

مجلة الشريعة والدراس الإسلامية

فصلية علمية محكمة تصدر عن مجلس النشر العلمي - جامعة الكويت

تاريخ نشأة وتطوير مقرر الثقافة الإسلامية في الجامعات العربية تجربة جامعة قطر أنموذجا

د. محمد إقبال فرحات

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البحث الثامن

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أستاذ مشارك في قسم العقيدة والدعوة
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د. محمد إقبال فرحات^(١)

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ملخص البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تسليط الضوء على البدايات الأولى لنشأة مقرر (الثقافة الإسلامية) عند الشيخ راغب الطباخ الذي ألف كتاباً لطلبة المعاهد الشرعية في حلب ودمشق، يختلف في المضمون عن المقرر الذي ألفه الأستاذ محمد المبارك تحت مسمى (نظام الإسلام) والذي اصطلح على تسميته فيما بعد بالثقافة الإسلامية ، ثم البدايات الأولى لهذا المقرر بهذا الاسم ، يعرض فيه الإسلام كنظام شامل، لطلبة الجامعات، ويركز البحث على الدور الهام الذي قام به الأستاذ محمد المبارك في إقرار وتعميم هذا المقرر في اتحاد الجامعات العربية، ودوره في تأليف كتب المقرر في مختلف الجامعات التي عمل فيها، ثم نعرج على الأستاذ الدكتور عدنان زرزور والذي كان من أشهر تلاميذ الأستاذ المبارك وإسهاماته المتعددة في الثقافة الإسلامية عموماً أو كمقررات دراسية في الجامعات، وما ينبغي أن يكون عليه المقرر، ونختم البحث بالحديث عن التجربة الرائدة العملية للدكتور محمد المصلح والذي يعتبر من أشهر تلاميذ الدكتور عدنان زرزور في جامعة قطر، وكان التطوير فيها نظرياً وعملياً، ولاشك بأن عملية التطوير يجب أن تنطلق؛ وفقاً للمستجدات والتحديات التي تستلزم إعادة النظر في المقرر شكلاً ومضموناً ومنهجاً تدريسياً؛ كلما دعت الحاجة إلى تطويره، وبخاصة ونحن نعيش في عصر التحديات المستجدة التي تواجه شباب الجيل في هذا العصر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الثقافة الإسلامية - محمد المبارك - عدنان زرزور - محمد المصلح - جامعة قطر.

(١) أستاذ مشارك في كلية الشريعة والدراسات الإسلامية في جامعة قطر، منذ عام ٢٠١٣. حاصل على شهادة الدكتوراه في التفسير وعلوم القرآن من جامعة الزيتونة عام ١٩٩٨ م، والدكتوراه في الحديث الشريف وعلومه من جامعة الملايا عام ٢٠١٣ م، والماجستير في التفسير وعلوم القرآن من جامعة الزيتونة، عام ١٩٨٩ م، والماجستير في الحديث الشريف وعلومه من جامعة الكويت، عام ٢٠٠٠ م. والليسانس في أصول الدين من جامعة الكويت، عام ١٩٨٧ م. وهو عضو باحث في عدد من المراكز البحثية في العالم. له كتابان مطبوعان، وما يزيد على ثلاثين بحثاً محكماً منشوراً في المجالات العلمية المحكمة. الاهتمامات البحثية: التفسير وعلوم القرآن، والحديث النبوي، والعقيدة والفكر الإسلامي.

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4. There should be constant development for Islamic Culture course because students face different challenges in different times, for instance, challenges that those students faced in the last centuries are totally different from the challenges that students are facing in this century.

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quality and standards?

Undoubtedly, active creative teacher is the cornerstone for presenting the syllabus with high quality.

What is effective teaching?

Effective teaching requires suitable and encouraging learning environments where students can get completely engaged with the contents and topics of the course of Islamic Culture. It is teacher who is responsible for finding proper ways to provide students with such necessary environments. He must be creative in teaching methods and in teaching his students accordingly with the situational context of the subject matter.

Conclusion

After a close reprisal of the subject, we conclude the following:

1. Islamic Culture is one of the most essential subjects that must be given special attention by those in charge of faculties of shari'a. This is because Islamic Culture could be the only course that provides students not specializing in Islamic studies with necessary information about Islamic culture. It is essential for those in charge to keep developing Islamic Culture in order for students and Muslims to be able to face and overcome the ongoing challenges.
2. Experience of University of Qatar in teaching Islamic Culture has been proved to be the best ever so far.
3. Due to the political conditions in 2011 (the Arab Spring), some Arab universities tend to stop offering Islamic Culture in their syllabuses.

lecturers in their journey of studying Islamic Culture. Students should use this guide either during their study to the Islamic Culture course or during their life journey. Students must perceive the course as a long training journey that helps them to understand Islamic culture. Indeed, it is student who should work hard to acquire Islamic knowledge. This requires him to be patients, persistent and diligent. Besides, student must be responsible for preparing his own notebook in which he has summarized all lessons, lectures, discussions and references. It is in fact important for student to use a notebook to write down whatever comes to his mind such as exploratory questions.

As for lecturer, he has to help students to discuss and explore new aspects of Islamic culture. He has to provide his students with the necessary tools that may help them understand, discuss and explore something new about Islamic Culture. Besides, teacher must provide his students with the right scientific methods to search for something new about Islamic Culture. Then he has to reward those who have worked hard done something remarkable in respect with Islamic Culture. Despite the fact that students' journey to comprehensively understand Islamic Culture requires them to have strong determination, endless efforts, diligence and sincerity, they will definitely acquire very valuable knowledge that would be of great significance in their lives. Such valuable knowledge could be their most effective motivation for self-learning.

How to present the course of Islamic Culture with high

policies regarding the marks allocated for classroom participation.

Mid-term exam (20 marks):

Mid-term exam assesses student's cultural knowledge that s/he has got from lecturer in the lecture. This exam assesses students' understanding, self-expression and ability of analysis and persuasion. Lecturer has right to divide the total mark of the mid-term exam into quizzes.

Final exam (35 marks)

Final exam examines students' understanding, self-expression and ability of understanding and persuasion. The exam covers all the topics of the course.

Development of a cultural handbook for the students and teacher/professor of the course

The committee in charge of developing Islamic culture course decided on one specific handbook that summarizes Islamic Culture course and that students should use as a reference. This handbook was prepared in order for the committee to achieve specific goals that may significantly enhance students' knowledge about Islamic Culture. Nevertheless, the handbook suffers from several issues that may hinder the required accomplishment of the specific goals. In fact, there is no specific book that addresses challenges that students of Islamic Culture face. Hence, the committee agreed on developing a specific guide/handbook that is easy to edit on in line with the specific goals to overcome the possible challenges.

Use of the Cultural Guide/Handover

This guide should be the map that guides students as well as

Presenting a lecture: Addressing a topic from the third and fourth themes

This activity aims to provide students with an opportunity to independently review some of the vocabulary of the course and present a brief summary of it in the classroom. The activity may also help students to interact with one another and to benefit from important materials, summary, using methodological tools in discussing cultural challenges. Besides, it may enhance students' awareness of the internal and external challenges that the Muslim World has been facing. Furthermore, it may reflect students' behavior and engagement with others. This may expose and emphasize students' character to the extent that encourages students to encourage one another and to get self-protection.

