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بِوَسِيْلَتِيْ اِسْلَامُهُ اَنْبَارًا يَجْنِبُ اُمَّلِيْنَا

**A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAM ON
CHILD-REARING VALUES AND METHODS IN
CLASSICAL MUSLIM LITERATURE WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MALAY
LITERATURE**

BY

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2006

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requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Civilization
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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study are; Firstly, to investigate the approaches of child rearing values and methods in traditional Malay literatures, secondly, to analyze and compare the values and methods in child rearing practices in traditional Malay literatures with the values and methods of child rearing values and methods as proposed by the classical Muslim scholars and finally, to analyze to what extent the works of traditional Malay scholars are influenced by the works of the classical Muslim scholars. The methods used in this study are descriptive, analytic and comparative. The traditional Malay literatures are all the Malay folklores, Malay *Kitab*, sufi literatures, Malay poems, legends and also observations by Western colonials and researches ranging from the thirteenth century up to the twentieth century. The work of the classical Muslims primarily used in this study is by al-Ghazālī. Besides al-Ghazālī's, the study will also deal with the works of Ibn Miskawayh, Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah and Ibn Jazzār al-Qairawānī. The study reveals that the values and methods in child rearing practices in traditional Malay literatures are in parallel with Islamic teachings as expounded by the classical Muslim scholars. In fact, these approaches are still relevant in the modern times. As far as Malay custom is concerned, most of the rituals in child rearing practices, which are incompatible with Islam have largely disappeared from Malay custom and have undergone modification. The study also finds that to develop the interest in learning Islamic education among the students, the teachers should have a correct understanding on the concept of knowledge and the importance of ethics. To achieve this aim, the study suggests that the concept of knowledge should be taught thoroughly in teacher's training program. To inculcate love of knowledge the true the scholars, who are properly trained in that field, should correctly define conception of Islamic worldview. The study also reveals that to solve moral problems, it is important for the children to learn more about their own intellectual traditions embracing all Islamic disciplines. Though it is premature for them at their age to gain mastery of this knowledge, it is not impossible for them to have rudimentary knowledge of these intellectual traditions.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institution.

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Dedicated to,

My Beloved Children Nur Najiha Sofea, Wan Muhammad Naqiuddin and Nur

Zeti Dalila

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

.....So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief: Verily with every difficulty

there is relief.....

(Surah Alam-Nashrah: 5-6)

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A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAM ON CHILD-REARING VALUES AND METHODS IN CLASSICAL MUSLIM LITERATURE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MALAY LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Rapid industrialization, the consequential rise in urbanization and rural-urban migration has resulted in increase of negative social behavior in Malaysia. Many scholars and educational practitioners contend that the educational system has not been fully successful in developing the moral character of students. They point to the rise in many types of corruption and crime. Data from the Police Department shows that the number of teenagers involved in criminal activities, including murder, is growing at an alarming rate¹. Likewise, the numbers of drug addicts² and patients who suffer from mental disorders have increased drastically³. These problems are the

¹ Berita Harian, 28 August 1997

² Department of Statistics Malaysia, *Social Statistics Bulletin Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, November, 1998.

³ Department of Statistics Malaysia, *Yearbook of Statistics Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, June, 1987.

products of many social diseases that are engulfing not only the West, but most traditional societies in the East as well, included Malaysia.

To ensure the fulfillment of Vision 2020, the former prime minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, insisted that moral corruption and behavioral misconduct should be tackled in a wise way⁴. The government has argued that a good value system that emphasizes moral and ethical behavior, based on religion, custom and tradition, should be developed as a critical component in the nation's drive towards becoming a fully industrialized nation⁵. For example, the importance of moral and ethical values was stressed in the Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001-2005):

A good value system that emphasizes moral and ethical behaviour based on religion, custom and tradition will be an important component of all development efforts. Attributes such as honesty, discipline, diligence, integrity, commitment, respect and tolerance will continue to be nurtured and inculcated through the education system, religious, social and business organizations as well as the media. Greater emphasis will be given to instill these positive values among youths through the implementation of *Rakan Muda*⁶.

