary schools that follow the policies of the Ministry of Education and are assisted by the government.

Minister announced his vision of a Malaysian model of development that would be unique and original without imitating the model of development subscribed by advanced nations of the G19 group (16 Western nations in the Northern Hemisphere, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan). The year 2020 represents the deadline for the realization of this vision and also the nature of this development--balanced and perfect--synonymous with perfect eyesight, 20/20. The Prime Minister outlines nine challenges to be met, viz., national unity; the creation of a Malaysian race; a Malaysian-styled democracy based on mutual consultation; an ethical and moral society; a liberal, matured, and tolerant society; a scientific and progressive society; a caring society; an economically equitable society; and an economically sound society that is dynamic and competitive. See "Keluaran Khas Wawasan 2020" [Special edition on vision 2020], Berita Harian, 31 August 1991.
Another source of isolation is the system of residential schools. Its rationale might be justified on the ground of affirmative action for the *bumiputra* (the indigenous people); however students in these schools do not interact with students from other ethnic groups. In general, students of various ethnic groups only begin to meet and socialize with one another in the secondary schools. The danger with these segregated schools lies in the propaganda diffused by teachers with extreme chauvinistic political beliefs. From sociological and psychological perspectives, these kinds of schools breed ethnocentricism and racial prejudice and therefore are unhealthy for national unity. I will discuss the resolution of this problem, among others, in the final chapter. But we should say here that it is a significant matter whose resolution could assist greatly in fostering national unity.

Our discussion shows that the National Education Philosophy is able to represent the interests of all Malaysian citizens regardless of race and creed. The presupposition commonly held by Muslims that the national education system is secular, that is, divorces religion from education, has to be reexamined. As we have seen in Chapter Six, this presupposition—which arose because of the confusion over the concept of secularization and development—is false. Islamic religious education has been provided in the national schools ever since the Education
Act of 1961, and today more time is being apportioned to religious and moral education than previously under the old curriculum. Moreover, with the integrated curriculum, all subject disciplines no longer are taught devoid of moral values. Hence, there is sufficient evidence that the National Education Philosophy captures the spirit of an Islamic philosophy of education.

Content and Methods of Education

In reference to Islamic education, the number of periods has been increased, and there seems to be an improvement, especially with the stress on practice in addition to theory. There is a significant addition of a section about the lives of great companions of the Prophet, Muslim compilers of Tradition, Muslim theologians and founders of the four legal schools, and Muslim scholars and philosophers, including those from the Malay Archipelago. The curriculum also includes a section on Islamic thought and civilization. The inclusion of three more Islamic education electives in upper secondary level is a positive step, for this is where further knowledge and understanding of Islam can be acquired. An interesting feature of Islamic education in the Integrated Curriculum is that it is taught in a fashion related to contemporary life. For instance, students are informed about the way zakat (tithe) collection is distributed in the country and how it benefits society,
instead of just learning about its virtue in an abstract fashion.

However, the same questions that were raised about the content and method of Islamic education in the Islamic school system, in particular the purpose of teaching Qur'anic recitation and the purpose of jawi instruction, still can be asked. It seems that the aim of teaching the Qur'an is primarily to know the Arabic alphabet and to acquire the ability to recite the Qur'an with proper intonation and melody (tajwid).

There is no effort to teach Arabic language in the primary school. Arabic is introduced only in the upper secondary level, and even there it is an optional subject depending on the availability of a teacher. This is inadequate for understanding the Qur'an.

Another issue that needs to be examined is the purpose of teaching and learning jawi (Malay language in Arabic script). The emphasis on jawi in the new curriculum is evident from the fact that it is taught from Standard One onwards as a component of Islamic education, and its use for writing and reading Islamic education texts is encouraged in class, in comparison to rumi (Malay language in Roman script). In fact, Islamic education textbooks for secondary schools are being printed solely in jawi, a change from the past when they were printed in rumi.
This circumstance promotes the misconception that equates jawi with Islam. Before the introduction of rumi, jawi was the only medium for reading and writing Malay. In Chapter Three, we saw that the Barnes Report (1949) proposed that jawi be dropped from the curriculum in order to avoid the difficulty it gives to non-Malays in learning the language. The report suggested instead that Islamic religious instruction be introduced and jawi be taught as one of its components, but not as the general medium for writing and reading the language.

Although the Malay language may be regarded as an Islamic language because it has adopted many Islamic/Arabic terminologies, and though Malay literature originated from the Islamic period in the Malay Archipelago and not from the Hindu period preceding it,\(^\text{30}\) that does not imply that jawi is Islamic and rumi is not, or that Islamic education should be taught in jawi. Therefore, jawi should be dropped from the curriculum and Muslim students instead should focus on Arabic language. Jawi could be taught in upper secondary level as an elective subject for those intending to specialize in Malay studies in the university.

In addition, as has been argued in Chapter Six, at the present time students are more familiar with rumi than jawi because of the widespread use of the former in printed

media. The requirement of reading and writing in jawi might hinder the learning of Islamic education among a large majority of students; might discourage interested non-Malays from participating in Islamic education at their own volition and taking it as an examination subject, as some have done in the past; and might become a barrier to national unity, especially if jawi is asserted in the printed media and in official government matters. It seems that the wisdom of the British during the colonial period in establishing rumi for use in official matters in order to facilitate communication among the various races has been forgotten. Instead, the British effort still is viewed by some scholars as merely an attempt to secularize Malay language and culture.

Another thing missing from Islamic education in the upper secondary curriculum is any discussion of science: its history, philosophy, and contemporary position from the Islamic perspective. Science is a crucial subject; it can help bridge the intellectual and the revealed sciences. It is particularly important for future religious leaders or scholars to understand science and scientific thought because many complex contemporary issues are entangled with science—such as babies born through in-vitro conception, surrogate mothers, genetic engineering, and environmental issues. I shall return to this matter in Chapter Nine.
Self-development also is an important consideration for primary education. Music and art are two important vehicles for achieving this. However, the stated objectives of music and art education in the New Primary School—the development of pupils' expressive talents and appreciation of Malaysian art, music, songs, and dances—fall short of meeting the objectives of music and art education in Islam or in the Western tradition. Rhythm and harmony are natural with children. It is important to inculcate grace, rhythm, and harmony, for it will make a child quick to perceive any defect or ugliness in art or nature. If this attitude is nourished, then the child will grow up with a noble character having an affinity for the Good and the Beautiful.\(^3\) Thus the love of beauty and aesthetics should be an important aim of music and arts education. This concurs with the Islamic principle stated in the Tradition that says: "God is Beautiful and He loves beauty."\(^2\) In this case, the appreciation of arts, songs, music, and dances will be universal and will not be limited to Malaysian culture. Properly inculcated, music and art can sharpen the child's perception and appreciation of beauty and the good.

\(^{3}\)For a discussion of the purpose of music education in Greek tradition, see Plato The Republic, tran. Francis Macdonald Cornford (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), Book III, Sect. 4, 400C-403C.

\(^{2}\)Sahih Muslim, 1: 164.
Art and music also train the physical senses to be sensitive to sounds and sights in nature. Through arts and music, the child can be taught to be sensitive to relationships existing in nature and the harmonious nature of the cosmos. Ultimately, art and music can draw children to the creator of this harmonious cosmos.

Moral and ethical concerns are important in the primary and secondary school curricula. Moral education should be taught with an emphasis on moral reasoning. However the present teaching of moral education is not satisfactory, and steps need to be taken to ensure it achieves its objectives. There has been a complaint that this subject is taught by teachers who are not qualified. They regard this class as similar to other classes and employ methods such as reading and comprehension of passages from a moral textbook. Another frequent complaint is the low value attached to this class by both teachers and pupils because it does not contribute to the determination of grades in public examinations. Thus, it is not uncommon that moral education class sometimes is replaced by an additional class for examinable subjects. Further, moral education classes are

scarcely well-supervised, nor are they subjected to any form of evaluation.\textsuperscript{34}

It is important to remember a few things for the successful implementation of moral education. There are two features of moral language—prescriptivity and universalizability—which "together will give us all that is essential to hold us in the path of morality which is sufficient to make life liveable with others in society."\textsuperscript{35} The prescriptivity of moral judgments means that one is supposed to act on them. Thus, moral judgments are not just ordinary statements of fact. Teaching a child morality is not like teaching the names of the states in the country. If a child adopts a certain set of moral principles, it is like adopting a way of life. A consequence of the prescriptivity of moral judgment is the notion that "nobody is likely to be much of a success as a moral educator if he is not himself trying sincerely to live up to the principles which he is advocating."\textsuperscript{36} Thus, the teacher's character is very important for the success of moral education. It also is essential for teachers to open communication with students. If students think that teachers have ready-made


\textsuperscript{35} R. M. Hare, Essays on Religion and Education (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 166.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 159.
answers that are not open for discussion, they probably will not write or talk about moral matters.

The universalizability of moral judgments implies their attachment to features of individuals and of their situations, not to individuals as agents. Thus, what is good for an individual must also be good for any similar individual in any precisely similar situation. This is similar to putting oneself in other people's shoes, "including the places where the shoes pinch them" (author's emphasis).

A consequence of this feature of morality is the ability to discern and discover the effects of our actions. "Moral education will be wasted if the products of it are so ignorant or so unperceptive that they do the most terrible things with the best of motives." This discussion demonstrates that the method of teaching moral education needs to be reexamined closely and teachers must be provided with proper training. Teachers must study moral philosophy themselves to gain experience in handling moral education classes.

Another concern about moral education is its segregation. The class is offered only to non-Muslims. This does not help in improving understanding and appreciation of values among the various communities and in overcoming prejudices. Muslim students also need moral

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37 Ibid., 166.
38 Ibid., 167.
education, as this subject can expand their horizons and develop the skill of using reason in making moral decisions and choices. Not every detail of life is given in the Qur'an and the Tradition, which offer general principles that are important as guides in living and as tools in analysing circumstances. But the final decision in any moral dilemma or choice depends on an analysis of the situation. The function of moral principles as instruments in moral decision-making is emphasized by the great American philosopher, John Dewey, who says,

> a moral principle, then, is not a command to act or forbear acting in a given way: it is a tool for analyzing a special situation, the right or wrong being determined by the situation in its entirety, and not by the rule as such (author's emphasis)."\(^39\)

This aspect of analysis has not been emphasized in the Islamic education curriculum.

The idea of integrating moral values "across the curriculum," in all studies, also is a positive step.\(^40\)

Traditionally education has been viewed as a moral enterprise with the transmission of societal norms and values uppermost. However, recently intellectual and moral training, acquiring information and growing in character,  


\(^40\) "Value across the curriculum" is the technical phrase for incorporating moral values in all subjects of the integrated curriculum. See The Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools, 3.
have been separated in schools. This, according to Dewey, is an expression of the failure to conceive and construct the school as a social institution. The study of the human and natural sciences still focuses on acquiring knowledge and material utility and neglects social ends and moral values. There is a need to break the barrier between the moral and the intellectual sciences, for both are needed to serve the purposes of knowledge acquisition, material utility, and moral and spiritual guidance. Further, with the great pace at which society is changing, moral knowledge needs constant revision and reconstruction. For example, until recently there was no such thing as a test-tube baby. When man acquires knowledge to produce such babies, a moral question is raised. Is it right or wrong to do so? Dewey is correct when he says that this constant revision "is one great reason why there is no gulf dividing non-moral knowledge from that which is truly moral."