Class participation (15 marks)

The aim of this activity is to encourage students to interact in the classroom and to develop his critical ability as well as dialogue skills. This can be accomplished by:

1. preparing for the lecture in advance, for instance, student should be well aware of the topics and presentation slides.
2. be ready to answer exploratory and introductory questions asked by the teacher.
3. participating with students in respect with the activities and reports.
4. adding an idea of a piece of information related to the lecture.
5. participating in the classroom activities.

* It is pivotal for teacher to inform his students about his

Discourse analysis helps students to understand what the debate is about analytically and critically.

Fundamental study (foundational authenticating study)

This kind of study means that students can conduct (by a teamwork) research to address a contemporary cultural issue. This kind of research ought to develop students' creative writing and composition skills, critical thinking, accurate discussion and analysis of the study findings. Such a development for students' skills ought to be based on accurate scientific methods. When choosing a topic to discuss or investigate, a student must discuss the topic with his/her teacher/professor. The topic/the subject matter under investigation must be done by all the team members who should all play a part in collecting, discussing and analyzing the data and in making final conclusions. Such a collaboration between the team members may develop and deepen their experiences and research skills at both theoretical and practical levels.

Critical Reading

Having discussed with their teacher/professor about what book to critically discuss and read, students should be able to present critical analytical study of the book and relate it with the temporary issues. If the book is large, it is better for each student to address one chapter and to highlight all the pros and cons. Such an activity may encourage student to use library, which may thus help him to acquire a great deal of cultural knowledge and to train him to be a critical reader.

in line with the subject matter under investigation or randomly from the study population. With very little interference on the part of teacher, a student runs a panel discussion to discuss the main topics. The discussion is recorded and discussed by those in charge to figure out the broad orientations to be elaborated in the report. Such an instrument/technique is used for students to explore the phenomenon more deeply. The discussion in fact demonstrates students' opinions and attitudes towards the debate and helps participants understand the depths of the phenomenon.

4. Observation:

Student observes a specific phenomenon. He goes to the place of the phenomenon taking notes for what he has observed without any intervention. Such an instrument is suitable for observing phenomena that are difficult to talk about and that take place in particular location. This instrument is suitable for studying behavior directly and while it occurs.

5. Discourse analysis:

Having observed oral or written texts, student starts analyzing these texts and knowing the main ideas and orientations addressed. Then s/he starts analyzing the context of these texts and getting to know the spatiotemporal dimensions of the text and how such dimensions are affected by some other relevant variables. After this s/he starts interpreting the text and understanding the logic of what s/he has discovered. This instrument helps student to understand the nature and norm of the rolling discourse whether it is taken from (social) media, the Internet or other relevant press.

witnessing.

It is important that the phenomenon be clearly defined and accurately specified to students when preparing the report. To study these phenomena, students should use one of the following field study tools:

1. Survey study (questionnaire): student selects the study population that should be a small group (college students for example). In case it is difficult to reach the whole study population, it is possible to focus on only a sample to be selected accurately. The individuals of the selected samples should be interviewed to know their opinions about the matter under investigation. Results are then interpreted and discussed. Survey study is the best method to study any phenomenon.

2. Structured interview: student carries out a set of structured interviews and makes some questions to help him obtain desired results. Then he chooses some of those interested in the phenomenon to meet. After that he objectively presents and discusses the results of these interviews divided accordingly with the topics; not with the interviews). This is the best instrument in case the study under investigation is in need for collecting information from specialists about the phenomenon.

3. Focus group: it is a discussion session between a group of people where a student plays a role of “coordinator and observer”. Some students are then asked to choose a group of people who either affect the phenomenon or who are affected by the phenomenon under investigation. These students are either chosen selectively

accordingly with their surroundings and environment. Such ideas must be related to the 'topics of the Course'.

6. It may provide students with an opportunity to play a part in developing the 'Course'. This could be done by students' observations and notes about the topics and teaching methods used in delivering the lessons in Islamic Culture course.

In the Domain of Culture, the following points must be considered

1. A student ought to state down the date and address of the lecture and then summarize the main points addressed by the lecturer.

2. In the assessment part after the lecture is finished, a student ought to state down his/her own notes about the lecture. Out of the total number of the lectures, Cultural File is made, and a student should obtain 15 marks.

Presentation and research activities (15 marks)

Student can get this activity done by one of the following methods:

1- Field study: this activity aims to link the course to society, train students to work in a team, use social scientific research tools in whole or in part, in accordance with the workload and the nature of the study that students will carry out. Each group of students prepares a field study on a phenomenon and connects it to one of the course topics. Some of the topics that students can work on are for instance smoking, students' being influenced by the West, use of social media, atheism and other phenomena that society is

based on these activities:

- Cultural file/chapter (15 marks)

Cultural file is the most important activity covered by Islamic Culture. It is very important for students since aiming to accomplish some scientific skills and objectives. Such skills and objectives that cultural file covers may have different benefits as follows:

1. It may help students to concentrate during the lecture since whatever they state down in their notebooks is their main reference of the whole course.

2. It may improve students' skills of writing and summarizing of the main points and ideas of each lesson in line with their style and understanding.

3. It may encourage students to interact with the lecturer in the classroom. This will motivate students to ask about every piece of information they are not sure about before stating down the main points in their notebooks. This may also help lecturer to explore individual differences between students so as so s/he enhances their weaknesses and improves constructive dialogue between students.

4. It may help students to interact and communicate with one another in and outside the classroom, that is, students will try to be sure that their summary is accurate so as to other 'absent students' benefit of the summary of the 'attendees'.

5. It may help students acquire broad cultural horizons beyond the lesson since students are asked to state down their ideas

enhance such identity

Language, history, heritage, charismatic social figures and spatiotemporal symbols.

Possible ways to promote and reinforce identity.

Characteristics of Islamic Nation

- Benevolence, civilizational advancement, enjoining good and forbidding evil, promotion of virtue and prevention of vice, and calling people to embrace Islam (Da'wah).

- Being in charge of all theological and jurisprudent- based missions for which the Ummah has been created.

- Discussing the most serious challenges that Ummah faces and discussing the possible ways to overcome such challenges.

Outreach and Relationship with others

- Introduction

- Interface between the topics related to Ummah and the topics related to interrelated relationship with others.

- Concept of 'Other'.

- Concept of allegiance and disownment.

Holistic view of understanding the relationships with others

The holistic principle in comprehending relationships.

Dialogue is a means for mutual understanding and making relationship.

Collaboration in respect with humanitarian commonalities

- Humanitarian commonalities

Policies and tools of assessment: Such policies and tools are

2. Rabbanism/divinity.
3. Humanistic.
4. Integration and inclusiveness.
5. Universal.
6. Eternity and immortality.

Sources of Islamic Culture:

1. Divine revelation.
2. Assiduity; Ijtihād.
3. Islamic heritage.
4. Human experience.

Pillars of Islam:

- 1- *'aqīdah (Islamic creed).*
- 2- *Values system.*
- 3- *Islamic jurisprudence.*
- 4- *Main elements of Islam.*
- 5- Life systems.
- 6- Protection of Islam.

Muslim Nation

Introduction:

Connecting between the topics related to Muslim Nation and Islamic Message.

Concept of Ummah (Muslim Nation).

Interface between 'aqīdah and Ummah.

The relationship of the concept of the followers of the Sunnah (Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'ah) with Ummah.

Main elements of Islamic identity and possible methods to

5. Body

Islamic methodology in dealing with all basic elements of human

Islam creates a balance to deal with each element and considers the peculiarities of each element. Islam also compares such elements in respect with other cultures.

