

ISLAMIZATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FOR MUSLIMS IN SECULAR SOCIETY*

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I always remember the great work of a great Muslim thinker, Dr. Iqbal. I was tempted to say of Pakistan, but I would rather say of the Muslims and of humanity. In his '*Shekwa wa Juwab Shekwa*' Dr. Iqbal posed a rhetorical question and was saying, or rather asking, what would in essence be something like this: "You might be a mullah, you might be a lord, you might be a sharif, you might be a president, you might be a rich man, you might be a merchant, but are you a Muslim?" and, indeed, it is a good question to ask: where do we belong and where do we stand?

I am certainly very happy and proud that I am one of you. I certainly belong to you. I am very proud of being an honorary citizen of the City of Marawi since 1960.

The topic of this Conference is very important, because we are talking about urgent phenomena, about urgent impact, about infrastructure. Economics, politics, social change, health, all are relevant to Man. The interplay of these factors and the forces that shape the quality of Man come together in the endeavour we call 'education'.

* Keynote Address at the Opening Session. 16 February 1983. First International Seminar on Islamic Education in the Philippines, held at the Islamic University of the Philippines.

The quality of Man is related to his education, the quality and quantity of his education, the direction of his education and the relevancy of his education. And our topic today is about quality, about relevancies and irrelevancies.

Money, health, children, recognition and status, are the rewards of life. But the rewards of life are only rewards insofar as we can see them as such. Property and wealth are property and wealth insofar as they have meaning to us. The value of anything lies in its meaning to us and the meaning of anything is related to its value to us. We are talking about the core of the matter. We are talking about the human being who can value, who can understand, who can assign meaning, and who can grow, and who can regress, and who can change.

Our topic today is about education, Islamic education, about the Islamization of the educational system for Muslims in a secular society. Islamization refers to a process to Islamize. It is a process of Islamizing a system that is either not Islamic or not Islamic enough. The education system refers to certain processes that lead education in a certain direction.

Muslims are the followers of Islam and secular societies are not uncommon in our age. As a matter of fact, although we as Muslims don't belong to a secular society, it is imposed on us to be part of it. There is a difference between saying 'we are part of' and 'we belong to'. Both the secular world and we belong to one modern world, the world of today.

My paper is divided into 5 parts. The first part is about what education is. The second part is the relationship between education and progress, development, modernization and Westernization. The third part is about the position of Islam. Where do we stand? Where should we stand? Where does the responsibility of modern Man lie? What should we, and what should we not, do? The fourth part is the nature of the challenge of the 20th Century to Islam and to Muslims on the one hand, and on the other hand, the extent to which Islam also poses a challenge to other contemporary ideologies and ways of life. When you challenge somebody and somebody challenges you, when challenge is mutual, then it is no longer a challenge - the proper term is 'conflict,' and we need to look at the nature of the existing conflict. Is there a conflict between Islam and modern life? Or is there a conflict between Islam and certain self-imposed models of modernity, such as Westernization? And, finally, the fifth part is about Muslim education; its content and its focus. What are the kinds of interaction between different

subject matters taught in a school? What kind of output should be expected? What are the criteria?

The ultimate criteria are: how growth will be manifested and in what form, and how could this community develop? This could be manifested in the local Muslim community and state Muslim community in the way they serve themselves, develop themselves, develop the kind of leadership that can pool resources, organise, co-ordinate and make, under any circumstances, the lot of the community better.

Turning now to the elements of education. What is education? Education - in one of its English meanings - is to 'pull out'. On the other hand, Islamically speaking, using the word 'education' from its Arabic origin, education in Arabic is *tarbiyya*; *riba* is increase, *rabwa* is a height; *raba* 'to cause growing-up'. *Tarbiya* (education) in Arabic actually means growth and development; growth for further growth. When I say 'growth for further growth', I mean that it is a continuous process. It is a process that never stops. It is a process with respect to the individual that starts from the cradle and never ends before the grave. So, it is life-long education. With regard to the community, education starts from the very earliest existence of life on earth and it never ends - it continues for ever and it gives us our concept of time. Time is a very important part in our concept - and should never be wasted, no matter that it is abused and misused in certain cultures of today. If we don't regard time as being as important as it should be and allocated a proper place in our culture, then we are unfaithful or less faithful than we should be to our heritage and to our conscience. Time is the past and the present and the future: time is continual and growth is continual and the community is continual.