Two fundamental values seem to be missing from those moral values prescribed for the curriculum: the love of knowledge and mutual discussion and persuasion. The love of knowledge has spurred man to travel far and wide and to study. From the Islamic perspective, God elevates those who

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42 Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, 282.
possess knowledge, and its pursuit is enjoined by the Prophet who calls for learning from the cradle to the grave and also encourages its inquiry even if it means going to Sinn (China). All civilization honors men of knowledge. Thus love of knowledge, its pursuit and its seekers, should be inculcated together with other values, especially if the nation wants to groom contributors to and not just consumers of knowledge.

Mutual discussion and deliberation is especially important for a democratic nation. Pupils need to be imbued with this value. It is essential for a multicultural and multireligious society to be able to come to a consensus on any issue through deliberation and democratic decision in order to avoid destructive conflicts. Therefore the curriculum should provide opportunities for pupils to exercise democratic decision-making.

Although the Integrated Curriculum aims to move from teacher-centered to child-centered teaching and to develop critical thinking skills and creativity, the nature of evaluation in the system does not promote developing these strategies and skills. The Malaysian education system is plagued with a "diploma" or "certificate" disease, which is

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43 See Al-Qur'an 58: 11, "God will raise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees) those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge," and 39: 9, "Say, Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?" In the Tradition, the Prophet mentioned China probably because of its distance and its advanced civilization.
the frantic chasing after paper credentials because of their value in getting employment and the prestige attached to them. Diplomas or certificates generally are awarded for achievements in the cognitive domain and through external examinations. Little recognition is given to excellence in the affective, moral, or social domain. There is a lack of the cultivation of the social spirit, and the nature of evaluation inculcates individual competition for external standing. The purpose and function of evaluation needs to be reexamined because it seems that evaluation is used more for the purpose of selection than for diagnosing shortcomings to be remedied.

Dewey's criticism of studying for a remote future and an external result, such as passing an examination, getting promoted, entering high school, or getting into college is relevant to the discussion. Dewey argues that such a motive results in habitual procrastination and false standards of judgment. He believes that remote success is an end that appeals to those in whom personal ambition already is strong, but not so much to those who lack it. According to Dewey, competition is least applicable in intellectual and artistic matters, whose rule is cooperation and

"For a discussion of the "certificate" and "diploma disease" and how it changes the notion of schooling for learning to schooling for certificating or credentialing, see Ronald Dore, The Diploma Disease: Education, Qualification, and Development (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976)."
participation. Thus the focus of study ought to be shifted from an absorption with personal materialistic desire to a service that is social and altruistic. Al-Ghazzali also criticizes the materialistic focus in studying. He believes that a student's purpose for studying should be the

adornment and beautification of his inner self with virtue, and at the end, nearness to God. . . . His aim should not be the attainment of authority or influence nor contention with foolish men and boasting before his peers.  

The preoccupation with external examination and remote aims and uses of studying has two devastating consequences. First, it has a tendency to stifle critical thinking and creative intelligence because students tend to devote their time and energy to preparation for examinations. Lessons are focused toward this end, and not much attention is given to matters beyond the scope of examination. Facts are memorized more than applied in life. Second, experience shows that electives or subjects that are not examined are the least attended to. Such is the case with Islamic and moral education.

Therefore, if the Ministry is serious about developing creative intelligence, it must revise methods of evaluation. The gravity of the situation can be gauged from the opinion

of a concerned mother, which appeared in a newspaper forum. She writes,

Even at the primary level we find instead our children suffering from examination pressure, examination fever and burnout. The notion of "learning should be fun" is totally alien to them. . . . We have been for too long an examination-oriented society and it has brought its toll on us and our children. . . . It's time to depart from the beaten paths. Yes, we need to explore the unbeaten paths where "evaluation is not to prove, but to improve.""^47

Summary

The discussion in this chapter reveals that the national education system is undergoing reform towards a holistic form of education. The National Education Philosophy certainly is useful in providing a direction for education in years to come. By a proper and broad interpretation of the conception of belief in and devotion to God as focussing on moral concerns, the Philosophy has considered the interest of Malaysians of all race and creed in its aim to realize a society with high moral standards. The secular nature of the national system slowly is being modified, and there are attempts at infusing values in all subject disciplines. The importance attached to affective and moral development is manifested in extended hours for Islamic education and the introduction of moral education.

The emphasis on a broader general education is giving more flexibility and choices in the upper secondary level. The need for vocational skills is met through a continuous vocational program in secondary school.

The new curriculum even has opened up opportunity for specializing in Islamic Studies through the national schools. It also allows Muslim students specializing in the sciences to take courses in Islamic studies. However this opportunity is not accessible to the whole of the Muslim student population. In addition, through the infusion of moral values in all subject disciplines, the dichotomy between the intellectual or nonmoral and the revealed or moral sciences will be reduced, if not totally eliminated. This will make it possible to educate Muslim professionals who also possess high moral standards and have strong faith. Similarly, it will be possible to educate non-Muslims who hold to the same moral values. It is uncertain, though, whether the curriculum can lay the basis for further religious--Islamic--study, given the poor foundation in the necessary study of Arabic language.

In general this study shows that the National Education Philosophy captures the spirit of the Islamic philosophy of education. The aims of education agree in three major respects--the integrated and harmonious development of all aspects of an individual, the special concern for producing
individuals of high moral standard, and individuals who can contribute to society and nation.

However the National Education Philosophy and the Integrated Curriculum are not without their shortcomings. Inadequate attention is given to national unity, which is vital for the survival of a multicultural nation. The value of mutual consultation and persuasion, which is necessary for decision-making and resolving conflicts especially in a multireligious and pluralistic nation is missing from the 16 moral values prescribed by the curriculum. Similarly, the value of love of knowledge, which could lead to academic excellence and knowledge contribution, also is missing.

Although the content and method of Islamic education have improved, they still are not completely satisfactory. The teaching of Arabic language, the Qur'an, and jawi need to be revised. Although Arabic has been introduced, it is not accessible to every Muslim student. The standard is low, and it is doubtful if the national education system can produce 'ulama (religious scholars) who can make ijtihad (independent judgment). The approach to teaching moral education needs improvement. The aim of music and art education, which is geared towards national pride and unity, should include aesthetic sensibility as well. Finally, although the curriculum aspires to develop critical thinking and creative intelligence, the method of evaluation does not encourage its growth.
CHAPTER 8
COMPATIBILITY OF ISLAMIC AND NATIONAL EDUCATION

In this chapter I will examine the similarities and differences between Islamic and national education, which have been presented and analysed in detail in Chapters 6 and 7. The purpose is to determine whether the similarities and differences are conceptual or practical and if the two educational systems are compatible. Once again, the examination will focus on the aims, content, and methods of education.

Aims of Education

Similarities in Aims Between Islamic and National Education

Interestingly, the philosophies of both educational systems—the Islamic and the national, are converging. I have shown in Chapter Seven that the National Education Philosophy captures the spirit of the Islamic philosophy of education which has been outlined in Chapter Five. Despite the ambiguity surrounding the concept of God in the National Education Philosophy, the aims of education of the Islamic and national systems now resemble one another closely.
The national school system is no longer secular-based, that is, it does not divorce religion and morality from education. The national school system now is more inclined toward moral values and this suits the Islamic system well. Both Islamic and national school systems hold that the development of moral excellence is vital. The seriousness of intent in the national system is manifested in the introduction of moral education for non-Muslim students, beginning from primary school and continuing to secondary school, and the increase in the amount of time allocated to Islamic education for Muslim students. The national system acknowledges that 16 moral values that have been derived from the great religious traditions in Malaysia are the subject of the moral education classes. Ethics (akhlqaq), a very important concern for Islam, always has been taught in Islamic education, and this includes the 16 moral values.

The importance attached to moral development in both systems parallels the importance of moral excellence as a goal of an Islamic philosophy of education. In fact, non-Muslim students have the freedom to acquire religious instruction, guaranteed under the Education Act 1961. However, there is a snag in this provision in that the instruction must be given outside of school hours and with no assistance from the government. Despite its nonsecular nature, the system does not compel anyone to subscribe a particular faith. This first similarity between Islamic and
national education is vital because a secular-based education has been one of the biggest difficulties Muslims have had with national education. This first commonly shared goal is fundamental and substantial. It is an important bridge for bringing the two systems together.

Second, both systems agree implicitly on the fundamental goals of servantship (abd) and vicegerency (khalifah). It was shown in Chapter Seven that despite not being expressed specifically in the National Education Philosophy, the elements of the two concepts nevertheless are present. Both systems are concerned that Muslims shoulder their fard `ain (individual) and fard kifayah (societal) obligations. This is expressed in the Islamic education curriculum of both systems. The goals of servantship and vicegerency are important for the development of the individual and his society. Agreement in these goals is vital because they form the cornerstone of Islamic education without which a synthesis would be almost impossible.

A third fundamental similarity in aims is the concept of a balanced development of the individual. Both the Islamic and the national school systems aim at developing all the potential of individuals in a balanced and harmonious manner. Both aim for the intellectual, spiritual, physical, and moral perfection of the individual. This philosophical goal rectifies past mistakes made in both
systems. The national system, being an extension of Western liberal, secular education, made an error in downplaying and even neglecting the spiritual and moral dimensions of man and overemphasizing the intellectual and physical dimensions. The Islamic system, which inherited its tradition of learning from Muslims in India and the Middle East during the period of the decline of Islamic sciences in the fourteenth century, made the mistake of confining learning to the religious, spiritual, and moral dimensions while neglecting the intellectual and physical dimensions. Thus, by paying attention to the highest possible development of all these intellectual, spiritual, physical, and moral faculties, both systems pay heed to a holistic human development, which is perfectly in line with the Islamic philosophy of education. Only by perfecting these faculties to their highest potential will man be able to perform in this world his responsibility to himself and his society—as a vicegerent of God. Similarly, only in this manner can man realize the height to which he can rise in the spiritual world and acknowledge his servantship to God and be able to perform his responsibility as a servant of God.

A fourth similarity relates to the process of education. Both the Islamic and the national systems advocate that education should be integrated and holistic. Moral values are integrated in the teaching of every subject
and are not confined just to the teaching of religious or moral education. Although this is a new idea in the national schools, it is not so for the Islamic schools. This concept of integrating moral values in every subject has been practised in the Islamic school system because of its religious tradition of education and its definition of a teacher. Education not only deals with the acquisition of knowledge but also with character formation. A teacher not only imparts information but also guides students to distinguish between right and wrong behaviors and attitudes.

An integrated approach also means that the teaching of various subjects is not compartmentalized but, rather, is inter-connected. For example, the study of the formation of limestone caves in physical geography is enhanced with some knowledge of chemistry. Similarly, the study of the revealed or religious sciences is not isolated from the rational sciences. For instance, in teaching the Qur'anic statement that "Glory to God who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they have no knowledge," the concept of positive and negative electrical charges, or the presence of pairs in living things, including plants, is brought to bear. Or the process can go in the other direction whereby Qur'anic principles are made manifest in the study of the rational sciences.