Purposes of creation

Introduction:

- Significance of knowing the purposes of creation.
- Comparison between Islamic philosophy and others in respect with the issue of creation.

There are five main purposes in Islam:

1. Worship
2. Caliphate
3. Construction of the Earth: Overall constructive mindset and behavior.
4. Affliction
5. Difference and disagreement

Islamic Message

Introduction:

Connecting Islamic message with human being.

Islamic worldview and how humans need it:

Islamic worldview

1. Islam is based on 'human instinct', which differentiates Islam from other religions.

2. The effective use of modern tools should support the content of Islamic Culture course.

3. Providing students with research tools and appropriate methodological approaches which are a key for self-learning.

4. It is essential to get students know about the challenges and issues of their countries. This demonstrates the essential role of university which may become trusted by community.

5. Exams should be considered as learning tools rather than assessment mechanisms.

6. Teacher's behavior and influence over student are as important as his knowledge and teaching style.

The General content of the Islamic Culture course can be described as follows:

1. A general overview of the course: this includes a- a map of all parts of the course and b- significance of the distinctive features of the course as a general mandatory course.

2. Key words: a- concept of religion, b-concept of culture, c-concept of knowledge, and d-concept of civilization.

Humans and the philosophy of creation:

Introduction

Human nature

Basic elements of human:

1. Instinct
2. Soul
3. Mind
4. Psyche

Muslims are facing.

- f- Students can make a future plan.
- g- Students can use critical analytical research approach to find sources related to Islamic culture and heritage.
- h-Students can use methodological tools to discuss and refute all suspicions about Islam.
- i- Students are able to present their Islamic civilization and culture, and they should have effective communication skills when communicating with others.

3. Philosophy for teaching the course of Islamic Culture⁽¹⁾

Teaching philosophy of Islamic Culture focuses on:

1. Finding an active learning environment that motivates students to:
 - a- Get completely involved in the educational process.
 - b- Self-directed learning.
 - c- Using various sources.
 - d- Triggering full potentials and capabilities.
 - e- Raising up an independent character.
 - f- Developing self-confidence and encouraging initiatives.
 - g- Enjoying learning.
 - h- Fostering self-confidence
 - i- To encourage the culture of questions and practical skills to develop scientific and critical thinking.
 - j- Collaborative relationships between Muslim individuals.

(1) See *The Developed Course Material for Islamic Culture*.

to accomplish the following stages of development:

1- development of unique objectives for the Islamic Culture course. This was to:

a- enable students to draw a comprehensive cognitive map about Islamic system, philosophy, values and purposes.

b- enable students to analyze elements and features of civilizational and cultural identity of the Muslim Nation.

c- enable students to play an essential cultural role in line with their awareness of the entire system of values and purposes of Islam.

d- enable students to entirely explore historical, civilizational and heritage-related achievements of Islam.

e- enable students to apply some effective cognitive and methodological approaches to deal with current cultural and intellectual challenges.

2- students are expected to benefit significantly from the developed course of Islamic culture. These benefits could be summarized as follows:

a- students may be able to deeply express their understanding of the nature of humans, philosophy and creation.

b- students may be able to draw a comprehensive map of the general principles and values of Islam.

c- students could be proud of being Muslims.

d- students can express their awareness of Islamic civilization, history and achievements.

e- students can talk about the challenges and problems that

constant constructive development of the course⁽¹⁾”

Criteria for developing the project of Islamic Culture in University of Qatar

Muhammad Almuslih presented two papers⁽²⁾ in which he shed light on the necessity of developing Islamic Culture. He discussed the historical context of the inception of the Islamic Culture and spoke about the experience of University of Qatar in developing and teaching Islamic Culture. He proposed some significant criteria for effective development in Islamic Culture. He developed his criteria based on high quality standards and different innovative approaches. Muhammad Almuslih's paper aimed to present a comprehensive guide that helped the teamwork to exactly know what to be done for developing Islamic Culture. The guideline was considered as a map consisting of all the necessary plans and outcomes to be accomplished by the team⁽³⁾. The team was made⁽⁴⁾

(1) See Muhammad Al-Muslih: *Towards the Effective Development of the Courses of the Faculties of Sharia. Islamic Culture at the Faculty of Sharia at University of Qatar as a Model* (2016)

(2) The research article was presented in one of the seminars taking place at the Faculty of Sharia in 2015. The second research article entitled “Use of the Criteria of Effectiveness in Developing the Course of Islamic Culture at the University of Qatar” was presented in the second seminar before the President of the University. The article was then reviewed and published by *The Journal of College of Sharia and Islamic Studies (JCSIS)* at Qatar University.

(3) A team work was headed by Muhammad Al-Muslih and other members like 'Adnān Zarzūr, Alqrši 'Abd Alrahym, 'Abd Alġabār S'yd, Muhammad 'Ayaš Alsa'ydi, Mūsah Alzahrāni and Muhammad Iqbal Farahat.

(4) It was the Faculty Dean Ibrahim Alansari who asked for the committee to be formed in 27/12/2015.

Salient Features of Islamic Culture course in University of Qatar

Development of Islamic Culture as a course initially took place when Yūsuf Alṣadīqī's deanship period was about to come to an end. The course was significantly developed after Ibrāyīm Alansāri and Muḥammad Almusliḥ had been in charge of Faculty of sharī'a. After such a remarkable development for Islamic Culture, a committee was selected to develop other courses at Faculty of sharī'a. Islamic Culture was first selected to develop by the committee. This was due to the fact that Islamic Culture has been a core university subject for all students to pass in at University of Qatar. In this regard, Muḥammad Almusliḥ stated that "Islamic Culture, being a core university course, is the mirror of Faculty of sharī'a that is reflected on all other faculties. That is, students of Islamic Culture, whose number could reach up to 2000 students, can be considered ambassadors of Faculty of sharī'a in all other faculties. Only if well-cultivated and taught, these students will reflect a positive image that represents the staff of Faculty of sharī'a. This means that there is a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of those in charge of developing 'Islamic Culture'. He went on arguing that "there is a challenge that students face when taking Islamic Culture. Such a challenge must be faced by

gauged by the fact that the final exam was set to only examine students' cognitive aspects and neglected other essential skills of 'higher thinking' such as comparison, analysis and deduction. That is, it was hard to assess students' answers of the questions related to 'higher thinking skills' since there were specific answers approved by the supervisory committee.

Islamic Culture Course had undergone some modifications at University of Qatar as follows:

- 1- Standardization of the course,
- 2- Selection of one professor to teach the course,
- 3- Cancellation of both the status of 'active teachers/professor' and the qualitative differences between teachers/professors,
- 4- There should be no contradiction between a professor's independence and responsibility and his being free in choosing his teaching philosophy at university⁽¹⁾.

Role of Muḥammad Al-Muslih in Developing Islamic Culture Course from 2016 to 2021

Muḥammad Al-Muslih's experience for developing Islamic Culture at University of Qatar is one of the experiences that Arab and Islamic universities should emulate in developing Islamic Culture course. This is because his experience was built on strong logical scientific, methodological and philosophical basics as to be discussed in the subsequent sections.