When I talk about Muslims, when I talk about human beings, when I talk about the community, I do so within the framework of a number of expanding, concurrent circles. The closest circle is the family, then comes the relatives, the town, the city, the nation and the *Ummah* - the *Ummah* is the Islamic term referring to all Muslims interacting together and forming one community. It not only refers to modern Man, because modern Man was not born in a vacuum; modern Man is the outcome of yesterday; modern Man is a concept of the accumulation of all that has happened before.

And with respect to the future? What is the future anyway? We are not bystanders to tomorrow, to the future. We are not waiting on a bank of a river, watching and observing tomorrow till it comes. Our deeds, our

thoughts and our actions are the important factors and formulating essence of what tomorrow can be and what it is going to be. Whatever the situation, whether good or ill, what is happening today is the result of what we have done or what we have failed to do in the recent and distant past. Every action, every behaviour, every moment counts and is part of the system of Islam and the concept of responsibility. We are responsible for our actions, we are responsible for the minutes, we are responsible for the atoms, we are responsible for the most minor deed, as much as we are responsible for the great deed. We are also responsible for inaction and silence.

Education is the development of insight. We have senses as evident in seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling, but over all this, we have something deeper and more comprehensive - we have insight. It shows itself in the overall understanding of a situation, of a person, of a book, of a culture, of a problem. Like puzzle solving we put individual items together in an interacting fashion to give an overall picture, the sense of a pattern in the totality of a situation - this is insight. People are not equal. People are equal as human beings, but with respect to height, to weight, to intelligence, and to insight, they are not equal. He who has more insight is better than he who has less insight, as much as he who has more knowledge is better than he who has less knowledge.

To develop your insight is to educate yourself. To make your insight and vision deeper and wider, is to learn. Learning is not an abstract. Learning is not only something that we talk about - learning is something that we touch, experience and know. Learning is your insight and my insight and our insight - developed so that we can see more, understand more and act more wisely and effectively affecting that course of action of ours and of others. This is education.

Education never stops as long as we are alive. And as long as life goes on and as long as we can provide that kind of education that makes an individual tomorrow better than today, and today better than yesterday, and to the extent that we can continue moving forward, we experience progress. That progress will be measured in terms of what Man is doing with himself, what he is doing with his time, what he is doing with his education, what he is doing with his learning, what he is doing with his behaviour. I am talking about progress in terms of education, because I am talking about education and learning in terms of developing insights and the reconstructing of experience. Man has certain levels of experience. You experience life, you experience certain circles of life. Make life broader, make this experience

broader, make it deeper, make it higher, concern yourself with a wider range of interests. Don't look at your footsteps, but look to yesterday and look up at tomorrow so that your experience will be higher, deeper and wider. This is part of what is included in what is called 'reconstructing your experience'. When you are reconstructing your experience, expanding your experience, making your insights wider and deeper, you are learning. And this is the criteria of learning in education. If whatever you are doing is not fulfilling this criteria, then it is not education. You are imagining you are doing something when you are not. Education is not parroting, imitating, repeating. Education as growth must appear in wider action. It appears in your better behaviour that gives you better health, more wealth, and better use of your wealth. Let us make better use of our property, let us make better use of our time, let us make better use of our life. This in turn will benefit your friends, your neighbours and your community. When I am talking about community, I am talking about better housing. I am talking about cleaner roads. I am talking about better paved roads. There are things you can do as an individual - do them. There are things you can also do as a co-ordinating, organizing community - do them. And remember, that this kind of progress, this kind of improvement, is not only something that you as a human being should do, but this is something that a true Muslim should do because the Faith requires of a Muslim to improve the conditions of life. To make things better, is part of your responsibility. We might be talking about Islam, we might claim to be Muslims, but the criterion of a *Mu'min*, according to *Hadith* is that Faith (*Iman*) must not only be present in the heart but must be evident in behaviour. Without showing in behaviour, it is talk, it is lip-service, but it is not *Iman*. What is *Ibadah*? *Ibadah* is not only praying five times a day, although we should do that. *Ibadah* is not only fasting although we should do that. *Ibadah* is not only paying alms, although we should do that. *Ibadah* is not only going to Mecca, although we should do that if we can. *Ibadah* is based on the testimony, "I bear witness that *La illaha ila Allah Muhammad Rasul Allah*," and this testimony must fashion any action we are doing, to improve our lot materially, morally or spiritually. This is what distinguishes the Muslim concept from the Western concept. Maybe this is the measure and the most important difference in outlook and in action and in behaviour that we must pay attention to.