⁴Berita Harian, 23 February 1997

⁵ Malaysia, *Eighth Malaysian Plan 2001-2005*, Malaysia National Printing, p. 19.

⁶ Ibid.

Problems faced by contemporary Muslims are due to external and internal factors, the most basic of which is related to confusion and error in knowledge that leads to the loss of *adāb*. The effects of Western culture and civilization are external factors that have contributed to the gravity of our situation. However, the internal factor of loss of *adāb* is the main cause of the great crisis and confusion.

This internal factor has been ignored by many Muslims due perhaps to their inability to understand the real nature of the problems facing them and their solutions. Because it remains uncorrected, the error of understanding has spread from generation to generation⁷. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas defines the meaning of loss of *adāb*:

I am referring here to the loss of discipline, the discipline of the body, mind and soul, the discipline that assures the recognition and acknowledgement of one's proper place in relation to one's self, society and community; the recognition and acknowledgement of one's proper place in relation to one's physical, intellectual, and spiritual capacities and potentials; the recognition and acknowledgement of the fact that knowledge and being are ordered hierarchically⁸.

⁷ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (ed.), *Aims and objectives of Islamic education*, Jeddah, King Abdul Aziz University, p. 1.

⁸ Ibid, p. 2. See also Abū Hamid al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā 'ulūmuddīn*, Vol. 3, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiah, 1998, pp. 45-68.

The problems that are related to moral corruption are the product of the confusion in knowledge and the loss of cultural identity⁹ due to the pervasive influence of secularization¹⁰.

Knowledge is an important key for every individual, to guide him in this world as well as to achieve happiness in the hereafter. The appropriate avenue to convey and to inculcate knowledge is first the parents as the children are, not only close to them, but genetically related. The family institution is accepted as an important authority to carry the task of educating children and transmitting all values to them. This is in line with Ibn Miskawayh's (d. 1030 A. D) and al-Ghazālī's (d. 1111 A. D) opinions that moral training is something to be initiated right from childhood. For maximum effect, the training should be a continuous process guided by discipline as needed. This implies that moral training of a child should be designed as a daily and continuous programme. The training should be facilitated by the family and members of the society in which the child lives, because the responsibility for child guidance is placed on for every man by the Creator. Says the Qur'an:

O Believers! Guard yourself and your kindred against the fire...¹¹.

In traditional societies that have not been deeply affected by the secular worldview, children are brought up in a good manner. The children are carefully looked after and form close emotional bonds with their parents and other relatives.

⁹ A personal discussion between Wan Mohd Nor and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, 4 September, 1995 In Wan M. ohd Nor Wan Daud, *The educational philosophy and practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas: an exposition of the original concept of Islamization*, Kuala Lumpur, ISTAC, 1998, p. 124.

¹⁰ According to al-Attas secularization is; "...the deliverance of man "first from religious and then from metaphysical control over his reason and his language. It is "the loosing of the world from religious and quasi-understandings of itself, the dispelling of all closed world views, the breaking of all supernatural myths and sacred symbols...the 'defatalization of history', the discovery by man that he has left with the world on his hands, that he can no longer blame fortune or the furies for what he does with it...[it is] man turning his attention away from the worlds beyond and toward this world and this time". Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and secularization*, p. 15.

¹¹ al-Qur'ān, Surah al-Tahrīm, 66:6

They experience a great deal of emotional warmth, and should a child cry, there is always someone around to pick him up and comfort him¹².

Malay parents are also concerned about religious learning. At an early age, children are sent to the religious teacher to learn the Qur'ān and other Islamic sciences. Beginning at six years of age, Malay children are given lessons by the village religious teacher, either at home or at the village prayer hall such as the mosque or *surau*. Despite not knowing Arabic, children learn to recite the Qur'ān and usually completed it before they reach their teens.