(1) Muḥammad Al-Muslih; *Use of the Criteria of Effectiveness in Developing the Course of Islamic Culture at the University of Qatar*, pp: 296-287

Muhammad Al-Muslih who stated that the process of merging and integrating two courses of Islamic culture in one course changed the objectives of this course. After the integration process, the objectives doubled up to seven; reduced to six and then five. Such an integration and change of objectives affected the quality of the content, for instance, the integrated course presented quantitative data rather than qualitative data. The course also did not make any distinction between primary and secondary objectives which did not meet the quality criteria⁽¹⁾

The integration of two courses of Islamic culture in one course posed some problems as follows:

- 1- It was hard for students to understand the content and digest terminologies and vocabularies since the book was written by a group of authors each one having his own way of writing. Also, as the integrated book was replaced with one note book consisting of all different sources of the main book.
- 2- It was uneasy to conduct exams and assess students since many would be developing the final exam in line with the content of the integrated book or 'notebook'. In other words, Islamic Culture final exam was developed mainly by a specialized committee in order to emphasize upon 'quality' between all groups of students.
- 3- Poor assessment due to the integration of the two courses in one book posed some issues. Some of these issues could be

(1) See Muhammad Al-Muslih: *The Use of the Criteria of Effectiveness in Developing the Course of Islamic Culture at the University of Qatar*, pp: 295-291

some of which are: 1- methodological issues, 2- old statistical tables and maps that need to be updated and 3- printing-related errors.

As for methodological issues, he has found some mistakes in the chapter of ‘Challenges and Difficulties that Face the Muslim World’. This chapter was presented in a simple way; hence, he suggested some modifications concerning methodological aspects divided into two parts: theoretical and practical. One of the methodological-related issues was related to the difficulty in differentiating between what was political and what was not, what is Islamic and what is not.

Some political issues were among the sensitive topics that were not easy to talk about, because such issues may be of concern to some political regimes. These necessitated writers to address such topics indirectly. It is necessary for writers writing on Islamic Culture to categorize their topics as accurately as possible, for instance, they must talk about all political-related issues in one chapter etc.

One of the important notes that I’ve mentioned about the second unit in the ‘memorandum’ was the writes’ inconsistency in considering ‘concept’ and ‘terminology’ as synonyms⁽¹⁾

It seems that such inconsistency and illogicality did not lead to the required development. This was emphasized by

(1) See Muḥammad Iqbal Farahat: “Report about the Notebook of Islamic Culture and Contemporary Issues”.

students as well as all other Muslims⁽¹⁾.

To develop Islamic Culture, the two courses were integrated into one. A memorandum consisting of all the topics that cover the two courses was made. The notebook included three units: 1- Islamic Culture which talks about the concept, sources and features of Islamic Culture, 2- elements of Islamic Culture, and 3- contemporary challenges of Islamic Culture⁽²⁾.

In the fall of 2015, a memorandum was made in the name of Islamic culture and contemporary issues. It consisted of five units: Islamic World at present times, 2- nature of Islamic culture, 3- the elements of Islamic culture, 4- Islamic culture and contemporary issues, and 5- Islamic culture from others' perspective⁽³⁾.

According to Muḥammad Al-Muslih, integrating two courses of Islamic Culture in one course caused a serious problem in respect with the course objectives, content and vocabularies. Since the two integrated courses have two different goals, the course became very heavy, unorganized, inconsistent, and inaccurate.⁽⁴⁾

At personal level, the author of the present study was requested to write some notes about the memorandum of Islamic Culture. He found some serious mistakes in the memorandum,

(1) See: 'Adnān Zarzūr, Yahyḥ Rabī' and Ḥamd 'Abd Al'zīz, *Islamic Culture in Facing Challenge* by, pp:7-8

(2) See *A notebook of Islamic Culture and Contemporary Challenges*, pp:5-7

(3) See *A notebook of Islamic Culture and Contemporary Challenges*, pp: 5-7

(4) See *Use of the Criteria of Effectiveness in Developing the Course of Islamic Culture at the University of Qatar*, p .٢٩١, by Muḥammad Al-Muslih

of ‘Adnān Zarzūr’s most famous students. He played a pivotal role in developing Islamic Culture at University of Qatar.

Islamic Culture since the establishment of the faculty in 1977 to 2015 at University of Qatar

Islamic Culture was first taught at University of Qatar right after the establishment of Faculty of Sharī‘a which was in charge of the course in terms of the writing process, description and teaching. Islamic Culture as a course was taught in two stages based on the objectives for which the course was designed. The main goal of this course was to make students ‘convinced’ in Islam as a comprehensive system, a creed, and a life style. This goal was fulfilled in the first compulsory university course. Islamic Culture also aimed to protect Muslim students from any destructive philosophies and ideologies. This goal was fulfilled in the second compulsory university course⁽¹⁾.

It is very essential for Muslims to be culturally cultivated with vision owing to a plethora of factors. They include: 1- influence of secularism that has been affecting the Muslim World since imperialism. This secular system separates between religion and life system. 2- destructive philosophies and ideologies that have affected the Muslim youth’s thoughts and principles. Translation and media have played an essential role in influencing Muslim youth. Hence; Islamic culture is of great value for university

(1) See: *Use of the Criteria of Effectiveness in Developing the Course of Islamic Culture at the University of Qatar*. Muḥammad Al-Muslih (2016).

stages⁽¹⁾.”

5. Role of Muḥammad Al-Mubārak’s most famous students in developing Islamic Culture

‘Adnān Zarzūr⁽²⁾ had graduated from Faculty of sharī‘a at University of Damascus with specialization in Qur’anic sciences and exegeses. Nevertheless, he was interested in civilizational, cultural and theological studies. He wrote a significant number of books on/about Islamic culture. The most famous among his books are ‘Insights in Culture and Civilization’, ‘Islamic Culture as a Universal Culture’ and ‘Islamic Culture’. These books, having been approved by a significant number of Arab and Muslim universities, talk about history, inception, nature, aims and developmental stages of Islamic Culture. ‘Adnān Zarzūr was co-author for many books on Islamic culture. He taught Islamic Culture at University of Damascus, participated in writing and teaching books related to Islamic culture in some universities in Damascus, United Arab Emirate University, Qatar University and University of Bahrain. He was one of the team that was responsible for developing Islamic Culture at Faculty of sharī‘a at Qatar University (2015/2016). Muḥammad Al-Muslih⁽³⁾ was one

(1) Moḥammad Al-Muslih , *Use of the Criteria of Effectiveness in Developing the Course of Islamic Culture at the University of Qatar. Written* (2016), Vol 34, Issue 2.

(2) He was born in Damascus in 1939, studied Islamic Sharia and Law. He graduated from University of Damascus (1960).

(3) Muḥammad Al-Muslih, an assistant professor, serves as assistant Dean for Academic Affairs at the College of Sharia at Qatar University.

c- Student library.

5- Relationship of Islamic Culture with other subjects⁽¹⁾

There is no doubt that the effort made by the Association of Arab Universities in professionally making the course of Islamic Culture approved by all Arab universities indicates the influence of the early pioneers such as Muḥammad Al-Mubārak, Muḥammad Qutb, ‘Abd Ālkarym ‘Uṭhmān, and ‘Umar Ğum’ah Ālḥtyb. Such figures had had the most influential role in making the aforementioned constructive decisions to develop Islamic Culture. However, the implementation stages to be taken for developing Islamic culture varied from one university to another. That is, each university has had its own staff, teaching methods and strategies to teach the ‘course’.

In 1988, during the Islamic Culture Symposium held at the Fourth Conference of the Association of Islamic Universities, the committee decided to include Islamic Culture in the curricula of all universities in the Muslim World. Besides, the committee decided that Islamic Culture must be taught for all students in all departments. Even the committee decided for postgraduates to study Islamic Culture as a core subject. ISESCO recommended, in paragraph “e” of Article 4 thereof, that “Islamic Culture should be made the centerpiece of educational curricula at all levels and

(1) See Šāfi Alhāğri, *Islamic Culture in Arab Universities. An Analytical, Critical Descriptive Study* by, pp: 334-337.

courses offered by university during student's study. Such a plan may help student acquire enough knowledge about Islam.