Education, hence, does not refer to product only or process only. Education refers to both process and product. An education system is a kind of entity that regulates educational processes, learning processes, and learning experiences thus leading to certain products. The aim for the product is always betterment. The product of today is better than the

product of yesterday, and the product of tomorrow, the product of the education we have outlined, the product of this better vision, better insight, better learning will be better than the product of today - this is progress. Now, we have a definite definition of progress - progress that has to do with education and education that has to do with progress. A dynamic concept - not talk, not verbalism, not parroting, such is not part of education. Talk is talk; words are words, and I would like to warn you that we have two kinds of words: the empty word, that is nonsense, leading you nowhere. You can talk a lot, saying nothing, saying nonsense. But there are other things that have substance - words that reflect meaning. Words that have substance and reflect meaning, are words that can cause action and affect behaviour. They can change people, material building can be changed, wealth can be accumulated, health can be better, clothing can be cleaner. But the human being is a larger entity. He must not concern himself only with accumulating money that he does not know what to do with, so living a shallow life, abusing the wealth that he has accumulated, or having a big building that he does not know what to do with, except that it develops pride - false pride. Rather man must know that all this material wealth must be marshalled in the service of God, in the service of Allah, in the service of our spiritual life. Don't tell me that material wealth is the most important thing. Don't tell me that *Doniah* (present life) is the most important thing. *Doniah* is important, but it is part and parcel of the totality of the configuration. Without material wealth, without material power, you wouldn't be in a position to say *Allaho Akbar*. You wouldn't even be able to say what you believe to be right, to say what you believe to be correct, because you wouldn't command respect. If you are thirsty, if you are ignorant, if you are poor, if you are sick - you might get sympathy. But you wouldn't get as much respect as an able person .

A Muslim is supposedly a respected person. When I use the word 'education', I am talking about the kind of education that can make a Muslim a respected person, not only because he commands material wealth or physical fitness, but because these form an important part of a person who is sure of himself, because he knows what he is doing, because his dignity is not based on false pride. His dignity is based on the fact that he knows he can say what he believes. Because he respects himself, others respect him. He can speak and act in a way that commands respect from others, who are not as good as he is. He can show where the right way lies so that they can follow.

Very often, when talking about 'modern Man' there is a tendency to confuse the phrase with the Western way of life. Westernization and the

Western way of life is the modern, developed way of life, proper for Western people, relevant to the culture of Western people. That is why we call it 'Westernization'. There is no such thing as development from a vacuum. When you move forward you have a starting point. But **you** cannot move forward from **my starting point**. If you are starting from somewhere and I am starting somewhere else, my progress might not be your progress. That is what I mean by saying that Westernization is modernization for Westerners. It might not be modernization for non-Western people. So, when we try to imagine that we can move forward from other starting points, we are already falling into irrelevancy, and this is one of our mistakes. Western people are people who have certain cultures. Out of these cultures they developed their own way of thinking. They developed industrialization, they developed the kind of social change that goes with this particular industrialization and in line with their way of thinking and insight, their opinions, their beliefs, or disbeliefs, and in line with their ideology. When we come and seek the fruits of their civilization, that does not make of us Western people. If I am using the fruits of the civilization of other people, that will not make me part of them.