1Al-Qur'an 36: 36.
Integration also implies that there is integration of theory and practice in learning. Thus, the inculcation of the virtue of compassion can be accompanied by extra-curricular activities, such as visits to old folks' homes, in order to enhance its worth. Similarly, the relevance of whatever that is taught to contemporary living is shown. For example, in the teaching of hajj (pilgrimage), students can become familiarized with the Pilgrims' Fund and Management Board (LUTH) that is involved in its management and operation.

Fifth, both systems have grown more conscious of the need to develop practical skills in such areas as commerce, agriculture, industrial arts, and home economics. These skills are basic and are necessary for students to cope with daily life. These practical skills are taught in addition to theoretical instruction in other subjects. The latter is useful for those who will be continuing further into higher education and will become specialists in their respective areas. Vocational education is important because it provides students with skills and knowledge that they can use for their own and for societal development. Without these tools, students might become a burden to society once they leave schools. It is not true that by having vocation as an aim of education one puts utilitarian values above all other values in the system. This might be true only if this end is overemphasized at the expense of other equally
important aims of education, such as the development of moral excellence.

Nor is it true that consideration of utility in drawing up an educational plan is an unIslamic idea. The importance of work or a vocation to a Muslim is exemplified by the Prophet who taught that the whole of man's dignity is tied up with his work—any sort of work—and that real disgrace and humiliation comes from dependence upon others for one's living. Something as important as this should not be left to mere chance. It is essential that the school system also prepare its graduates for a livelihood.

Thus, both the national and Islamic school systems plan to expand career or vocational education to include careers related to all of man's knowledge—the revealed sciences as well as the humanities, the social, the natural, and the applied sciences. This is a great improvement over the past when the national school system prepared students only for occupations related to the rational sciences and the Islamic school system prepared its students only for occupations related to the revealed sciences. Hence, the allegation in certain quarters in the past that the national system is too utilitarian because all it cares for is the development of

\[ ^{2}\text{In a Tradition reported by Bukhari and Muslim, the Prophet said, "It is better that a person should take a rope and bring a bundle of wood on his back to sell so that Allah may preserve his honor, than that he should beg from people, (regardless of) whether they give to him or refuse him." Quoted in Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, Al-Halal Wal Haram Fil Islam [The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam], 127.}\]
manpower for economic growth no longer holds true. Similarly, the allegation that the Islamic school system is not at all concerned with vocations other than religious vocations is no longer true, especially when its philosophy of education and curriculum closely resemble what has been formulated by LEPAI (The Advisory Council for the Coordination of Islamic Education).

Sixth, both the Islamic and the National Education philosophies regard education as a lifelong process, beginning from the cradle and ending only with the grave. Access to formal education is provided to everyone until the end of secondary school. An important aim of education is to inculcate the attitude that education and the pursuit of knowledge must continue even after leaving school, whether the child terminates his formal education at the end of secondary or tertiary education. This is an improvement over the past practice of terminating a child's education at the end of lower secondary if he fails in certain subjects in the public examination.

Finally, both systems of education do not give sufficient attention to the issue of national unity in their aims. National unity is not stated explicitly in either educational philosophies, although music and arts are taught in the national system with the explicit aim of raising national pride and for self-development. National unity is
a vital matter because communal instability can threaten the nation.

The above discussion reveals important and substantial similarities between the national and Islamic school systems with regard to their educational aims. Common aims are crucial in forging a common foundation for further construction. They form strong arguments for the viability of a synthesis. The agreement of aims of education is the most important step in moving toward this direction.

Differences in Aims Between the Two Systems

Still, there is at least one great difference between the two systems that needs to be deliberated in the open. In the Islamic school system, the principles of education are based on the doctrine of the Unity of God (Tawhid). This unity pervades in all spheres of Islamic education--its concept of knowledge and the curriculum. However, the national system is ambiguous on this point. It does not elaborate the conception of God that is the foundation of its philosophy. As discussed in Chapter Seven, this can be problematic, since non-Muslims in Malaysia are a mixed group with respect to religious beliefs--Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Confucianists, and Taoists. This matter has to be clarified by the formulators of the National Education Philosophy. However, it has been proposed in Chapter Seven, that a broad interpretation of the conception of God as a
Supreme Deity which manifests itself differently in
different religions may be used to accommodate the various
beliefs of all Malaysians.

The second main difference between the two systems lies
in the absence of formal primary education in the Islamic
school system. Formal Islamic primary schools are available
only in a few states such as Selangor, Johor, and Melaka,
and even there they are supplementary, indicated by the
length of school day. Even though the Al-Qur'an and Fard
`Ain Classes (KAFA) have been planned throughout the nation
for all Muslim children in primary school age, they are
still supplementary, and until today they have not been
implemented. This absence of a formal primary school system
is inconsistent with the idea of education as an ongoing
process. The supplementary nature of primary Islamic
education creates several major problems, discussed in
Chapter Six, such as the misconception that Islamic
education is concerned only with the hereafter and forcing
the child to stay too long in school.

The idea that education is an ongoing effort and a
continuous process is marred also in the case of the Islamic
school system by the presence of only a limited number of
tertiary institutions offering specialization in Islamic
studies. This situation is peculiar, considering that the
National Education Philosophy aims to produce a nation of
believers. Here an inconsistency exists between theory and
practice. It seems the National Education Philosophy is meant only for primary and secondary education and not for tertiary or higher education. If that is the case, then it should not be called a National Education Philosophy. What would be consistent with this philosophy would be the offering of revealed knowledge on a higher intellectual level as electives and as a core in all tertiary institutions. Obviously, to be able to present this knowledge in depth, there needs to be specialists who are gathered into a faculty of Islamic studies. Presently only three of the seven universities in the country have faculties of Islamic Studies or Revealed Knowledge. The lack of places for higher education, the love of knowledge, and its necessity for the Muslim community oblige the Islamic school system to prepare its students for study abroad in the Middle East.

This inconsistency is not fundamental and could be remedied. There are two ways to go about it. If a separate system is to be maintained, then proponents of Islamic education will need to establish their own primary school system in all the states. Alternatively, and a better plan if integration is sought, the present national primary school system should be adopted by Islamic schools with

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3The University of Malaya has an Islamic Academy, the National University has a Faculty of Islamic Studies, and the International Islamic University has a Faculty of Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences.
some slight modifications in the curriculum, as will be discussed in Chapter Nine.

The above discussion shows that there are similarities and differences in the aims between the Islamic and national systems. There are fundamental conceptual and philosophical similarities, but no great differences of this nature. The differences arise mainly from the implementation of the aims, and could be remedied.

Content of Education

Similarities in Content Between the Two Systems

With respect to Islamic education, since there is only supplementary primary or elementary education in the Islamic school system and the availability varies according to the states, there is very little that can be compared at this level. Whatever is taught at this level in the supplementary Islamic primary school is done to reinforce the Islamic education curriculum of the national primary schools. Thus, in this respect the contents of the Islamic education curriculum at the primary level in the national and supplementary Islamic schools overlap. They overlap in their emphasis on the teaching of Qur'anic recitation, memorization of short chapters from the Qur'an, the pillars of Islam such as prayers and fasting, and reading and writing in jawi.
Comparison at the secondary level is more relevant because the Islamic secondary school system is formal and full-time and not supplementary. First, both the Islamic and national systems bear a similarity in teaching core components of revealed knowledge. Both systems teach the Qur'an (tajwid and tafsir—recitation and interpretation), the Tradition (hadith), Islamic law (figh and shari'ah), history (tarikh), ethics (akhlaq), and theology (tawhid).

At a slightly higher level, in the secondary school, there is an option to study principles of law (usul al-figh), science of the Tradition (musthalah hadith), and history of jurisprudence (tarikh al-tashri'i). However, this opportunity is limited in the national school system. Only students in the national religious secondary schools (NRSS) and the special Arabic stream classes (KAA) have access to such options. In addition, students from Islamic schools are exposed to a greater depth in all the revealed sciences, since they have been allocated more time. For example, the national schools allocated only four periods a week to Islamic education at all levels, while the Islamic schools allot between seven and 14 periods weekly, increasing as the level rises (see Tables 6-2, 6-3, and 7-4). Even under the revised curriculum drafted by LEPAI, Islamic education is allotted an enormous time—12 periods weekly (see Table 6-5).

The second similarity in content is the teaching of Arabic language in both systems. This is something that
just recently has been introduced in the national secondary school system and is not yet widespread. Arabic language is offered only when there is a strong request for it. An exception is for students in the national religious secondary schools and the Arabic stream classes who are provided instruction in Arabic from their first year. However, the contrast between the number of periods allocated for Arabic in the two systems is great: eight periods a week in LEPAI curriculum and three periods a week in the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools.

Third, there is a similarity between the two systems in the content of natural and human sciences, especially for Islamic schools adopting LEPAI's curriculum. With LEPAI's curriculum, both school systems teach mathematics, science, living skills, and history in lower secondary as part of the core subjects. In both systems, almost an equivalent level of Malay and English languages are taught. In the upper secondary, both systems offer compulsory core subjects and four electives: humanities, vocational or technical, science, and Islamic studies.

Islamic schools are able to provide more periods for Islamic studies and Arabic language in lower secondary because of the omission of arts education, physical and health education, and geography and the reduced time for mathematics and science (see Tables 6-5 and 7-4). By omitting physical and health education, the Islamic school
system contradicts its philosophy that gives importance to physical development of the individual. It has not lived up to the Tradition which states that God prefers the healthy Muslim to the sickly one. It also has not responded to the idea that a healthy mind comes from a healthy body.

The omission of arts education in the Islamic school system also is a pity because Muslims have been known for their beautiful arts and architectural designs such as the decorated walls and floors in the Alhambra in Spain, the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, and the Taj Mahal in India. These beautiful arts and designs have not escaped the attention of Western artists; the famous European artist, M. C. Escher, praised their brilliance. He admits that the Moorish work "is the richest source of inspiration that I have ever struck; nor has it yet dried up."^4

Several reasons could be given for the omission of arts from the curriculum. It might be due to the misconception that all drawings are forbidden in Islam.5 The omission of arts also might be caused by the belief that arts are not important in education and do not contribute anything to a child's development. Therefore, given the constraint of


^5There is a good discussion on the issue of paintings and one-dimensional ornaments in Islam in Qaradawi, Al-Halal wal Haram fil Islam [The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam].
time, it might be argued that nothing is lost if art is not taught. Or this omission might be due to the belief that arts in Islam consist merely of Arabic calligraphy and that the different forms of calligraphy already have been taught within the subject of Arabic language.

The reasons given above are misconceived. Art is important in the curriculum for the same reason that music is. Studies show that art can refine a child's sensibility and aesthetic perception. It also trains a child's visual perception to be sharper. Art is useful because it refines aesthetic sensitivity and is important in developing a moral person. It has been argued in Chapter Six that art is equally relevant and important in the Islamic tradition.