Beside the Qur'ān, children also learn the basic principles of Islam and moral studies (*akhlāq*)¹³. Due to the great emphasis on the recitation of the Qur'ān, children who complete it earlier are honored in a ceremony attended by their parents, teachers, the learned and the pious and community members. Thereafter, the children often acquire knowledge of how to read and write in Arabic-Malay script, or *Jawi*¹⁴. When children are able to memorize the verses in the Qur'ān and to read and write in the Jawi script, the process of learning other basic Islamic principles becomes easier¹⁵.

For the potential religious teacher or officer of the court or mosque, specialized education beginning in early adolescence was available at *pondok* (hut) schools.

¹² W. R. Roff (ed.), *Kelantan: religion, society and politics in a Malay state*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1974, p. 226.

¹³ Abdullah Abdul Kadir Munshi, *Kesah pelayaran Abdullah*, Malaya Publishing House, Singapore, first published in 1961, 1965, pp. 14-15. R. S Shinn, Phillip W. Moeller et. al. , *Area handbook for Malaysia*, n. np. n. pp, 1977, 3rd edition, first edition in June 1976, p. 166. T. W. G Miller (ed.), *Education in Southeast Asia*, Ian Novak Publishing Co. , Australia, 1968, p. 169. R. J. Wilkinson, Malay custom and beliefs, *JMBRAS*, 1957, Vol. 30, Part. 4, p. 46.

¹⁴ H. C. Clifford, *In court and kampung*, Graham Brash, Singapore, 1989, rev. edition, first edition in 1897, p. 13.

¹⁵ R. J. Wilkinson, Malay custom and beliefs, *JMBRAS*, Vol. 30, p. 47.

In this school, the students boarded at their teacher's house or in a hut (*pondok*)

nearby¹⁶. The teacher received support in the form of land or other gifts from villagers. The students, instead of paying school fees, worked during their free hours as farm laborers for the teacher. The curriculum was entirely religious and the students usually remained at the *pondok* for five to ten years to finish their courses before graduating¹⁷.

In the 19th century, when Patani became established as a centre for Islamic studies, particularly for the states in the north and on the east coasts of Peninsular Malaysia, many students who graduated from that traditional Islamic school devised their own *pondok*. *Pondok* schools were the main educational system in Malaysia during that time, and produced many Malay-Muslim scholars and thinkers in the contemporary world.

As mentioned earlier, the Qur'ān classes held by the religious teachers either in the mosque or in the *pondoks* are the first educational system to exist in the Malay world. When the Europeans came to this region, Western administrators and colonial theorists established, particularly Malaysia, the vernacular educational system based on traditional culture and race, beginning the process of secularization in education. This new system gradually marginalized Islamic education, where a student's behavior was shaped within the required Islamic cultural schemata.

¹⁶ *Pondok* literally means 'hut', is usually built near the teacher's house. The students reside in the *pondok* and receive knowledge from the teacher on a wide range of Islamic studies including Hadith, Tafsir, Fiqh and Tasawwuf. See W. R. Roff, The Social Organization in Kelantan ins. His (ed.), *Kelantan: religion, society and politics*, p. 266. Mohd Taib Osman (ed.), *Islamic civilization in the Malay world*, D. B. P & The Research Centre For Islamic History, Art And Culture, Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, 1997, pp. 165-166. Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab kuning, pesantren dan tarekat*, Penerbit Mizan, Bandung, 1995, p. 8. Mohd Nor Ngah, Islamic worldview of man, society and nature among the Malays in Malaysia ins. Mohd Taib Osman (ed.), *Malaysian worldview*, SEASP, Singapore, 1985, p. 6. Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam: antara tradisi dan modernisasi menuju millineum baru*, P. T Logos Wacana Ilmu, Jakarta, n. d, Cetakan Pertama, p. 119-121.

¹⁷ R. J. Wilkinson, Malay custom and beliefs ins. *JMBRAS*, Vol. 30, p. 47. R. S Shinn, Phillips W. Moeller et. al. , *Area handbook for Malaysia*, p. 166. Azyumardi Azra, *Tradisi dan modernisasi*, pp. 119-121. Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab kuning*, p. 8. W. R. Roff, The social organization in Kelantan ins. His (ed.) *Kelantan: religion, society and politics*, p. 266.