I remember Ted Lucsin, a former editor of the *Free Press*, at one time one of the most elegant, most influential magazines in The Philippines. On the question of identity he recalled that he had always been brought up to think that he was an American and yet when he arrived in America he was addressed as 'stranger'.

The agony of Ted Lucsin was that he was confused as to his national identity. But what do these words 'American,' 'Filipino,' 'Italian', really mean? We are talking about identity. What was his identity? What did he stand for? Now, let me talk again about irrelevancy and relevancy. If what you are doing is meaningful to you, it is relevant. If what you are doing is making full use of your capabilities, it is relevant. If you are just imitating - it is irrelevant. If you are putting your money, your efforts, into something that has no return to you, it is irrelevant, even though it might have returns for others. If you are not doing what you think you should be doing just because of others you will feel a vacuum inside. You will not be as solid as you think you are. When you find that all these modern rewards are the contributions of others and that you are just a consumer, you will realize that yours is a minor role. You will discover that modern medicine is beyond your means, modern weaponry is beyond your means, modern homes are beyond your means, modern life is beyond your means. If modern life is beyond your means, you are indeed strangers to modernization. But we should not be

strangers to our lives. We must then find some kind of modern life where we are not strangers. We must look for the kind of modern education that is relevant; modern education that is not irrelevant from the standpoint of costs as much as from the standpoint of output. When education is so expensive that the masses cannot afford its costs and when it is producing the kind of persons that cannot contribute to the improvement of the lot of the people and the improvement of the community, it is irrelevant education and there is something wrong in the outlook of the people concerned. No doubt you are familiar with movements like the Hippies, like the Punks, like the Beatniks in the old days that looked at life as absurd and meaningless. The fact that many Western people look logically at life and find it absurd is a central problem of modern Western philosophies and an obstacle to the extension of the Western way of life to other cultures. This particular way of life which is enjoyed now by less than 20% of mankind, cannot be generalized to cover much more than that. We are already short of energy. Five per cent of the population, or even less, consumes 95% of the world's mineral and natural resources. Twenty per cent of the population are eating 95% of the world production of red meat. Fifteen per cent of the population is misusing the lumber of the world. We cannot generalize this way of life. If we want to double the output of red meat, we need to work for years to come and I'm not even sure that we can accomplish that. But when it comes to minerals and metals, it is a more difficult case. Lots of minerals are already seriously depleted. The only hope is to find alternatives which so far are a matter of speculation. Westernization as a way of life cannot be generalized to accommodate all humans. Not only that, nobody knows whether that way of life can be sustained or not, or for how long. Today's situation is based on cheap natural resources, captive markets, cheap labour and cheap energy. If this is the case, for how long can such a situation continue? If not, what kind of problems are waiting ahead? How long can this standard of living in the West and way of life be preserved? Whatever the answer, it is not particularly relevant to us. Would it not be more of our concern to look for alternatives? If we speak of alternatives, as I have hinted before, it should not be in the direction of the accumulating of more material wealth with the sole emphasis on material life. We cannot ignore the material essence of life on earth but must seek for a direction where the end should be the consumer, not machinery; the end is the man who can assign meaning to all these material benefits. Man could not find meaning in these material benefits without ideals of justice, dignity, self-respect, love and interaction among people. This will lead to the community that is better than yesterday and better than today. This is the standard of tomorrow that we are looking for. How can we assure this? What is the kind of technology; what is the kind of

thinking that we can pass on to the students? What is Islam? What is Islam, that the Muslims of today are not the beneficiaries of it? But Muslims, if they make a commitment to it, they can present it better. Let us talk about Islam also in simple terms.