A fourth major similarity in content between Islamic and national school systems arises from the philosophy that gives considerable importance to the cultivation of moral virtues. In both systems, Islamic ethics are taught as a component of Islamic education for Muslim students, and for non-Muslims moral education is taught formally in the national system. In the Islamic school system, ethics always has been taught in an integrated manner based on the

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Qur'an and the Tradition. It has been taught especially through the study of Prophet Muhammad who is regarded as the model of a perfect man, endowed with fine character and praised highly by God in the Qur'an. Ethics are learned through history, in particular that of prophets, and through direct ethical injunctions found in the Qur'an and the Tradition. In the national school, on the other hand, moral education is taught with a special focus on 16 values that are considered to be universal and are derived generally from the religious traditions of the country. Good morals are learned as lessons drawn from stories written or extracted from cultural traditions, specifically to highlight these moral themes. However, neither system gives sufficient importance to two fundamental values necessary for cultivating knowledge and freedom of opinion: the love of knowledge—its pursuit and respect for its seekers—and a democratic means for reaching decisions.

Finally, none of the systems offers any specific subject that promotes cultural and religious understanding between students. A subject of this nature will clarify racial or religious prejudices and broaden students' views of other cultures and religions. It can foster national unity. The closest subject that plays this role is moral education; it discusses moral values from various cultural and possibly religious perspectives.
Differences in Content between the Two Systems

The major difference in content between the national and Islamic school systems is the inequitable amount of time allocated to Arabic language and Islamic studies, on the one hand, and the natural and social sciences, on the other hand. In the Islamic school system, Arabic is taught intensively because of its necessity as a foundation for specialization in Islamic and Arabic studies at the tertiary level. Students are expected to do Islamic and Arabic studies completely in Arabic in Form Six. Only with intensive Arabic within a short period of time will pupils be proficient in the language. However, with so much time spent on Islamic and Arabic studies, there is little time left for teaching the rational sciences, especially, the natural sciences. In contrast, the national school spends only a short amount of time on Islamic studies and sometimes none on Arabic. Most of the time is devoted to study of rational subjects.

Thus, the content of education in both systems reveals many similarities and only a minor difference which should not hinder efforts towards a synthesis.

Methods of Education

The methodology of teaching in both the Islamic and national systems share many similarities. I have shown in Chapters Six and Seven that both systems neglect thinking
skills and creative intelligence. In the past, both systems were strictly teacher-oriented. Teachers wielded great authority and students were passive receptacles of factual knowledge. This practice stifled independence and creative thought. With the new emphasis on individual self-development that arose from the National Education Philosophy, more attention now is centered on children's interests and abilities.

The teacher's role also has shifted under the National Education Philosophy to that of being a facilitator in learning and a moral and intellectual guide. However, many teachers still find it difficult to change from the old, set ways on the pretext that new approaches such as the "discovery" method require more time before the specific behavioral objectives can be attained. They argue that given the amount of material to be covered in the syllabus and the efficiency of the old method, direct imparting of knowledge is better. This change in teaching strategy is most difficult for those teaching revealed sciences because they have been among the most authoritative teachers. However, thinking skills are necessary for new and bold discoveries in the natural sciences and for solving social, political, and economic problems within a society.

The methodology of teaching Islamic studies in both Islamic and national systems also Shares many similarities. Both systems suffer from similar weaknesses in the teaching
of Islamic studies. The situation is better in the national school because almost all of the teachers are professionally trained. Among the weaknesses, in addition to an overemphasis on memorization which is beginning to change, in that Islamic studies often are taught in isolation from their contemporary relevance and separated from the intellectual sciences.

Another weakness in the methodology of Islamic studies, which also is prevalent in the methodology of the human sciences, is the underutilization of studying by experience or by travel. The bookish tradition still is believed to be superior, which is easy to understand given an elitist educational tradition. Study by making short field trips to local points of interest, such as a bakery, post office, rubber estate, sawmill, and bank, seldom is considered. The national system is a little better than the Islamic system in this respect because it encourages some co-curricular activities that support learning by direct experience. The disinterest in employing the approach of direct experience in learning contradicts its enjoinder in the Qur'an which has been outlined in Chapter Five.

The methodology of teaching Arabic language in both systems is another matter of concern because there has been frequent complaints about its teaching. The rate of passes in Arabic language examinations is low. The Qur'an is not integrated with the teaching of Arabic language in order to
avoid duplication. The approach of spelling and reading Arabic and Qur'an is very traditional, beginning only after all 28 letters of the alphabet are recognized. This is the approach adopted in the popular method that employs the Muqaddam, a classical text used in teaching the reading of the Qur'an among young children. A simpler and more efficient method needs to be found. It is ironical that although teachers and Arabic scholars are dissatisfied with this method, they have not been innovative and children are still taught in the old manner.

The methodology of teaching moral education and Islamic ethics suffers from similar weaknesses. It was shown in Chapter Seven that the teaching of these subjects appears to be like the teaching of other subjects, with the objectives of imparting information rather than discovering moral principles to act upon. The approach is along the line of reading comprehension instead of discussion involving original thought.

Finally, there is a big gap in the teaching of science between national and Islamic schools. It is more advanced in the former than the latter. The Islamic schools lack proper laboratory facilities and scientific equipment. More

8The Muqaddam consists of two parts. The first part consists of the Arabic alphabet and its nunation system, words and phrases for drills in correct spelling, nunation, and reading. The second part is the thirtieth section (iuzu') of the Qur'an that contains short chapters and are included for exercise in reading.
importantly, they lack good science teachers. Thus it sometimes happens that science is taught by simply imparting information without students conducting any experiments themselves. The neglect of science teaching reflects the attitude of the institutions toward science.

The discussion of methods of education in this section indicates that they do not pose any serious threat toward a synthesis of the two systems. Both systems share similar weaknesses rather than differences. These weaknesses need to be overcome, and some suggestions for doing so will be proffered in the next chapter.

Summary

In this chapter I have analysed the similarities and differences in aims, content, and methods of education between Islamic and national education systems. The study concludes on an optimistic note about the compatibility of the two systems.

First, the study has found many similarities in the most crucial factor, which is the aims of education. Both systems are found to: (a) be moral-based; (b) agree on the goals of servanthood and vicegerency; (c) emphasize a balanced and harmonious development of individuals—spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, morally, and physically; (d) adopt an integrated and holistic approach; (e) give attention to the vocational aim of education; (f)
regard education as an ongoing process; and (g) neglect national unity as an important aim of education in the Malaysian context. Conversely, there are two major problems with the aims of education. One is that the Islamic school system is inconsistent in its goal of continuity of education. Formal primary schooling is absent from the system and tertiary education is weak. Another problem lies in the ambiguity over the concept of God in the National Education Philosophy. However, it has been shown in Chapter Seven that both problems could be resolved in the interest of a unified system of education.

Second, the study has found major similarities in content between the two systems. They both teach Islamic studies and Arabic language, the natural and social sciences, and moral education or ethics. However, they differ in the distribution of these subjects. Both systems subscribe to the concept of integration, which is the infusion of moral values, knowledge, and skills across the curriculum and the teaching of all subjects as interconnected, in contrast to being compartmentalized. However, both systems seem to be missing two fundamental values--love for the pursuit of knowledge and a democratic means of problem solving.

Third, the methods of education utilized in both systems also reveal many similarities, especially some common weaknesses. Both systems suffer from the
impoverishment of the development of thinking skills and creative intelligence and weaknesses in the approach to teaching Islamic studies and moral education.

The compatibility of the two educational systems give hope for the possibility of a synthesis. In the next chapter, I will explore that possibility and examine its implications on pedagogy, curriculum, and administration.
CHAPTER 9
A SYNTHESIS AND IMPLICATIONS

At this juncture, the study indicates that there is a possibility for a synthesis between Islamic and national education. This optimism is based on the fact that the aims of the two systems are compatible. It was shown in Chapter Eight that there are many similarities in educational goals, curriculum, and instructional method, and only few rather minor differences that can be reconciled. I have shown these differences to be differences in approach towards the same ends or the result of inconsistencies between theory and practice. Methodology is the smallest barrier to a synthesis because both systems suffer from the same kind of weaknesses and need similar improvement. In this chapter I will explore the possibility of a synthesis between the two systems and discuss the implications such a synthesis may have for curriculum, pedagogy, and school administration.

A Synthesis of the Two Systems

A synthesis of the two systems will be possible if the following matters are considered carefully. First, although the National Education Philosophy has clearly expressed the individual and social ends of education, it still needs to
be explicit in its interpretation of the most crucial point, "belief in and firm devotion to God." This phrase has to be interpreted more clearly and be more acceptable to Malaysians of all backgrounds—race, religion, and culture. Religion is a vital matter because Malaysians profess a variety of religious beliefs with varying conceptions of God. It thus is proposed that the phrase "belief in and firm devotion to God" which forms the basis of the National Education Philosophy, should be interpreted to be concerned with ethics. Basing the philosophy on ethics should not run counter to religious philosophies since ethics is the moral equivalent of religion.

With this interpretation, the National Education Philosophy should then be acceptable to all Malaysians, for it bears educational principles and goals that are consistent with the principles and goals of an Islamic philosophy of education. The philosophy also is well-suited for a multiracial and multireligious nation. It considers two major concerns of Muslims—rejection of secularism in education through its concern for ethics, and the achievement of fundamental goals of being servants and vicegerents of God. The philosophy also weighs the concern of non-Muslims for a holistic development. In some multicultural nations such as the United States, democratic education is seen as a means of national integration. An holistic education based on ethics has the potential for
being another means to a multicultural society, which yet has to be achieved in Malaysia.

Second, consistent with the spirit of the National Education Philosophy that aims to produce a nation with high moral standards, religious or moral education needs to be provided for all Malaysians. Islamic education should continue to be provided for Muslim students as traditionally has been done, and moral education, highlighting 16 universal values that have been identified in the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School should be provided for non-Muslims. There should be flexibility in the teaching of religion where the non-Muslims are concerned. They should be provided the facilities and the staff for their religious education if it is desired. Morality should not be the concerned of religious and moral teachers only, and its emphasis should not be confined to religious and moral classes only. The method of integrating values in all subject disciplines is important to ensure the attainment of a high moral standard. This method also will ensure that the intellectual sciences and the moral/revealed sciences are not separated.

Third, to foster national unity, a subject should be offered where students from various races and religions can meet to discuss and deliberate on ethical issues such as those related to the use of drugs, drinking alcohol, and corruption. This can sharpen their minds and help in
understanding other cultural values. This subject could be moral philosophy or comparative religion. In addition, students also should be taught Malaysian history and Western culture and civilization as a means for understanding their own culture and national life. Western culture and civilization have been dominant for years, and students will continue to face it in years to come. Although some Muslims may oppose this idea because of an anti-Western attitude and ethnocentricity, they should be persuaded that even their great Prophet Muhammad urged his followers in the seventh century to seek knowledge even as far as China, which was and still is a non-Muslim nation.

The fourth pertinent step that can help bring about a synthesis is the improvement of the Islamic education curriculum in both systems, which still suffers from many shortcomings. Similar to moral values, Islamic education needs to be taught in an integrated manner. It needs to be integrated with other subject disciplines and be related to contemporary events. For an understanding of the development of thought in Islamic civilization, the history and philosophy of science from the Islamic perspective needs to be introduced into the curriculum.