During the Portuguese and Dutch eras, both colonial powers were inert towards the development of education for the Malay Muslims, except in 1548, when the Portuguese founded the Roman Catholic School in Malacca. Thus, informal Qur'ānic learning and religious instruction remained until the British came, who later made a significant impact on education in Malaysia¹⁸. The idea of developing the Malay vernacular school was devised by Stamford Raffles in 1819 following his visit to Qur'anic schools in Malacca. Raffles was surprised when the students learned to recite and memorize Qur'anic verses without understanding them and that some instructions were given in Arabic. Raffles held that the students should first learn and understand their own language¹⁹.

The first Malay vernacular school, where Malays received formal instruction in the Malay language, was Penang Free School in 1821 and, later Singapore Free School in 1834. They were developed by the Christian missionary organizations²⁰. In Penang and Singapore Free schools, Malay language and Qur'anic subjects were taught simultaneously. It was only in 1871, after A. M Skinner was appointed as the schools' inspector, that a new system was established. Under this new system, changes were made to the Malay Vernacular school: the Qur'ān could be taught in school, but had to be kept strictly separate from the Malay language; the morning classes were instructed in Malay and Qur'ān lessons were confined to the afternoon; Government allowance to the teacher was for the Malay lesson only with parents themselves having to pay the Qur'anic teacher²¹.

This separation between Malay language classes and Qur'anic ones was seen as the starting point of the process of secularizing the Malaysian educational

¹⁸ M. Rudner, *Malaysia development: a retrospective*, Carleton University Press, Ottawa, 1994, p. 282.

¹⁹ Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, A. H. Hill (ed. & trans.), *The Hikayat Abdullah: an annotated translation*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1970, pp. 79-80. F. W. Hoy Kee & G. Y. Hean, *Perspective: The development of education in Malaysia and Singapore*, Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd. , Kuala Lumpur & Singapore, 1972, p. 7.

²⁰ D. D Chelliah, A short history education of the straits settlement, ins. F. W. Hoy Kee & G. Y. Hean, *Perspectives: The development of education in Malaysia and Singapore*, pp. 7-8. H. S. Ong, *Education for unity in Malaya*, The Ganesh Printing Works, Penang, 1952, p. 39. J. M. Gullick, *Malaysia: Economic expansion and national unity*, Ernest Benn, London, 1981, pp. 220.

²¹ F. W. Hoy Kee & G. Y. Hean, *Official reports on education: straits settlements and the Federated Malay States 1870-1939*, Pan Pacific Distributors Ltd. , 1980, p 2. P. L. Fok Seng, *Seeds of separatism educational policy in Malaya 1874-1940*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1975, p. 13.

system. Though the aim of the English educational system was mainly non-religious, it was highly valued since it had better educational facilities and also promised economic advantages. The vernacular or English education system became even more attractive when technical and vocational trainings were added as the requirements to its curriculum²². A minority of intelligent boys went on to secondary school, where they first learned English before being absorbed two years later into mainstream education. Thereafter, they joined the government service as administrators or, if that was unattainable, as clerks or subordinate staff. This was also the typical career of the aristocrat or those of upper-class origins whose initial opportunities of getting a secondary education were rather less constricted²³. The primary end and purpose of British control was the creation of political stability and an ordered government of a Western type as a necessary precondition and context for the rapid economic and commercial development of the country's natural resources²⁴.

Traditional Islamic education is intrinsically linked with the objective of producing a good human being, who is successful and happy in this world and in the hereafter. It operates in harmony with other aspect of society and complements, as well as is reinforced by them. Its goal goes beyond societal needs as seen below;

Traditional Islamic education has always had the personal success and happiness in this world and particularly in the hereafter as its most important aim and purpose. However this person-centred educational philosophy gradually shifted to concentrate on the needs and interests of

²² J. M Gullick, *Malaysia: economic expansion and national unity*, p. 221.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ W. R Roff, *The origins of Malay nationalism*, University of Malaya Press, Singapore, 1967, p. 12. Ab. Halim Tamuri, The impact of British educational policy on the Malay-Muslim community in Malaysia ins. *Muslim Education Quarterly*, Vol. 18 (4), The Islamic Academy, Cambridge, 2001, p. 10.

society when the Muslim world came under the beguiling influence of Western ideas and institutions²⁵.