The validity of Islam is not in its complexity. The beauty of Islam is in its simplicity. If I am saying that the poorest farmer in the far distant *Bukidnon* is called upon to be a Muslim, how can he talk about the complicated Islam that only higher scholars can understand? Islam is all sides. It must be shown in the simplest terms to the simplest of men. And this is one of the miracles of the Quran and one of the miracles of Islam, because every time you read the Quran you find new ideas. Every time you assess your growth and read it again you will find new meaning. It grows with you, addresses you differently at your various levels.

ISLAMIZATION. I do not like to use words loosely. What is a system? A system is an entity of interacting elements. These interacting elements, the body of these interacting elements, the entity of these interacting elements, this is what I mean by 'system'. Islam is a system. Systems that in turn interact with their environment may be regarded as open or dynamic. Islam then is a **dynamic** outlook. The word 'dynamic' is very important. Islam is not merely an outlook - it is a dynamic outlook. Islam is not a heritage. Islam does not belong to the past. Islam is a dynamic movement; dynamic action, dynamic behaviour, dynamic meaning, dynamic outlook, always changing, always moving, always vital, always coping with the changing life of changing Man. Islam is suitable for Man in all times. Without its dynamic concept it would not be suitable. The form of Islam which was suitable for a man in the 9th Century, would not be suitable for a man in the 21st Century. Because Islam is dynamic, its terms are suitable for Man in all times. Its terms can only be suitable if we take this outlook and couple it with this term 'dynamic'. Islam is a dynamic outlook on the basis of faith in one God, one Creator, one Supreme Power, All-powerful, All-Capable, All-Merciful. Islam makes sense when, without losing sight of the substance, the form, by being flexible, can be relevant. The greatness of Man on earth makes sense. Life on earth makes sense, any life - the life of men and the life of people, the individual as well as communities. We believe in the rights of nations as much as of individuals. Take as a case, the Muslim community. Sometimes we are more committed, sometimes we are less committed. Consequently, sometimes we are up, sometimes we are down. To be committed to Islam and to behave in the style of a good Muslim belonging to a good, true and solid Muslim community, it must be realized

that such commitments have requirements and obligations, i.e., a cost and a price. We have to pay for it, to labour to attain higher levels of closeness to God. Faithful prayer is a level, faithful worshipping is a level, sacrificing your comfort is a level, sacrificing your interests sometimes is a level and so on, but this is the obligation or price that is relevant to your commitment to your faith. It is easier to live without commitments and obligations. But for nothing you get nothing. Without paying your price you can go ahead enjoying an easy, loose life but you are less than what you were before, you are weaker, you are less clean, because it requires labour to be clean, you are not entitled to good houses, you are not entitled to a good life, because a higher standard of living requires more labour and discipline to attain higher production. As with the individual so with communal Muslim life - less labour less results.

Even on the question of faith, we are not equally faithful, and the same person is not equally faithful at different times. Sometimes my faith is strong, sometimes my faith is less strong.

Sayyidina Ibrahim, in the Quran says what may be translated as: " 'God, show me how you can revive the dead.' God answered him, 'Why! Don't you believe?' He said, 'Yes, but my heart should be rest assured, (so I can be more faithful)'."

Anyway, what is the purpose of birth, of life on earth? To simplify the *Ayat*: "I did not create jinn and men on earth except to worship Me".

What is '... to worship Me'? Some of us think that worshipping means staying in the mosque. Go to the mosque but don't stay there because staying in the mosque all the time is not worshipping God. Worshipping God means fulfilling His directives. Worshipping God means fulfilling His orders - which have meaning. All right, what are His orders? They are elaborate. They are defined and available. Read them in the Quran.

Make your life better and look at your life as a continuum. This is the difference between somebody who lives on earth and thinks that that is it, he eats and grows then perishes, and somebody who lives on earth, labours, endeavours, enjoys and knows that there is life after this. This is the basic difference, because there is *Akhirat*, there is meaning to life. Without *Akhirat* what difference would it make if you lived 50 years or 500? What gives value and meaning to technological and medical research? What difference would it make if these 50 years are spent in agony? Or spent in palaces,

gardens or among beautiful flowers? These are major differences in outlook.