The inequal distribution of revealed and intellectual sciences in both systems can be resolved if Arabic language is taught beginning in the primary level and continued through the secondary level. What is required will be the
integration of the teaching of Qur'an with Arabic. It is not necessary for the curriculum to ensure that all 114 chapters of the Qur'an are read in school. According to Taha Jabir, an eminent contemporary Muslim scholar of jurisprudence (fiqh), jurists agreed that understanding and contemplation with little reading is better than much recitation without thinking or contemplation. By contemplation is meant reciting the verse, reviewing it, dwelling on its meanings in an attempt to know all the possible meanings it contains, and allowing one's thought to wander freely and unh hampered through it in order to arrive at the hidden meanings that Allah reveals to certain people of intellect and understanding.

The most important development the school can offer is the ability to read, write, and understand the Arabic language. Then students will be on their way to Qur'anic literacy. They will definitely love to read something that is meaningful and useful in their lives.

The large amount of time spent in Islamic studies in the Islamic school could be reduced if there is less repetition of the same materials, especially between primary and secondary levels, which is done on the assumption that children still cannot read the Qur'an or do not know how to pray. If the ability to read the Qur'an and to pray is not

2Ibid.
learned at the primary level, then the methodology of teaching must be investigated for its weaknesses. With lesser time needed for Arabic and Islamic studies in the core curriculum in Islamic secondary school, more time could be expended for general science and mathematics. Also, art education and physical and health education could be put back into the curriculum of the Islamic school. In this way the curriculum would be more balanced and would enable students to specialize in other fields and develop their personal interests.

Fifth, the main feature of the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School and the planned LEPAI curriculum that provides for a core requirement and electives ought to be supported and maintained. However, implementation of all four electives in upper secondary level, in particular the Islamic studies electives, must be made more accessible and equal opportunity must be given to all interested students. In the present set up, the Islamic studies elective is limited only to students in national religious and state Islamic secondary schools. This feature of the curriculum is important because it delays specialization and allows a wider latitude for exploration than in the previous curriculum. This is specially significant for those wishing to specialize in Islamic studies and Arabic language. Delayed specialization will help to avoid poor decision making by parents and students. This curriculum also offers
students a broader option for specialization, four major electives rather than the previous two in the case of Islamic schools.

Sixth, music, arts education, and physical and health education must be considered important parts of the curriculum, especially for self-development. The present objectives of teaching these subjects emphasize the appreciation of national cultures and pride more than anything else. The objectives should be oriented to achieve a more universal goal—refining aesthetic sensitivity, which also can help in moral development. If this goal is emphasized, then its inclusion in the curriculum will meet less objection from certain sections of the Muslims who misconceive Islam as forbidding art and music.

Finally, there is a concern in both systems for a greater opportunity to develop thinking skills or higher cognitive skills and creativity. To guarantee the right climate for the cultivation of thinking skills and creative intelligence, a change is needed in the system of evaluation that has been practised in the country. The present mode of evaluation is fit for an elitist system where the purpose of examinations is to weed out rather than to diagnose. The fear of being weeded out early is enough to haunt students and their parents from deviating from the norm in thought and actions. This itself is sufficient to stifle original thought and creativity. Added to pressure from principals,
teachers, and peers to succeed in these examinations, these skills find very little nourishment on which to survive.

Another change that will be necessary is in teachers' attitudes toward students' ideas. The classroom climate need to be pervaded with a democratic or shura (mutual consultation) atmosphere. Students should be trained to deliberate on any issue without fear and be open to others' opinions and arguments. Since the government is democratic, it is logical to cultivate freedom of expression and speech in the classroom, though restrained by the cultural and religious sensitivities of the different communities. This will help to develop critical thinking, for students have to articulate their views and defend them before others with whom they disagree. The formation of the deliberative character, according to Gutmann, is essential to realizing the ideal of a democratic state.³

The climate should not be autocratic even in the teaching of religion. The existence of numerous schools of theology and law in Islam before the establishment of the four Sunnite and a few Shi`ite legal schools testifies to the tolerance attached to differences of opinion in religion. However it is important that these differences be presented in such a manner (adab) that they do not result in

enmity and rivalry. In fact, Prophet Muhammad considers differences of opinions as a blessing for Muslims because it allows them choices. Thus if these two steps—change in the form of evaluation and in teachers' attitudes—are taken, the possibility of developing thinking skills and creative intelligence blooming is better.

One of the dangers of a synthesis that must be avoided is lapsing into a common error that has been seen in other countries and that arose from the powerful economic attraction of the rational sciences over the revealed sciences. The possibility of an economic return from a career in these sciences and the incentives provided by the Ministry of Education attracts many students and tends to leave only a handful of students, usually the less able, to specialize in Arabic and Islamic studies. This does not augur well for educational excellence in these fields. This already is happening in the national religious schools, which has been discussed in Chapter Four. Therefore, the Ministry of Education ought to offer incentives to students to specialize in these areas, as it has offered incentives to those specializing in the natural and applied sciences.

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Taha Jabir al-Alwani has written an interesting book outlining the ethics of differences of opinions by studying how the Qur'an, the Prophet, and his companions handled them. See Adab al-Ikhtilaf fi al-Islam [The ethics of disagreement in Islam] (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1987).
The Ministry offers handsome scholarships for Bumiputras (the indigenous people) to specialize in the natural and applied sciences, such as basic sciences, engineering, medicine, and computer science, at home and abroad, and from the undergraduate degree to the doctoral degree. Now that there is a need for more teachers in Arabic and Islamic studies at all levels of education and research in these areas, there is no reason why such an incentive could not be offered for Arabic and religious study as well. In addition, the government and private sectors should give equal opportunity for graduates in these fields to be employed in administrative positions, as they do for graduates from the human sciences.

Secondly, since the Islamic school system is just beginning to give attention to the natural sciences in the upper secondary level, care should be taken to ensure that facilities especially for the natural sciences are available in the school system. Otherwise, students who are inclined toward natural and technical sciences are bound to leave the Islamic school at the end of lower secondary for the national school in their search for schools with good laboratory and scientific equipment. The flow in the reverse direction at the end of lower secondary, that is, from the national system to the Islamic school system for those interested in Islamic studies, is not possible because students either do not have the Arabic language prerequisite
or the level of Arabic is low. This trend does not serve the Islamic school system well, and its effort to broaden its curriculum might not be successful. In that case, the dualistic educational system might persist.

The above discussion shows the approaches that could be taken to reach a synthesis between the Islamic and national education systems. Next I will examine the implications of this synthesis on curriculum, pedagogy, and administration.

Implications for Curriculum

First, for the improvement of Islamic education, it is proposed that Arabic language be taught in place of jawi, in primary and secondary schools beginning from Standard One and concurrent with the teaching of Qur'anic recitation. It should be compulsory for all Muslim pupils because of its importance as an instrument for understanding the religion. More time should be devoted in the early primary years to Arabic than to Qur'anic reading.

The Islamic education curriculum ought to be improved to include history and philosophy of science in the Islamic tradition in an effort to understand the development of thought and knowledge. The curriculum also should be integrated, that is, the revealed sciences should not be taught in isolation from contemporary issues and from the intellectual sciences. The Qur'anic verses selected for study also should be comprehensive, covering social,
economic, political, and scientific aspects in addition to faith, law (shari'ah), and worship. Muslim students should become familiar with the operation of existing Islamic institutions such as the Islamic banks, hospitals, universities, insurance, pilgrimage fund and management board, (LUTH), and the treasury of the state religious department (bait al-mal).

Second, music and art education should continue to be taught at the primary level and be extended to the secondary level, but with a wider goal in mind than merely for national pride. They should be taught to instill aesthetic values which support moral values. Music and art should encourage themes of love of one's homeland, of justice, and of the 16 moral values, as well as the ability to read musical notes and paint beautiful strokes. Physical and health education should continue to be emphasized. Music, arts, and physical and health education are useful for all children's self-development.

Third, history--Malaysian history and the history of religion--ought to be introduced to all students in secondary school in order to foster understanding, religious tolerance, and national unity. Moral philosophy for all students also should be introduced in upper secondary school to develop moral reasoning among students. Students from all backgrounds should be imbued with a spirit that can aid in fostering religious tolerance:
O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into Nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (Not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).  

Fourth, Western culture and civilization should be introduced into the curriculum. It was argued earlier in the chapter that this study will help in understanding Islam and other eastern traditions as well as Western civilization itself. Fifth, the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School could be used as the launching pad for secondary education. However, the concept of an integrated education should be enlarged to include non-separation of the intellectual sciences from the moral or revealed sciences, as was argued in Chapter Seven. This is in addition to the infusion of moral values across the curriculum. The framework of the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School, that comprises a general core requirement and four groups of electives—humanities, vocational/technical, natural sciences, and Islamic studies—in upper secondary school, should be maintained with some modifications of subject distribution. Suggestions from LEPAI (The Advisory Council for the Coordination of Islamic Education) about Islamic and Arabic studies need to be considered. The core requirement should comprise subjects from both the revealed

and the rational sciences. The four groups of electives must be accessible to all students and not only to those from selected schools such as the national religious secondary schools in the case of Islamic and Arabic studies.

It is proposed that Arabic be the medium of instruction in higher-level Islamic studies for students intending to specialize in Islamic and Arabic studies. This will help increase proficiency in the language. It is important also to be literate in science, especially in this scientific age. Therefore it is recommended that a course about the nature of science that omits quantitative reference and formulas be included as a core subject. This will enable all students, including those specializing in science itself, to understand scientific issues such as the thinning of the ozone layer, nuclear power and energy, outerspace travel, and hazardous waste material.

Finally, extra curricular activities should be a part of the school curriculum. Academic societies, such as a mathematics society and literary and debating societies; uniformed clubs, such as girl guides and boy scouts; and recreational and sports activities, such as chess and soccer clubs, should be encouraged. In the past only national schools offered extra-curricular activities. These activities are vital in providing first-hand experience in organization, responsibility, and democratic processes. The uniformed clubs should have service to the community as one
of their objectives, in addition to acquiring knowledge, acquiring socialization skills, and fostering national integration. By the end of upper secondary school, students should have been a member of at least one club or society of each kind—academic, uniformed, recreational—to widen their horizon and exercise their sense of responsibility.

Implications for Pedagogy

Some changes in pedagogy are required by the proposed synthesis. First, a more efficient methodology of teaching Arabic as a second language and teaching the Qur'an has to be found. The matter of understanding the Qur'an should be overcome with the ability to read and write in Arabic. More research must be done to develop a more efficient methodology of teaching Arabic as a second language. Research also will be needed to determine how much Arabic is required for a Muslim to function adequately according to the profession of Islam. Islamic educators need to deliberate about the purpose of teaching the Qur'an, which should help them also determine its curricular contents. Similarly, research on the relationship between moral education, religious education, and conduct ought to be investigated. There should be research on the compatibility of democratic and Islamic educational principles and on how
they can be extended to benefit the country. The government must not hesitate to give grants for such research.