2- Department of Islamic Culture

Since Islamic Study has become a main course approved by university, there is a dire need for a department to develop this course, choose qualified professors to teach, and solve students' issues.

3- Staff. Selecting staff to teach Islamic Culture-related courses must meet these requirements:

a- A teacher/professor of Islamic Culture must be knowledgeable, excellent planner and presenter.

b- He must enhance dialogue and discussion between students, give students an opportunity to express their opinions. He must make students adore their religion by explaining to them the goals of religion. He must help students constructively compare between Islam and other ideological and theological theories and views.

c- He must relate Islamic Culture with the conditions and circumstances that Muslim Nation has been through.

d- He must refer to the Holy Qur'an and authentic Hadith in demonstrating the facts related to Islam. He, when necessary, should focus on essential principles, views and facts to help students understand the subject matter.

4- Library: Libraries should be available for students. This should include:

a- Faculty library.

b- Library at students' residence.

committee's report.

In the period from February 11 to 18 in 1978 AD, representatives from faculties and departments of Islamic studies in Arab universities were invited to a symposium held at Omdurman University, Khartoum. The committee in charge agreed on the recommendations made by the Council of the Association of Arab Universities that Islamic Culture should be taught as a basic course to be taught at all Arab universities and faculties whether they are specialized in Islamic studies or not.

In May 1978, the aforementioned committee that had held meetings in both Riyadh and Doha met at the Faculty of Education at the University of Riyadh. The committee emphasized the significance of Islamic Culture in cultivating civilizational awareness in students alongside their characteristics and personality traits. Having reviewed the responses of the targeted universities regarding the significance of approving 'Islamic Culture' as a main course to be taught, the committee discussed different methods to teach Islamic Culture. These methods may be explained as follows:

1- To develop the course of Islamic Culture, it should:

- a- be taught in four levels.
- b- include Military College, faculty of aviation as well as faculty of female students.
- c- have a choice, after taking the main course of Islamic culture, to study three more course on Islamic Culture. A student has right to choose these courses from among a list of available

Al-Mubārak worked tirelessly to promoting Islamic Culture at the Association of Arab Universities.

Approval of Islamic Culture at the Association of Arab Universities and Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

There is no doubt that the course of Islamic Culture was not widely spread in all Arab universities in the fifties and sixties of the last century. The course was not as developed as it was in the mid-seventies of the last century. Such a development took place right away after the Council of the Association of Arab Universities convened its first meeting of the *eleventh session*. The meeting was held for five days in April in 1977 AD. The council decided to approve the recommendation made by the Islamic Conference that Islamic Culture must be taught as a compulsory university course in all faculties and for all specialties. In December 1977, the second meeting of the 11th session of the Council of the Association of Arab Universities was held at Qatar University. The Council decided the following:

- 1- Formation of a committee consisting of 6 members.
- 2- The committee's task was to develop a new curriculum for Islamic Culture with new innovative teaching methods.
- 3- The General Secretariat should refer *its papers* to the University of Riyadh, to put them at the disposal of two members of the formed committee to prepare a paper for the meeting.
- 4- The General Secretariat of the Association should inform all the universities of the Association of Arab Universities with the

b. Nationalist tendency that encourages ‘Nationalism’ as an ideology, high values and a greater purpose in life.

Nationalism tends to promote the interests of a particular nation, especially with the aim of gaining and maintaining the nation’s sovereignty over its homeland to create a nation state. Such a tendency, extensively spread in the school environment, is very obvious in the educational system of the overwhelming majority of Arab countries⁽¹⁾. One of the books talking about the concept of ‘culture’ is ‘A notebook about Islamic Culture’, which is a short book with 37 pages and which is published by Darul Fikr. Collaborating with Muḥammad Qutb and Mustafa Kāml, Muḥammad Al-Mubārak wrote ‘Islamic Culture: Level 4 in 1976 at King Abdulaziz University. Muḥammad Al-Mubārak used the concept of ‘ideology’ in his book ‘Modern Islamic Ideology in Facing Western Thoughts’. This indicates that Muḥammad Al-Mubārak found it necessary to differentiate between concepts of ‘culture, ideology and scheme.

4. Islamic Culture after approval in Arab universities

Collaborating with some of his outstanding colleagues, Muḥammad Al-Mubārak wrote extensively about ‘Islamic Culture’. Believing in the significance of promoting Islamic culture to protect Muslims from ‘western cultural influence’, Muḥammad

(1) See *Journal of Da‘wah Al-Haq* published by the Moroccan Ministry of Awqaf, No.181 <http://www.habous.gov.ma/daouat-alhaq>.

cultural system in/of Islamic countries, argues that this world in general is dominated by non-Islamic creeds. Such crucial influence of Islamic culture could affect our cultural system by either school education, newspapers, broadcasting, TV channels, or translated books from foreign languages into Arabic.

Some subjects such as history, sociology, national education and civic information could negatively affect Muslim students' Islamic culture since these subjects consist of non-Islamic concepts and ideologies inconsistent with Islamic teachings. Although the authors of these books planned not to have controversial concepts and ideas inconsistent with Islamic culture and ideology, their ideology is still inconsistent with the authentic sources of knowledge of Islam. These subjects, mainly taken from foreign materials through translation and citation, are heavily based on specific civilizational, philosophical and intellectual backgrounds such as the conflict between religion and science, science and rationalism. The main aim of such a conflict is to support 'polytheism and paganism' and to distort Islamic religion that Allah has acknowledged to all mankind. Muḥammad Al-Mubārak categorizes ideological tendencies inconsistent with Islam creed and culture as follows:

a- Atheistic tendencies with its various kinds and doctrines since the 18th century.

These tendencies include some destructive materialistic philosophies such as Marxism, Rationalism and Existentialism, among other philosophies.

aspects of it were distorted during the Age of Stagnation after the Almohad Caliphate, or after the era of ‘human’ after the Almohad Caliphate as referred to by the Algerian philosopher Mālik Bin Nabī⁽¹⁾

Although Muḥammad Al-Mubārak chose the name “Scheme of Islam” to refer to the course of Islamic culture at the University of Damascus and Omdurman, he used the term “culture” for many of his books written after “Scheme of Islam”. One of these books is ‘Reality and Solution of Cultural Problem in Islamic World’. The booklet, as indicated by the author, was research he had previously presented to the General Islamic Conference held in Makkah al-Mukarramah after the Hajj season in 1963 AD.

The booklet, consisting of 30 pages, covers these topics:

- 1- The current cultural system in Muslim countries.
- 2- Dualism in education.
- 3- New initiatives and trends.

Indeed, Scheme of Islam diagnoses and suggests some solutions for culture-related problems at schools, institutes and universities all around the Islamic world. The aim of this was to create a comprehensive cultural system of Islam that helps Muslims to have Islamic culture and theology revived in this crucial era.