Islam has several circles. I will enumerate some of them. Number two (I will give number one later), is the relationship between man and man; number three is the relationship between man and the community - between man and the society. And society, as I have told you before, is a dynamic concept. Society is not only the village or city - but the community, then the village, then the city, then the nation, then the *Ummah* and then humanity and the whole world including those before and after us. That is depending on who you are and how dynamically you can view yourself. The relationship between community and community, this is part of the third point also.

Now I come to number one. The innermost circle is the relationship between man and God, *Subhanaho wa ta'Ala*. The relationship between man and man is influenced and affected by the relationship between man and God, and the relationship between man and the community is influenced and affected by, and is a continuance of, the previous relationship between man and God, and the relationship between nation, community and each other is based on all these relationships and interaction.

Well, are we talking about Utopia? Not if it is the unattainable. We are addressing ourselves to something that, even if we cannot fully fulfil, we should never stop from trying to attain, from trying to fulfil. This is **hope**. People without hope are people who are doomed. People without faith are people who will not find meaning in labour. People without hopes, dreams, faith, are people who would not find the minutiae of labour worthwhile. There is no such thing as a man who is bad or good by nature, or a community that is backward on account of race, but there are people who have the means to move with their faith, hopes and dreams, and there are people who are doomed because they live so narrowly and shortsightedly. Islam gives us hope. Islam gives us faith, gives us dreams, and gives us the feeling of value and the sense of responsibility - not false, but demanding and real.

If you are thinking of modernization and Westernization as synonymous, then Westernization is a challenge to Islam. This is a true fact. So do not worry that there is a conflict between the Western way of life and the Islamic way of life. It is the responsibility of those who believe in the Western way of life and are not believers in Islam to fight all points of weaknesses in it, if they find them. And it is your responsibility to tell them that such points of

weakness either exist or do not exist, and what points of weaknesses exist in us as human beings or in us as Muslims, and whether these weaknesses are natural in us or just temporary. This is the conflict of the day and it is our duty to win the conflict. Winning, incidentally, does not mean destroying others but rather in creating the kind of synthesis that improves both. So it is a victory for Man. Winning the conflict cannot take place by shouting, not by words that do not mean much, but by deeds and by action, by the ability and power to do. And this power cannot be accumulated and cannot be earned by hoping, by day-dreaming. No nation can improve its lot by day-dreaming. If we are talking about real things, we must be talking about real efforts. For nothing you get nothing. You must invest in the kind of education we have discussed. You must pursue it minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, year after year, generation after generation. This is the nature of things. There are no shortcuts. The more you put in, the more you get out; the more you earn, the more you are able to spend; the more you try, the more you hope to achieve. Don't disillusion yourself. Sitting lazily down in the sun will get you nowhere. Being happy or witty will get you nowhere. Improve the capability of yourself to develop your insight, improve your skill, learn to do something. This is how you may hope to change; this is how to hope to change others and affect the action of others - be it the individual, be it the nation. They are in a continuous process that challenges you. Only if you are solid have you a chance in such a conflict, and you can be solid by the relevant Islamization of your educational system. The Islamization of your educational system is not as simple as adding some hours in studying the Quran, some hours in the study of *Sunnah* and some hours of Islamic education. This is the mixture where items can be sorted any time. What I am calling for, what I mean, is a kind of interacting of all things together, resulting in the making of a kind of person that is good, able and in accord with himself.

Islamic education is any education that can achieve these objectives and any education that cannot achieve these objectives is not Islamic education. I told you a few minutes ago what education is and what it is not. Don't imagine that you are doing something when you are not. I told you what is empty talk and what is talk with substance. Now, I am telling you what kind of Islamic education I am referring to.

Islamic education touches upon any kind of knowledge that is needed for the formulation, improvement, and development of a modern Muslim.