Second, empirical methods of observation and experimentation must be introduced into the curriculum and be emphasized alongside the traditional methods of lecture, memorization, disputation, and dictation. Empirical methods should not be confined to the natural and applied sciences only, but should be utilized in the other rational sciences as well. Even the revealed sciences could benefit from empirical data, especially as evidence to strengthen its assertions or in understanding it. For example, statistical data on road accidents because of alcohol-related behavior can strengthen the Qur'anic assertion that there is more harm than benefit in alcohol.⁶

Third, a different instructional methodology is needed as a result of the synthesis. In both systems, a traditional method characterized by reliance upon subjects, externally imposed regimentation, and a discipline that ignores the capacities and interests of the child is predominant. Pupils are docile, receptive, and obedient. To encourage freedom of expression and cultivation of individuality, attitudes of inquiry, critical and reflective thought, and discovery, teachers in the system need to be

⁶Al-Qur'an 2: 219 states: "They ask thee concerning wine and gambling. Say: 'There is great harm in both, although they have some benefit for men; But their harm is far greater than their benefit."
more democratic and appreciate pupils' ideas. They must be less autocratic and authoritarian but still be respected. However, a check is needed against the possibility of a disorganized curriculum and excessive individualism. The lecture method is a reflection of authority and thus needs to be deemphasized. Instead, discussion, which allows for freedom of expression, and reflection ought to be utilized as an important instructional method.

Fourth, the method of learning through experience should be amplified. Effort must be made especially by teachers to enlarge the meaning of education. Teachers must cultivate the idea that going to places of action beyond the four walls of the classroom also is education. Anchoring integrated education to experience is necessary especially for empirical and experimental methods to thrive. However, one must distinguish between experience that is educative from that which is mis-educative or non-educative. Both kinds of experience have some kind of continuity. Experience that is educative opens up wider conditions for subsequent learning. It is a moving force. However, although a mis-educative experience may open up new conditions, it arrests the person's capacity for growth.

such as the effect of overindulging a child. Thus, as Dewey counsels, education depends very much on the quality of the experience.  

The fifth pedagogical implication of a synthesis relates to the most important agent of learning, the teachers. More Arabic language and religious education teachers will be needed. As it is, there are shortages of these teachers in the country. The Ministry of Education must be serious in its effort to increase their supply. There should be more intake of teacher trainees in these fields, and their training should not be limited only to the Islamic Teachers' Training College (Maktab Perguruan Islam). Teacher educators need to ensure that teacher trainees are exposed to a more efficient methodology, modern educational technology, and be on guard against the tendency to revert wholly to traditional teaching methods.

With respect to the teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies, the Ministry should provide scholarships to send students abroad to acquire higher degrees in Islamic studies and Teaching Arabic as a Second Language. The Ministry and also private corporations have been sending students abroad to specialize in the natural and applied sciences and the teaching of English, so there is sufficient justification to do the same for Islamic studies and the teaching of Arabic. The quality of Arabic in Islamic schools presently is low

\[8\] Ibid., 17-30.
and consequently they employ ineffective methods. In the future, cooperative programs with other universities in the Middle East could be initiated in order to save costs. Such programs could emulate joint programs currently going on between Malaysian institutions and American and British universities. In such programs, students would need to be present at the foreign universities only in the third and fourth years of study. This plan also could stimulate students to specialize in Islamic and Arabic studies.

The importance of teachers to the success of integrated education and its pedagogical approach cannot be overestimated. In this regard, teacher education institutions have a vital role to play. Since integrated education requires a more critical approach to learning, values experience as a learning method, and involves a fundamental change in philosophy, teacher educators must provide opportunities for potential teachers to develop this approach themselves. Teacher education programs need to emphasize the study of educational philosophy as much as educational psychology. Educational philosophy can help define the problem of national education, analyse and clarify the issues involved, explain the ends and means of education, and study the need for educational reform in Malaysia. Educational philosophy can clarify the concept of a holistic, integrated education and stimulate trainees to reflect about education in a multiracial, multicultural, and
multireligious nation such as Malaysia. Only teachers who understand the National Education Philosophy and are convinced of its soundness will be able to translate it into practice and realize its ends. Moreover, the approach of educational philosophy could provide an experience for teacher trainees in the methods of critical thinking.

In preparing teachers for moral education, teacher education programs should introduce moral philosophy and comparative religion courses. Since teachers in a holistic, integrated education should be exemplary models of character in addition to models of knowledge, teacher selection should be more comprehensive, considering characters as well as academic achievement.

Finally, the methods and purposes of evaluation need to be reexamined and modified. Promotion to higher levels of study depends very much on the results of a public examination administered once for all at the end of each stage of education. Thus, the effort to extend general education from nine to 11 years should be welcome, together with the move to replace the Lower Certificate of Education Examinations with the Lower Secondary School Evaluation. To avoid the annual rite of examination fever and stress, and to encourage genuine love of knowledge, formative evaluation should be conducted instead of summative evaluation. Academic credit systems such as those used in the United States should be experimented with and used for promotion to
the next stage of education. Similarly, only entrance into universities should require a national examination. Every effort should be taken to cultivate education for the love of learning, for this will help to produce individuals who are not only consumers of, but also contributors to, technology and knowledge.

Another shortcoming of the present evaluation system is its concentration on cognitive development and its neglect of affective development. On the same note, the method of evaluation also focuses heavily on the individual and neglects the social aspect. These have to be changed if the objectives of the National Education Philosophy are to be assessed properly. The difficulty of evaluating affective or moral development is common knowledge. Of course it is difficult to assess moral behavior except by noticing conduct in the classroom. However, good morality manifests itself in service to society. Students who actualize the slogan "service above self" should be rewarded. Presently, only those students who excel in academic performance are rewarded. Surely the educational system teaches some hidden values in this case. Here again the credit system should come in handy. Students should be given credit for service they have done in the community. This can be witnessed by beneficiaries of those services. In this manner the school system will promote social good among its students.
In the evaluation of Islamic education, the above evaluation procedure is equally applicable. Muslim students need to be examined on their knowledge of the pillars of Islam and its articles of faith. However, theory alone is insufficient. Since prayer is the pulse of Islam, students need to be evaluated on their ability to perform prayer individually and in congregation. The ability to read the Qur'an and to understand it must also be evaluated. Ability to read should not be emphasized over understanding.

There have been suggestions that Islamic education and moral education be made examinable subjects compulsory for all Muslim and non-Muslim students respectively. I disagree if the purpose is for motivation rather than evaluation. Evaluation is important to see if the objectives of the affective domain, such as receiving, responding, valuing, organization, and characterization, are being attained. This ought to be the motivation instead of ensuring that students do not neglect Islamic or moral education class. As argued earlier in Chapter Seven, Islamic and moral education subjects are not similar to other subjects and, hence, require a different pedagogical approach. Evaluation

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questions need to be carefully designed. Otherwise, they will not give reliable measures of values, attitudes, commitments, or characters.

Implications for Administration

The major implication of a synthesis for administration relates to centralization of education. Presently two agencies, the Ministry of Education, which is a federal agency, and the various states religious departments, are involved in a dualistic system of education. For the success of a synthesis, it is proposed that only one agency, the Ministry of Education, should be responsible for the direction of education. This is not to underplay the role of states religious departments or of LEPAI (The Advisory Council for the Coordination of Islamic Education), but is made for several reasons. Moreover, the proposal is made in the interest of Islam, Muslim students, and communities as well as the nation as a whole.

By uniting the system of education under the Ministry of Education, students can be provided with better education. First, the Ministry has the financial resources to improve the schools. As mentioned earlier, Islamic schools, especially the rakyat (people) schools, are in bad physical condition. For example, in 1989 a dormitory of
Madrasah Taufiqiah Khairiah al-Halimiah, in Kedah was gutted by a fire that killed 27 students.\(^{10}\)

Second, the Ministry of Education has professional expertise in the administration of schools. It has experts in curriculum and instruction, educational administration and leadership, educational counselling, educational research, and even Islamic and Arabic studies. The states religious departments, on the other hand, do not have this expertise and draw mainly from the experience of previous Islamic and Arabic studies teachers in administering their systems. This is true not only for the education division of the states religious departments but also for the entire department. For instance, the treasury division of the state religious department is managed by Islamic and Arabic studies graduates who do not know much about economics. With this kind of situation, one cannot expect much educational innovation in methods and content and also better educational leadership.

Third, the Ministry of Education is in a better position than are the states religious departments to provide pre-service and in-service training of teachers. In fact the latter have no institutions to train teachers and are dependent on the Ministry for their teacher supply.

\(^{10}\)"Twenty-seven girls killed in hostel fire," *New Straits Times*, September 23, 1989.
Fourth, the Ministry is in a better position to pay adequate salaries to teachers than are the states religious departments which usually pay teachers poorly despite their qualifications. The turnover rate for teachers in the Islamic schools is high because teachers leave for greener pastures at the slightest opportunity. As a consequence of this, Islamic schools rarely attract good quality teachers. Centralization under the Ministry of Education could help to improve the situation.

It is important to reiterate that the Ministry must develop incentives for students to be drawn to Islamic and Arabic studies. It has been suggested that scholarships to further education in these fields be granted to promising students. Only in this manner will excellent students be found. Excellent students are necessary to provide an innovative leadership for the future development of these fields. In the past, these fields tended to draw the weaker students.

Incentives in the form of scholarships and study awards abroad for Islamic and Arabic studies are very important for the success of an integrated educational system. This is to prevent mistakes made by others in this effort—such as the abandonment of Islamic and Arabic studies as the result of the attraction of the intellectual sciences and their rewards—from recurring. The possible abandonment of Islamic and Arabic studies is the greatest fear that states
religious departments have with integration, and the fear is warranted especially if the Ministry is not concerned in this matter. With the great demand for Islamic and Arabic studies experts and teachers in the country, perhaps that motivation will not pose a problem in the near future.

Another way of avoiding mistakes in an integration effort is to improve science facilities, equipment, and staff in existing Islamic schools. Such an improvement will make it unnecessary for students to transfer to national schools for natural and technical science electives in upper secondary. Otherwise, the dualistic character of the school system may prevail, even though the system is integrated.

Lastly, error in the integration effort could be avoided if the government and private corporations do not discriminate against employing in Islamic and Arabic studies graduates to administrative positions. There will be no need to discriminate against them if they graduate from universities that offer a core of intellectual and revealed sciences as general education before specialization.

The synthesis will help the Ministry of Education in its implementation of the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School, discussed in Chapter Seven, by providing some Islamic and Arabic studies teachers from the pool of teachers in the existing Islamic schools. However, the shortage of Arabic language teachers still will be large because Arabic language never before has been taught in the
national schools. Therefore, it is suggested that Arabic language be introduced gradually beginning with the primary schools and the Ministry should shoulder the responsibility of training these teachers.

The greatest handicap in integrating the two educational systems may be the Malaysian Constitution itself. The problem relates to the constitutional arrangement of state autonomy over matters pertaining to Islamic affairs, including Islamic Religious schools. This arrangement does not allow the federal government to have much say in the management of religious schools, except for the provision of financial aid. The question of which agency have authority over religious schools should be deliberated democratically, or by the Islamic concept of shura (mutual consultation), taking into considerations the interests of the religion, the child, and families. The Constitution, which also states that education is the responsibility of the federal government, should be interpreted in the interests of the religion, the child, and families, rather than seeing these as an encroachment on each other's authority. The more efficient, able, and knowledgeable agency should be entrusted with the authority. LEPAI (The Advisory Council for the Coordination of Islamic Education) might be an alternative to the Ministry of Education, but it does not possess the professional quality of the Ministry nor the legislative power to ensure that all
religious schools--state and rakyat (people)--abide by its curriculum and directives.