Muḥammad Al-Mubārak, as demonstrated and elaborated in all the topics of his book, especially with regard to the current

(1) ‘Adnān Zarzūr, *Islamic Culture in Universities*, p.9.

a ‘designation’ could be acceptable for those seeking to know about Islam; however, this could not be effective for those Muslims specializing in other sub-fields of Islam such as Fiqh, Tawhid and ‘aqā’id, since all of such fields are covered by the umbrella of Islam. Some scholars suggested for Muḥammad Al-Mubārak to designate his book as ‘Islamic Civilization’; however, he was not encouraged since the book does not focus on historical and civilizational aspects of Islam. Others, on the second hand, suggested Muḥammad Al-Mubārak to designate his book as ‘Islamic Systems. Such a title may refer to family, state and economy systems as well as inheritance, judiciary and *ḥisba* systems. This title, however, does not entail ‘*aqīdah*, worship, or manners. Muḥammad Al-Mubārak found that ‘Scheme of Islamic’ is a very appropriate title since the world has different religions and ideologies each have their own systems, each part of which is classified in line with theoretical and practical principles. Semantically, ‘scheme’ implies that ‘*aqīdah*, worship and legislation are interrelated concepts controlled by Islamic rules and principles⁽¹⁾. The book title remained as so at University of Damascus. Then he moved to Sudan and Saudi Arabia where he developed Islamic-Culture related courses which were all designated as ‘Scheme of Islamic’. ‘Adnān Zarzūr stated that Islamic culture-related courses must be designated as ‘Scheme of Islamic’ in order to present Islam in its perfect image after many

(1) See *Scheme of Islam*, pp:23-24

tirelessly for Islamic 'aqīdah that is linked to all parts of Islamic system and that is of great effect on Muslims' lives. Islamic 'aqīdah permeates all chapters of the Noble Qur'an as well as judicial, moral and Islamic precepts. Such a critical view and reasoning of 'aqīdah was the cornerstone for Muḥammad Al-Mubārak to have written his book.

b- 'worship: *Ibādah*, which is the second topic in Islamic Scheme, is to make human beings understand their duties towards the Creator and so what he or she should 'do' to worship Allah.

c- Manners: as the third topic in the book, addresses fundamental and principles of societal behaviors of individuals within the society.

d- Judiciary (Social System): it addresses topics concerning family, economic, political and penal systems, international relationships as well as principles of peace and war. The aim of all these systems and principles is to assure the application of all manner and judicial-related regulations⁽¹⁾.

Devising *Scheme of Islam* by Muḥammad Al-Mubārak:

Having written 'Scheme of Islam', Muḥammad Al-Mubārak was unsure about what title to be given to his book. He puts it explicitly in his introduction when he speaks about different titles to choose from for his book. At the beginning, he chose 'Islam' to designate his book since the name is semantically impactful when compared to Christianity, Judaism, communism etc. Such

(1) Cf. *Scheme of Islam*, pp:27-30

5- The book portrays Islam comprehensively as demonstrated by the Qur'an and understood and applied by prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and his Companions.

6- It presents all principles and fundamentals of Islam concerning mental, scientific and psychological aspects of human life.

7- It presents, exclusively, all moral, judicial and faith-related alongside those related to worship in an integrated module that appears to be appropriately consistent with modern learning methods. Such a new module is a unique Islamic aim.

8- The book augments itself in argumentative framework with scientific and universal facts verified by rationale evidence.

9- It acknowledges the legacy of earlier scholars known for their outstanding contribution such as Imām al-Ghazzali who wrote 'The Revival of Religious Sciences' and Imām Shāh Walīullāh Dehlawī, the celebrated author of 'The Conclusive Argument of God'.

Chief contents of Islamic Culture as proposed by Muḥammad Al-Mubārak:

Before deciding on adopting and teaching Islamic Culture at University of Damascus in the middle 1950s, Muḥammad Al-Mubārak used authentic sources of Islam to write his book. He made use of the history of Islamic *Da'wah*. His book consists of these topics:

a- Islam's general comprehensive view of existence. At the beginning of *Da'wah*, Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) had worked

e- *The Need of Humanity for Islam* by Muḥammad Yūsif Mūsah.

f- *This Life* by Sheikh Muḥammad al-Ghazali al-Saqqā.

In fact, the authors of the aforementioned books did not have a clear planning to discuss Islamic topics related to Islamic Culture; thus, some of their topics are incomplete, some chapters are poorly arranged and logically related. Hence, Islamic Culture as an integrated topic had not yet been comprehensively addressed in these books⁽¹⁾.

Salient features of Muḥammad Al-Mubārak's *Islamic Culture*

There is a wide range of features that characterize Muḥammad Al-Mubārak's book. They may be summarized as follows:

1- It gives a complete picture of Islam in respect with its main features and major lines. The main aim of this feature in the book was to collate Islam with other religions and new social doctrines.

2- It presents different aspects of Islam with utmost accuracy.

3- It avoids sectarian differences and personal opinions and presenting from its original sources without the interference of personal opinions.

4- It corrects some distorted perceptions of Islam in respect with ideology, belief, behavior, destiny and predestination, entrusting one's soul to Allah, asceticism, behavior and worship.

(1) See *The Scheme of Islam*, 1st Edition, No 13, pp: 26-27.

in order to acquaint himself with the diversity of culture, outlook and experience among the masses. He worked at four different Islamic universities: Damascus, Omdurman Islamic University, University of Khartoum and King Abdulaziz University. As a visiting professor, he worked at Jordan University in 1977. He participated and delivered lecturers and workshops in different Arab and Islamic universities such as University of Tehran and University of Constantine. To know about Islamic education for some Muslim countries, he visited Pakistan, Burma, Thailand, *Malaya*, Sri Lanka and Somalia⁽¹⁾.

Inception of Islamic Culture in 1955

Islamic dogma (‘Aqīdah and Worship) could be considered to be the first stage of Muḥammad Al-Mubārak for developing Islamic Culture. Muḥammad Al-Mubārak wrote Islamic Culture after having referred to previous outstanding authors in the same field. Some books he prescribes in Islamic Culture are:

a- *Al- Risālah Al-khālidah* (Immortalized Message) by ‘Abd Al-Rahmān ‘Azzām.

b- *Book of Islam* by Āḥmad Šibli.

c- *Spirit of Islamic Religion* by ‘Afyf Tabārah.

d- *Islam and the New World Order* by Muḥammad ‘Ali who belonged to Ahmadiyya Movement which believes that Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad was a reformist but not a prophet.

(1) Muḥammad Al-Mubārak. *Modern Islamic Ideology in Facing Western Thoughts*, p. 24. Dār Al-Fikr, Beirut.

curricula of Islamic University of Medina. In the middle 1960s, Islamic Culture was added to the curriculum at university of Omdurman Islamic University.

Muḥammad Al-Mubārak's role in popularizing Islamic Culture at Arab and Islamic universities

Having developed 'Islamic Culture' at Faculties of sharī'a in Egypt, Damascus and Sudan, Muḥammad Al-Mubārak was invited to visit University of Tehran to evaluate Islamic values and aspects. Then he evaluated Faculty of al-Ma'qūl wa-al Manqūl, which then became Faculty of Theology and Islamic Culture. After this in 1964, University of Riyadh decided to include 'Islamic Culture' to the curricula of all faculties.

Islamic Culture Course as devised by Muḥammad Al-Mubārak

Having had a long unique experience of teaching Islamic Culture at a number of Arab universities, Muḥammad Al-Mubārak could successfully get the first version of 'Islamic Culture' well-done. Muḥammad Al-Mubārak's philosophy of teaching Islamic Culture mainly and comprehensively relied on his teaching experience before Syria's independence in 1946. After the Independence, Muḥammad Al-Mubārak was in charge of the committee for curriculum development of Arabic and Islamic courses at secondary school level⁽¹⁾.