We need liberal education, Islamic as well as Western, we need physics,

we need chemistry, we need engineering, we need medicine, etc., because without these we cannot have hospitals, but we will have sick people. We cannot have good houses, but we will have shaky houses; we cannot have property, but we will have the poor; everything would be beyond our means.

But these are means to an end - this end is dynamically valid in as far as it develops the kind of community that is good, that is co-operative, that is happy, doing everything in the name of God and doing it as some form of praise to God, appreciating His rewards. Islamic education has direction, it has a product, it is a product, and it is a process. Islamic education is parallelly linked to progress. Islamic education is uplifting of its people and covers everything, including all project plans, all school buildings, all methodologies of teaching that respect the child and the grown-up, give him a feeling of dignity, give him pride in his ideals, give him pride in himself, give him a real feeling of belongingness. It can give him these feelings that can manifest themselves in community service, and I am looking at the *Jamiatul Philippine Al-Islamiah* and looking to some of you. I am looking to those among you who have the quality of leadership to show me, to show yourself, that you can have some programmes of community development in the name of Islam and as a service to Islam and a service to Islamic commitments and ideals (*Qudwa*). You must demonstrate leadership that others consult, that others will imitate and follow intelligently, so that they will know the difference between what is sound and what is vacuous.

So Muslim society's contribution to the world of today is by manifesting what you can **do** and not just recreating the ideals of Islam and feeling sorry about what we could but do not do. God in His wisdom causes the rise and fall of nations to be natural things depending on their contribution to civilization and humanity and ideals. What is good and what is ill is for yourself. God is guiding you but you are responsible. The sense of responsibility is the major part of Islamizing your educational system. Secular society and the secular world must not divert you from this outlook. They cannot in any way stop you from pursuing this outlook.

Some among you can carry on the job of crystallizing this particular outlook, and out of it can initiate and continuously improve and perfect the Islamization process, because it is a never-ending process. This Islamization process of our educational system is needed so that it will be more and more Islamic. Don't stand short of introducing subjects such as the Quran and *Sunnah* and Islamic education - you must introduce them. But don't introduce them as pieces of knowledge that you put in the corner of

your minds, separated from other knowledge. Teach them in such a way that they will be interacting with others, interacting with themselves, so that they can, in the final analysis, influence and affect action and behaviour.

If it does not produce obviously Islamic patterns of behaviour, the process of Islamization is like a wild gun shot. Islamization must influence behaviour. Behaviour is a product; behaviour is an end-product, albeit continuous and progressive. But remember that you must be in a continual process of contemplation. Tie your prayers to your doing; tie what you are saying to God in your prayers with what you are hearing from God when you read the Quran. The Quran is a blessing inasmuch as you do what you understand from it, or follow what you understand from it. If you don't understand it, then you are 'parroting'. 'Parroting' is nothing, 'parrot - learning' is nothing. The Quran is (*Barakah*) a blessing, it is (*Na'amah*) good inasmuch as you can get something out of it.

The same applies to the *Sunnah* and Islamic history. Islamic history is not a story of glory only, because the history of the Muslim peoples is not all victories. Muslim peoples had in the past as they have in the present and will have in the future, the strong and the weak, the good and the bad. For ill or for good we have ups and downs. Let me tell you, if we could achieve right in this development, then we are serving ourselves. If we do not, then we are not doing what we should.

Let me end with this *Ayat*. The general meaning is:

"Don't obey he whose heart has been blinded from seeking and remembering Allah, and who followed his whims, and whose state of life became loose and fragile".

The easy way is not necessarily the best way. The state of your life will be loose if you follow your whims, and when you loose yourself from being committed you follow your whims. Hear and remember that God is always with you. God is always with us. God is watching now. He knows what we are doing, what we mean, what we want from a meeting like this. It is not glory. Is it fame? Is it mere attendance? Or is it real labour, honest labour, honestly trying in the hope that we can improve and that we achieve a better tomorrow?

My brothers, I thank you for giving me this opportunity. Not many people are favoured with such an opportunity and I am really thankful for it. Thank you.