A second handicap in integrating the systems involves instruction in religion other than Islam. Although the Education Act of 1961 allows instruction for pupils in religions other than Islam, it stipulates that this instruction should not be "defrayed from monies provided by Parliament."\textsuperscript{11} This is not a wise policy if integration of the educational systems is an aim. The federal government should bear the cost of any and all religious instruction for the benefit of the nation.

Considerations for National Integration

The steps outlined above would accomplish integration of the Islamic and national education systems in Malaysia. But they still fall short of achieving a national education system. The national-type Chinese and Tamil primary schools also must be integrated with the national system. However, the interests of Chinese and Indian parents and their children must be given consideration. These parents are concerned about the loss of their cultures, especially their languages, if their children enter the national primary schools. But at the same time they have to understand that their children live in a different time and place from their

own upbringing. Of course the interests of both parents and children must be considered, but in a truly democratic education, the interest of the State also must be considered. Consideration of all the parties that share educational authority is essential for the good life and the good society, although this will limit freedom of individuals and groups. Gutmann expounds this point when she says that

a democratic state of education recognizes that educational authority must be shared among parents, citizens, and professional educators. . . . It constrains choice among good lives not only out of necessity but out of concern for civic virtue.\textsuperscript{12}

Therefore, in line with the idea of democratic education within the framework of the National Education Philosophy, it is proposed that Mandarin and Tamil be taught seriously in the primary school and be continued in secondary schools. Although a provision known as Pupils' Own Language (POL) has been made in the past for Chinese and Indian students studying in national primary schools, it has not met with much success, and many non-Malay students prefer to attend the national-type primary schools.\textsuperscript{13}

Parents complained that the schools actually do not provide

\textsuperscript{12}Amy Gutmann, Democratic Education, 42.

\textsuperscript{13}There are two types of national-type primary schools—Chinese and Tamil. These schools follow the syllabuses of the national primary schools. The only difference is that they use pupil's own language, instead of Malay language, as their medium of instruction.
for POL and that there are not enough teachers to teach it at the secondary level. This trend if continued, will not be good for national unity. One might imagine what could happen to the national primary schools if non-Malays attend the national-type primary schools and Malays attend Islamic primary schools, which are growing in number. Furthermore, what if states religious departments start their own full-time primary schools? Primary school age is when formation of attitudes and values take root. With segregated schools, racial prejudices may be strengthened and will be more difficult to reverse later on. To strengthen their languages through the integrated system, POL must be offered daily and the Ministry must prepare an adequate supply of teachers.

In fact, Chinese or Indian studies should be included as electives in the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School, and any student should be allowed to specialize in them. More universities also should set up departments for these studies, to provide for continuity and to ensure a supply of teachers in these languages. This will enrich the country intellectually and culturally.

The Ministry of Education also should be prepared to meet the desire of non-Muslim parents to have religious

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instruction given to their children in an integrated system.\textsuperscript{15} It is complained that pupils are required to attend moral education classes that are perceived to stress "Islamic values," while Pupil's Own Religion (POR) is not allowed to be discussed or taught. This is a common misunderstanding of the education policy. However, there are some non-Muslims who believe otherwise.\textsuperscript{16} Hence, the Ministry must be serious in its effort to care for the interests of non-Muslims, and, as discussed earlier, the Education Act of 1961 should be amended so that, in addition to using their own religious funds, some financial resources from the federal government could be used to provide them with their own religious instruction.

An important source of racial discontent is the further establishment especially for indigenous people (bumiputras), of residential schools, which are science-based,, as part of


\textsuperscript{16}For example, Chong Hock pointed out: "Some people will always blame the Government that it is biased by imposing Islamic values on non-Muslims. . . . These people are misdirected and they fail to study the policy in depth. The 'Islamic values' are, in fact, universal values, values acceptable to all faiths. Are qualities like care and concern, love, cleanliness, cooperation, sincerity, social responsibility, moderation the sole domain of teachings of only one single religion?" See "Curriculum charts the nation's future," Saturday Forum, New Straits Times, 6 January 1990. The same opinion is expressed by K. Jegathesan, op. cit. note 15.
the national affirmative action programs following the May 13, 1969, racial riots. These schools are a great boon for the bumiputras because of the quality science education they provide and the large number of their graduates who have been awarded scholarships to study abroad. Consequently, there is stiff competition among bumiputras to secure places in them. However, the residential schools have served their purpose and there is now a sizeable bumiputra middle class in society. Now the residential schools have become a mechanism for perpetuating social class differences among the bumiputras, since a larger number of children of the middle and upper classes secure places there than do those of the lower class. These schools thus have become a source of racial discontent because non-Bumiputras view them as discriminatory.\footnote{Ling Liong Sik et al., eds., The Future of Malaysian Chinese, 65-67.} They are very expensive to maintain and should be phased out. All schools in the nation, especially in the rural areas and the new villages, should be upgraded with qualified teachers and up-to-date learning facilities. Most districts now have access to good schools with qualified teachers. With the phasing out of residential schools, there will be less source for racial discontent.

With this set up, the integrated system will satisfy ethnic groups of various faiths who will come to study under one roof. This is long overdue. There definitely will be a
shortage of Mandarin and Tamil language teachers, but this can be reduced through the absorption of teachers from the present national-type schools and through a serious effort to train more of them. To ease the shortage, the introduction in primary school of Mandarin and Tamil should be implemented gradually.

Finally, the Ministry of Education should be more democratic in its administration. It should solicit ideas, comment, and criticism from all who have an interest in educational authority, such as parents, communities, individual children, and professional educators, both those organized under unions and those who are not. The ministry should deliberate critically over its policies before their execution. The Ministry should be aware that there are some principled limits to political and parental authority over education, such as nonrepression and nondiscrimination, that require the surrender of some educational authority to professional educators. The examination of policies by means of the democratic process and the awareness of these principled limits are vital in ensuring the success of the ministry policies.

\[18\] Gutmann, Democratic Education, 95.
Chapter Summary

In this chapter it has been shown that a synthesis between the Islamic and national education systems is possible even though the National Education Philosophy, which has a high degree of compatibility with an Islamic philosophy of education, contains an ambiguity and neglects the concern over national unity. The study espouses that the National Education Philosophy be interpreted broadly so that it is based on ethics, the moral equivalent of religion, in order to meet the interest of all citizens. The study restates the importance of moral or religious education as the major thrust of the synthesis and the need for some subjects such as moral philosophy and Malaysian history, which could help in enhancing an understanding of different cultures and religions among students. It also shows that in working toward a synthesis some steps are necessary: improving Islamic education, maintaining a more flexible curriculum with a core requirement and electives, and changing the form of evaluation and teacher attitudes as an aid to developing student thinking skills.

The integration of the Islamic and national education systems has many implications for curriculum, pedagogy, and administration. With respect to curriculum, the study proposes that Arabic for Muslim students be introduced and Pupil's Own Language for non-Malay students be included in the school timetable. It calls for the teaching of music,
art, and physical and health education in primary and secondary education, and moral philosophy, Western culture and civilization, comparative religion, and science for literacy in the upper secondary level. The chapter also expounds the definition of integrated education to include the integration of intellectual and moral sciences and theory and practice, as well as the integration of moral values. It proposes some changes in the content of Islamic education so it will be contemporary. A flexible system of core requirements and six instead of four elective groups (with the addition of Chinese and Indian studies) in upper secondary is highly recommended. The chapter also recommends that extra curricular activities be made an integral part of the curriculum.

Concerning pedagogy, the study calls for a more efficient method of teaching Arabic and the Qur'an, an emphasis on empirical methods of observation and experimentation, and a change from the traditional methods of lecture and memorization toward encouraging discussion. The study recommends that a more progressive method of education that provides freedom of expression, inquiry, critical thinking, and discovery be utilized. It also emphasizes the method of learning through experience. The study proposes a change in methods of evaluation, from summative to formative evaluation, and the need to recognize social service. The study urges that the Ministry step up
its effort to meet the shortage of teachers in the various subjects. More importantly, concurrent with this reform in education, the study proposes the introduction or consolidation of educational philosophy, moral philosophy, and comparative religion in teacher education programs.

Regarding administrative affairs, the study proposes centralizing the administration of all schools, including the Islamic schools, under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education. It envisions improved funding, professional expertise, teacher training, remuneration, and scholarships or study awards as strong reasons for this move. However, the study calls attention to two difficulties that need to be overcome before an integrated system can be achieved—the constitutional arrangement between federal and state government concerning Islamic religious affairs, and the provision of the Education Act of 1961 that does not allow federal funding for instruction in religions other than Islam.

In addition to the above, the study also considers the formation of a genuine national education system by further integration with the national-type primary schools. It recommends the inclusion of Pupil's Own Language (Mandarin and Tamil) in the school timetable, the facilitating of Pupil's Own Religion in school, and the introduction of Chinese and Indian studies as electives in the Integrated
Curriculum for Secondary School and even in higher education.

The implications of a holistic, integrated education are many and challenging, but they are possible to execute. Success in their execution will augur well for the whole Malaysian community and not only for Muslims. A single national education system has the opportunity to bring all Malaysians, irrespective of race and creed, to study under one roof and achieve the dream of a truly united, progressive, and more prosperous Malaysia.

Summary and Conclusion of the Study

This has been a comprehensive study of the Islamic and national education systems in Malaysia. It has been shown how this dualistic system developed from British colonialism, which introduced Western, liberal, secular education in the early nineteenth century, overlapping the prevailing, traditional Islamic learning. The national education system inherited and continued the British tradition. The study has shown that the traditional Islamic school system evolved from the Qur'anic schools to the pondok and madrasah. The Islamic school system has had its ups and downs. It experienced its golden age in the period between the Second World War and Independence in 1957. It faced a decline in the period immediately following Independence. However, the study notes that with the
resurgence of Islam in the 1970s, demand for Islamic education rose again.

The study indicates that the dualistic education systems pose several problems for Malaysians, in particular Muslims, because of the nonsecular conception of their religion; both systems suffer from weaknesses that are fundamental to an Islamic philosophy of education. The Islamic school system has overemphasized the revealed sciences, which are represented by Islamic and Arabic studies, and has neglected the rational sciences. The national school on the other hand, emphasized the intellectual sciences and promised economic reward, prestige, and status to its graduates. However, it neglected the revealed sciences and the development of moral and spiritual values. This situation has posed a dilemma for Muslim parents who want sound Islamic education for their children, yet also want the benefits of modern life. It also posed a dilemma to non-Muslim parents who want their children to be imbued with moral values in addition to harvesting the benefits of modern education.

The study indicates that the dichotomy between the two school systems has been real and serious, but as time has passed, especially since the formulation of the National Education Philosophy, the two systems have the potential for convergence. An examination of the goals, content, and methods of education of both systems, especially after the
formulation of the National Education Philosophy, reveals that there are similarities and differences between them, although there also is an ambiguity and a weakness in the National Education Philosophy with regard to its basis and national unity. The educational philosophy and aims of both systems indicate great similarity. In particular, the National Education Philosophy does not contradict, but gets as close as possible, given the multireligious nature of the society, to the Islamic philosophy of education. The compatibility of the aims, content, and methods of education serve as a strong foundation towards integrating the two systems.