Muḥammad Al-Mubārak moved throughout the Islamic World

(1) Muḥammad Al-Mubārak. *Islam and Worldwide Theological Current*, p.22.

Muḥammad Al-Mubārak was the first person who wrote about Islamic Culture (or Islamic Scheme) in Muslim World. He was the first person to recommend that Islamic Culture should be added to the curriculum of the first-year students at faculty of sharī'a. This would definitely provide students with a comprehensive explanation about Islam before they get into specific details of other subjects each have one aspect to discuss and elaborate.

3. Muḥammad Al-Mubārak's role in developing Islamic Culture as course in Arab universities

During his lifetime, Muḥammad Al-Mubārak played a major role in developing the course of *Islamic Culture* in Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. Besides, he contributed a significant part in formulating new educational plans in Arab universities. He was the first to add 'Scheme of Islam' and 'Presence of the Muslim World'. He contributed to the development of a number of educational and university plans in the Arab countries. He was the first scholar who added the aforementioned courses to the curriculum. Furthermore, his contributions encompassed language and literature, Islamic and social studies.

Muḥammad Al-Mubārak spoke of his experience about university planning for Islamic studies at Faculty of sharī'a at Damascus University. As mandated by the President of Executive Board, he had written a detailed report of how to develop 'Islamic Culture' at Al-Azhar University, which became then a university course. Then he moved to Saudi Arabia and as a member of the Senior Advisory Board participated in developing the system and

Muḥammad Al-Mubārak and the idea of teaching *Islamic Culture* at Damascus University in 1954

Islamic Culture as a course was recommended by Mustafa al-Siba'i⁽¹⁾ who first established an independent faculty for Islamic studies at Damascus University. The aim of the faculty was to prepare and graduate highly intellectual educated scholars in sharī'a. Mustafa al-Siba'i's endeavors worked out despite of the obstacles and challenges he had faced. Both Muḥammad Al-Mubārak⁽²⁾ and Mustafa al-Siba'i established faculty of sharī'a.

(1) He was born in 1915 in Aleppo. He was the first academician to think about establishing an independent faculty. Despite facing some obstacles, al-Siba'i's endeavors worked out. He succeeded to set up the faculty in 1955, and he was the first dean to serve there. See Ālmu'ğam Alğām' in Translating the Biographies of Scholars and Students of the Present Time.

(2) Muḥammad Al-Mubārak was born in Damascus (1912) and passed away in (1982). He studied Islamic studies at regular schools. He obtained a bachelor degree from the Sorbonne University in Paris in 1937 AD.

He worked as a teacher of Arabic literature in secondary schools in Damascus. Then he was appointed as a supervisor for language and religion. After that he was appointed as a lecturer at the Faculty of Arts at Damascus University in 1947 AD. After serving at Faculty of Arts, he was appointed as a teacher at the Faculty of Sharia and Dean at Damascus University. Having served at University of Damascus, he worked as a teacher and head of the Islamic Studies Department at Omdurman University in 1966 AD. Then he worked at the Department of Sharia at the Faculty of Sharia in Umm Al-Qura University in 1969 AD. After this he served as an advisor at King Abdulaziz University, and a teacher at the University of Jordan until he passed away. Muḥammad Al-Mubārak has left a significantly large body of valuable books and other scholarly works having addressed some of the most serious issues that Muslims face. Refer to the Scholars' Literary Works by Muḥammad Khayr Ramaḍān (2), pp:188-192.

Sharī'a schools in which a student is in need of a chapter consisting of all basic fundamentals for each field in Islamic theology. That is, Al-Tabbākh 's book can only be suitable for students of Sharī'a.

2. Dawn of Islamic Culture as teaching subject in Arab Universities

The first inception of Arab universities was about two centuries ago. Egyptian University, founded in 1816, was the first university whose name was later changed to University of Fuad I. In 1952, the university's name was changed to Cairo University⁽¹⁾. *Islamic Culture* as a course was not approved and taught by Arab universities, especially those universities established in the middle 1950s. Some of the reasons why Arab Universities did not pay attention to this course stem from the assumption that the founders of these universities might not find it important enough to be taught while there were other essential issues drawing more attention to such as enhancing students' religion, cultural and civilizational identity. Another reason could be attributed to the fact that most of Arab countries were occupied either by Britain⁽²⁾ or any other Western country. This occupation had tried hard to weaken Arabs' Islamic, civilizational and cultural identity.

(1) Then many universities were established. Some of these universities are University of Algeria in 1909, American University in Cairo in 1919, Umm Al-Qura University in 1950, Umm Al-Qura University in 1949, Kuwait University in 1966, Qatar University, in 1973, UAE University in 1977, Sultan Qaboos University in 1982, University of Bahrain in 1986 and other universities in the Arab Gulf.

(2) We prefer using 'occupation' rather than 'Imperialism' since the latter denotes 'construction'.

issues such as the history, collection, transcription and miraculous and meanings of the Qur'an. Besides, this chapter addresses the history and most famous commentators of the old copies of the Qur'an. Furthermore, it addresses 42 interpretations of Ḥadīth. It seems that Al-Tabbākh made significant use of the 'Removal of Doubt'. Al-Tabbākh's concluded this chapter by referring to the role of the Qur'an in Islamic and Arab culture.

- Sciences of Ḥadīth.
- Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence.
- Tawhid/Monotheism.
- Tasawwuf/Sufis.
- Humanities.
- Ethics of Research and Debate.
- History.
- Decline and Raise of Intellectual Movement. It is worth mentioning that Al-Tabbākh wrote comprehensively about manuscripts and their sites, particularly manuscripts of Aleppo.⁽¹⁾

Relevance of Al-Tabbākh 's Book to his times

The topics addressed in Al-Tabbākh's book are encyclopedic in their nature, with similarity to Muḥammad Al-Zuḥli's book that addressed a variety of subjects such as history, imams, scholars, sources and books in the academic domain of Islamic Culture. Undoubtedly, Al-Tabbākh's book could be useful to students of

(1) Cf. 'Islamic Culture' to Altbāḥ and 'Abd Alsamy' Al'nys. It is a research article: https://islamsyria.com/site/show_cvs/1099

and taught by institutes of al-Shar‘īyah at Damascus and Aleppo. The book includes different topics such as Arabs’ life during pre-Islamic period, post-Islamic period, revelation of the Holy Qur’an, collection and documentation of Hadīth. It also provides a brief summary about those having written about the development of Islamic sciences.

Concept of Islamic Culture according to Shaykh Muhammad Rāghib Al-Tabbākh states that Islamic culture refers to “sciences and knowledge that Muslims acquire after *jāhilīyah* (*the Era of Ignorance*). *Such enlightenment was basically attributed to prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), his esteemed Companions and their followers (May Allah be pleased with them)*. Al-Tabbākh addresses the definition of ‘culture’ from a linguistic perspective that refers to ‘appraisal’. Hence, Al-Tabbākh’s book ‘Islamic Sciences and Knowledge’ provides an explanation and assessment of the situation of Arabs at pre-Islamic era. It also provides a description of the development of such sciences and knowledge in respect with the history of Islam.⁽¹⁾

Essential Topics included in Al-Tabbākh’s Book

Al-Tabbākh’s book addresses the following essential topics:

- Islamic culture, Arabs’ domiciles, traditions, lifestyle and beliefs.
- Sciences of the Qur’an. This chapter addresses very pivotal

(1) ‘Abd Al-Rahmān Ḥalali’s Investigation for Moḥammad Rāghib Al-Tabbākh and His Book ‘Islamic Culture’ (2005). Al’adiyāt Magazine.