Hence, not surprisingly, the mosque, the heart of all religious activities, was the apex of the system in the past. Neither the educator nor the student was isolated from the rest of the community. There was a close personal relationship between the teacher and the student which ensured that moral and spiritual guidance was present alongside the teaching of various skills. Success was, indeed important, but failure did not brand the individual a useless burden on society. Whatever he had learnt had value and his place in society would still be guaranteed²⁶.

There are many scholarly writings that emphasize the impact of the Islamic educational system on students' morality²⁷. A study on "Attainment of Islamic Moral Values among Adolescents in Government and Muslim Schools in Nigeria" reveals that the government school system in Nigeria has a negative influence on the

²⁵ Wan Mohd Nor, *The educational philosophy and practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas*, p. 123

²⁶ M. A Zaki Badawi, Traditional Islamic education-its aims and purposes in the present day ins. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (ed.), *Aims and objectives of Islamic Education*, King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah, 1979, pp. 105-106

²⁷ See Ibid. M. A Bari, Post-modern education and the missing dimension, *Muslim Education Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 2, The Islamic Academy, Cambridge, 2000. Ab. Halim Tamuri, The impact of British educational policy on the Malay-Muslim community in Malaysia, *Muslim Education Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4. Steward, Robbie & Jo Hanik, Does spirituality influence academic achievement and psychological adjustment of the African American urban adolescent?, <http://Searcheric.org/>

adolescent's moral attainment compared to that of the local Qur'anic school student²⁸. This study may be relevant to other Muslim societies. The study suggests the integration of Islamic and Western educational approaches, where Islamic ethics is the guiding principle.

In Malaysia, several changes have been made to improve the educational system and to overcome moral problems among children and youths. In 1977, the new integrated curriculum for primary and secondary school was introduced, which aimed to produce individuals with balanced personalities. Hence, moral values have been inculcated in all teaching subjects. Islamic education has been emphasized to meet its goal of producing the students, who are both knowledgeable in Islamic studies and possess excellent morality²⁹. This objective is in line with the recommended aim by the First World Conference on Islamic Education held in Mecca, Saudi Arabia in 1977:

Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of man through training of man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses. The training imparted to a Muslim must be such faith that infused into the whole of his personality and creates in him an

²⁸ M. D. Hamzah & M. G. Maitafsir, Attainment of Islamic moral values among adolescent students in government and Muslim schools in Nigeria, *Muslim Educational Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 2, The Islamic Academy, Cambridge, 2000, p. 40.

²⁹ Kementerian Pendidikan Islam, *Sukatan pelajaran kurikulum bersepadu sekolah menengah: Pendidikan Syariah Islamiah*, Jabatan Pendidikan Islam Dan Moral, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2005, p. 5

emotional attachment to Islam and enable him to follow the Qur'ān 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...*³⁰

In line with the above objective, education could not be achieved if religious education disintegrated into pieces of information to be learnt and tested at a particular time. Therefore, Islamic education should operate as a lifelong process, from infancy to the end of one's earthly life. Muslims who understand and practice Islam in a proper manner recognize the differences between various world religions, particularly in the area of theology and prophecy. Moreover, they will be able to recognize ethical similarities that exist in those religions that form the basis for global understanding. Ethical similarities, such as sincerity and tolerance, will lead to better improved communication within a nation and global cooperation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The advent of the twenty-first century sees the Muslims confronted with many challenging issues and practices in rearing children that lead to confusion and misinterpretation. The most important institution facing these challenges is the family, as its function is pivotal in child-rearing practices. It is the family that plays the important role in providing care and socialization for children. The family is also responsible for preventing deviant and delinquent behaviour as well as exposure to drug culture.

³⁰ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (ed.), *Aims and objective of Islamic Education*, pp. 158- 159.