The study shows that a synthesis requires a broad interpretation of the basis of belief in and devotion to God in the formulation of the National Education Philosophy, in addition to changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and administration. In delineating the changes needed to realize the integration of the two systems, the interest of non-Muslim communities have been considered too.

In conclusion, the study has uncovered the causes for the dualistic education system in Malaysia. It has examined the philosophical goals, assumptions, and practices of both systems and has come to the conclusion that both systems are compatible despite some minor differences. Based on these fundamental similarities, the study argues for an integrated system of education and presents the implications of such a
move for curriculum, pedagogy, and administration. The study argues that the systems can be integrated philosophically and pedagogically, but its implementation might face some legal difficulties. All the proposals in this study have taken into consideration the concern of non-Muslims so that proposed solutions to the dualistic education systems does not alienate them or the Muslims. In fact, the study envisions the building of a truly united, progressive, and a more prosperous Malaysia where individuals from various multireligious and multiethnic backgrounds can study under the same roof.
GLOSSARY

`Abd. The notion in Islam that a Muslim is a servant of God.

Ad-din. The concept of religion as a way of life.

Akhlaq. Ethics, character, or moral conduct.

`Aliyy. Post secondary level in the Islamic school system.

`Aql. The faculty of reason.

Bait al-Mal. The treasury of the State Religious Department.

Bahasa Malaysia. Malay language, which is also the national language of Malaysia.

Balaghah. Arabic proverbs and metaphors.

Bumiputras. Literally, "sons of the soil," referring to the indigenous people of Malaysia.

Dakwah. Literally, invitation to practise the commands of God, but is commonly used to refer to the call to Islam.

Fara`id. Islamic law of inheritance

Fard `ain. Actions obligatory on every Muslim.

Fard kifayah. Actions reflecting collective responsibility of the Muslim community.

Figh. Literally means "understanding," but commonly refers to Islamic jurisprudence.

Hadith. Tradition of Prophet Muhammad, his sayings and deeds. It is used interchangeably with the term sunnah.

Hajji. One who has made the pilgrimage to Makkah (Mecca).
Halaqah. A method of study whereby pupils form a semi-circle in front of the teacher.

Ibtidai. Elementary level of the Islamic school system.

Ijaza. Certificate issued at the end of learning.

Ijtihad. Intellectual exertion in the interpretation of the Qur'an and Traditions.

ʼIlm. The Arabic term for knowledge.

ʼIlm al-ʼaqliyah. Intellectual or rational sciences.

ʼIlm al-naqliyah. Revealed knowledge.

Imam. In Malaysia and elsewhere this term refers to the one who leads the congregational prayer. Also used to refer to religious leadership.

Imla. Spelling and dictation.

Insha. Composition or essay.

Islah. Reformation movement at the end of the nineteenth century initiated by Jamal al-Din Afghani and others.

Jawi. Malay language written in Arabic letters.

Jadal. Dialectics.

Kadi. Judge.

Kaum Muda. The progressive faction that subscribed to the spirit of Islah.

Kaum Tua. The conservative faction that disagreed with the idea of Islah.

Khatib. One who delivers a sermon during the Friday congregational prayer.

Khalifah. A vicegerent or representative. Also used in the past for the head of Muslim States.

Khat. Arabic calligraphy.

Khilaf. A difference of opinion in the law.

Khurafat. Misunderstood or erroneous teachings of Islam.
Kuttab. School for elementary Islamic education.

Lebai. A Malay title for a religious person.

Madrasah. Islamic school or college.

Mahfuzah. A branch of Arabic concerned with memorization.

Mantiq. The study of logic.

Menadah kitab. Method of learning where students study the text as it is read and clarified by the teacher.

Mudhakara. Reciprocal action or discussion as an aid to recall what has been taught.

Mufti. A religious leader recognized by the community who is qualified to give legal injunctions or rulings.

Munazarah. A method of learning that employs discussion and disputation.

Mugaddam. The classical text of learning Qur'anic spelling and reading introduced before the reading of the Qur'an itself.


Nahu. Arabic grammar.

Nashid. Songs with Islamic or moral themes sung without accompanying music.

Pondok. Literally, hut, but in Islamic education it refers to an institution of learning.

Qasidah. Poetry or songs on Islamic themes.

Al-Qur'an. The Muslim scripture revealed to Prophet Muhammad.

Rumi. Malay language written in Romanized scripts.

Sarf. A branch of Arabic grammar concerning gender and number.

Sekolah Rakyat. School built and managed by the community.
Shari'ah. Islamic law.

Sufis. Those emphasizing the mystical and spiritual tradition of Islam.

Surau. A small building used for Islamic religious purposes such as learning and praying.

Tafsir. Exegesis of the Qur'an.

Tahdiri. Preparatory level of the Islamic school system.

Tajwid. Method of reciting the Qur'an in proper intonations and notes.

Tarikh. Arabic term for history.

Tasawwuf. Method for purification of the soul; sometimes also known as philosophy in Malaysia.

Tawhid. The belief in the Unity of God or monotheism.

Thanawi. Secondary level of the Islamic school system.

`Ulama. Religious scholars or teachers.

Ummah. The worldwide community of Muslims.

Waqf. Religious endowment presented by individuals.

Zakat. Religious tithe obligatory on Muslims from whom it is due.
APPENDIX
CLASSIFICATION OF SCIENCES IN ISLAM

A. Al-Farabi

I. Science of language ("ilm al-lisani)

II. Logic ("ilm al-mantiq)

III. The mathematical or propaedeutic sciences ("ulum al-ta'lim):
   1. Arithmetic ("ilm al-'adad)
   2. Geometry ("ilm al-handasah)
   3. Optics ("ilm al-manazir)
      (a) Judicial astrology ("ilm ahkam al-nujum)
      (b) Astronomy ("ilm al-nujum al-ta'limi)
   5. Music ("ilm al-musiqa)
   6. Science of weights ("ilm al-athqal)
   7. Engineering or science of ingenious devices ("ilm al-hiyal)

IV. Physics or science of nature (al-"ilm al-tabi'i)

V. Metaphysics or science concerned with the Divine and the principles of things (al-"ilm al-ilahi)

VI. Science of society
   1. Political Science (al-"ilm al-madani)
   2. Jurisprudence (al-"ilm al-figh)
   3. Dialectical theology ("ilm al-kalam)

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1See Osman bin Bakar, "Classifications of the Sciences in Islamic Intellectual History: A Study in Islamic Philosophies of Science" (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1988), 194-98.
B. Al-Ikhwan Al-Safa (The Brethren of Purity)²

I. The primary (propaedeutic) sciences (riyadiyah):

1. Reading and writing
2. Lexicography and grammar
3. Accounting and business transactions
4. Prosody and metrics
5. Doctrines of good and evil omens
6. Doctrines of magic, alchemy, stratagems, etc.
7. Business and handicraft
8. Commerce, agriculture, etc.
9. Stories and biographies

II. Religious sciences (al-shari'at al-wad'iyah):

1. Science of Revelation
2. Exegesis
3. Tradition (Hadith)
4. Jurisprudence and law
5. Asceticism and tasawwuf
6. Interpretation of dreams

III. Philosophical sciences (al-falsafiyat al-haqiqiyah):

1. Mathematics consisting of the quadrivium
2. Logic
3. Natural sciences:
   (a) Physics
   (b) Science of the heavens
   (c) Meteorology
   (d) Mineralogy
   (e) Botany
   (f) Zoology
   (g) Generation and Corruption - knowledge of the four elements
4. Theology (al-'ulum al-ilahiyyah)

C. Ibn Sina

A. Theoretical knowledge (nazari):
   1. Natural science (ilm al-Tabi'i)
   2. Mathematical sciences (ilm al-riyadiyat)
   3. Logic (mantig)
   4. Theology or Metaphysics (ilm al-ilahi)

B. Practical knowledge (amali):
   1. Ethics (al-akhlq)
   2. Household management (al-tadbir al-Manzil)
   3. Public management (al-tadbir al-Madinah)
   4. Religions

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D. Al-Ghazzali

I. The Religious sciences (al-`ulum al-shari`ah)

1. The science of fundamental principles (al-usul).
   The science of divine unity (`ilm al-tawhid), prophethood, the hereafter, and the sources of religious knowledge.

2. The science of branches (furu`) or derived principles.
   The science of man's obligation to God, to society, and to his own soul.

3. The auxiliary sciences (mugaddimah).
   These include the science of writing and branches of the linguistic science.

4. The supplementary sciences (mutammimah).
   These are comprised of the Qur'anic sciences, Tradition, jurisprudence and the biography of prophets, companions, and illustrious men.

II. The Intellectual sciences (al-`ulum al-`aqliyah)

1. Mathematics
   (a) Arithmetic
   (b) Geometry
   (c) Astronomy and astrology
   (d) Music

2. Logic

3. Physics or the natural sciences
   (a) Medicine
   (b) Meteorology
   (c) Mineralogy
   (d) Alchemy

4. Metaphysics

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E. Ibn Khaldun

I. The transmitted sciences (al-`ulum al-naqliyah)
1. Qur'anic exegesis and Qur'an reading
2. Hadith (Tradition) of the Prophet
3. Jurisprudence
   - law of inheritance
4. Principles of Jurisprudence
5. The science of speculative theology
6. The science of dream interpretation

II. The acquired sciences (al-`ulum al-aqliyah)
1. Logic
2. Physics
   - medicine
3. Metaphysics
4. Mathematical sciences
   (a) arithmetic
      - inheritance laws
      - business arithmetic
   (b) geometry
   (c) music
   (d) astronomy
      - astronomical tables
      - astrology

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rosnani Hashim received her primary education at a national-type (English) school, and her secondary education in Tunku Kurshiah College, a premier girls' residential college in Malaysia. She was a beneficiary of the May 13 racial incident in Malaysia, being awarded a scholarship to study for her bachelor degree in mathematics at Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, in 1973. In fact she was among the first batch of students sent to the United States for further study by the Malaysian government. She graduated with a master's degree in curriculum and instruction (mathematics education) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1978. Upon her return to Malaysia in 1980, she taught O-Level and A-Level mathematics and statistics in a Malay residential secondary school. She joined the Department of Education of the International Islamic University, Kuala Lumpur, in 1987, where she taught Methodology of Mathematics and Issues in Muslim Education. Some of her articles have appeared in the educational journal Jurnal Pendidikan Islam and in Berita Harian, an influential daily newspaper in Malaysia.

During her student days in Illinois, Ms. Hashim was reacquainted with Islam and became a member of the Muslim
Students' Association of North America. She was a founding member of the Malaysian Islamic Study Group of North America, formed in 1976. The aims of this body are to disseminate understanding of Islam among Malaysian Muslim students in North America and to provide a forum for discussion of issues in Malaysia from the Islamic perspective. Her appreciation of the problem and the strength of the multiethnicity of Malaysia was enhanced when she became the Secretary-General of the Federation of Malaysia Students' Association of North America in 1975.

Ms. Hashim will return to Malaysia where she will resume her position as a faculty member of the Department of Education of the International Islamic University.
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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