In the present study, I have used descriptive historical as well as analytical research methods to investigate the inception of Islamic Culture.

Research Plan

This research consists of five sections. Section 1 discusses the very genesis of Islamic Culture as teaching subject at Sharia School, while section 2 approaches the early history of Islamic Culture in Arab universities. The section 3 addresses the first steps taken by Muḥammad Al-Mubārak to introduce and develop the course of Islamic Culture. Section 4 deals with Islamic Culture after its approval by Arab universities. Section 5 addresses Muḥammad Al-Muslih's efforts in developing the course of Islamic Culture from 2016 to 2021.

1. Genesis of the Course of 'Islamic Culture' Course at Sharia Schools

The first beginnings of Islamic Culture dates back to Shaykh Muhammad Rāghib Al-Tabbākh⁽¹⁾ who would probably be the first person who used the term 'Islamic Culture'. This could happen when he was studying at Sharia College in his hometown of Aleppo. Shaykh Rāghib was first to have written comprehensively about 'Islamic Culture' in 1944. His book, printed in 1949 and consisting of 421 pages, was written as a new course approved

(1) See Shaykh Muhammad Rāghib Al-Tabbākh as studied by the Aleppo historian, Ibrāhīm 'Abdullah Salqīni. <https://web.archive.org>.

be taught, I find a specific study that has discussed how to develop such a course. In this section, we will review some of such studies:

1- Shafi bin Safar Al-Hajri (2000) wrote his unpublished PhD thesis about 'Islamic Culture in Arab Universities: A Descriptive, Analytical and Critical Study'. This thesis, presented at Omdurman Islamic University, consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 discusses concept of Islamic culture, while chapter 2 discusses fundamentals and elements of Islamic culture. The chapter 3 discusses sources of Islamic culture; chapter 4 goes into the inception of Islamic culture at universities and chapter 5 approaches culture-scenario as pedagogical unit in Arab and Gulf universities. Chapters 4 and 5 of Al-Hajri's thesis intersects with the present research. The present research has extensively dealt with the term of 'Islamic Culture' before the term was discussed by Muḥammad Al-Mubārak. Al-Hajri 's study is different from other studies in that it demonstrated Muḥammad Al-Mubārak's motives for writing Islamic Scheme. His study also illustrated the conditions and circumstances for which Islamic Scheme was prepared. Then, the study focused on Adnān Zarzūr, the most famous student of Al Mubarak. Al-Hajri's study, however, did not address the development in Qatar University owing to time factor, since the development took place after 2015, while Al-Hajri's thesis was written in 2000.

2- Muḥammad Al-Muslih's study focused on his own experience in developing *Islamic Culture*. He mainly spoke about the historical aspects of this 'course'.

The methodology

to be in line with the new updates and possible challenges. Some of such challenges reside in a plethora of negative tendencies; those destroying ‘family’, supporting ‘polytheism’, raising up irreligious societies, promoting homosexuality, attacking and weakening social values and principles viciously. Hence, it is very essential to develop a comprehensive strategy to develop ‘Islamic Culture’ in most of Arab universities. The new developed course must include specific content with realistic analysis, deep vision and extrapolation. This should be in line with a deep, insightful and forward-looking study to investigate social, political and economic changes.

Aims of the Study

This study aims to:

- 1- shed light on the inception of *Islamic Culture* taught in Arabic and Islamic universities.
- 2- discuss Muḥammad Al-Mubārak’s role in promoting *Islamic Culture* as course of study in the University of Damascus as well as in Sudanese and Saudi universities.
- 3- propose some recommendations that may help develop Islamic Culture to help university students handle some possible or unpredictable challenges.

Literature Review (Previous Studies)

Amid a plethora of studies taking Islamic Culture as a course to

environment in real time. We have 3D spaces, immersive virtual environments and advanced communication devices. Besides there is a paradigm shift in commerce and entertainment”

and enable them to evaluate other cultures, literatures and events in line with Islamic cultural paradigms.

Introduction

Since 2015, Faculty of Sharia at Qatar University has been steadfast to develop the course of *Islamic Culture*. This was the very genesis of the courses for the faculty that saw immense development in as much as it may qualify itself for study as a unique experience based on high standards of creativity and effective teaching. To know the value of such an outstanding development, we must refer to the historical aspect of the Islamic culture syllabus in line with Muḥammad Al-Mubārak in the middle of the last century. The Faculty of Sharia at Damascus University⁽¹⁾ was the first to teach this course.

Indeed, the faculty staff paid special attention to the historical aspects of *Islamic Culture* since it was approved and used by Arab and Islamic universities in the middle of the last century as a course-corpus. It is important to discuss the experimentative stages that Islamic Culture has gone through in Arabic universities in general and in Qatar University in particular. This may enable us to develop this *course* in respect with content and teaching methods in the future. Such future enhancement in the era of metaverse⁽²⁾ ought

(1) The Faculty of Sharia at the University of Damascus was founded by Mustafah Al-Sibā'i in 1954. Since its establishment, a large number of outstanding scholars has been graduated. Such scholars have greatly contributed to the universities, schools, research centers, and mosques they work at.

(2) Metaverse is "a digital world in which the real and virtual worlds are combined, for example you can meet your cousin who lives in California in a cafe in a virtual

university curricula. In the last section, the study talks about Muḥammad Al-Muṣliḥ, a renowned student of ‘Adnān Zarzūr at Qatar University.⁽¹⁾ Qatar University has adopted a creative development strategy to re-examine and improve the prescribed syllabus at both theoretical and practical levels.

Significance of the Research

This research attempting to study the syllabus/course of *Islamic Culture* is of great value since it deals with the subject of moral values, cultural outlook and characteristics of Muslim Nation as envisioned and taught by Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH). The significance of the course lies in the moral and cultural paradigms adopted by Islam which are of pivotal contribution to humankind in this worldly life as well as in the hereafter. At the same time, the study manifests how *Islamic Culture* preserves the Islamic identity in the era of globalization transforming the world into into one ‘global village’ in respect with time and place. Consequently, this has extremely affected ‘culture’ in general and ‘Islamic culture’ in particular. This study may help create a scheme of an environment that plays essential part in instilling moral and social values in individuals. Such values and morals that link the behavior of a Muslim to his environment, could be acquired subconsciously. This study may suggest some new insights that would help a student acquire the desired levels of moral values for his persona at pre-university stage of education. It may also help Muslims formulate holistic concepts about Islamic culture

History of the Inception and Development of the Course of Islamic Culture in Arab Universities: University of Qatar as a Model

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Abstract

This research sheds light on the early beginnings of the inception of *Islamic Culture* course by al-Shaykh Muḥammad Rāghib alṭṭabbākh, who wrote a book for students of Sharia institutes in Aleppo and Damascus. The book differs in content from the work of Muḥammad Al-Mubārak entitled *The Scheme of Islam*, which was then termed as “Islamic Culture”. The book presents Islam as a ‘*comprehensive scheme*’. This study spotlights the role of Muḥammad Al-Mubārak in securing approval of his by the Association of Arab Universities, besides the salient features of his method in preparation of ‘Islamic syllabuses’ compared to those in different Arab Universities. The study then addresses ‘Adnān Zarzūr’s enormous contribution to Islamic culture and university curricula. In the last section, the study talks about

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