

INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE ON EDUCATION IN ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION AND THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION ON THE FORMATION OF MALAY IDENTITY

(Pengenalan kepada Isu Khas tentang Pendidikan dalam Peradaban Islam dan Peranan Peradaban Islam terhadap Pembentukan Identiti Melayu)

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ABSTRACT

This introductory paper first provides a brief overview of the current state-of-the-art of issues centered on Islamic civilization and Malay identity, followed by a synopsis of the articles included in this special issue. In addition, future perspectives on the expansion of discussions on the issues centered on Islamic civilization and Malay identity are outlined.

Keywords: *Islamic civilization; Malay identity; education*

ABSTRAK

Pertama sekali, kertas pengenalan ini memberikan satu ringkasan tentang kedudukan perbincangan isu yang berkisar tentang tamadun Islam dan identiti Melayu. Seterusnya, sinopsis artikel yang terpilih ke dalam isu khas Jurnal Hadhari dipersembahkan. Perspektif masa depan tentang isu yang berkaitan dengan tamadun Islam dan identiti Melayu turut dimuatkan.

Kata Kunci: *tamadun Islam; identiti Melayu; pendidikan*

OVERVIEW

Issues centered on Islamic civilization in relation with Malay identity are timely to discuss, research and publish. Islam correlates strongly with the identity of the Malays – in other words, only after the coming of Islam that the true

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identity of the Malays is formed. Hence, the Malays and Islamic civilization is inseparable. The arrival of Islam has changed the previous religious life of the Malays which was influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism. Islam not only brought upon a major and profound impact on socio-cultural life of the locals and set a structured system in their life and lifestyle but Islam is also said to be the heart for the continuation of history, language and culture of the Malays for decades. The tradition of knowledge introduced by Islam enlightened Malay civilization particularly in setting the future direction for the Malays. The process and effect of Islamic acculturation in Malay civilization can be seen in their tradition of knowledge acquisition, culture and arts, social and physical environment, economic system and many more. However, today, Malay-Muslim scholars seem to agree in that the identity of the Malay-Muslim which was once strongly shaped by the values from Islamic civilization is gradually tarnished and slowly being replaced by Western secular values.

In the last decade, Malay-Muslim scholars are unified in the opinion of the current main state-of-the-art of issue centered on Islamic civilization and Malay identity is the challenges face by Malay-Muslim community of the erosion of their Malay-Muslim identity which was based on values from Islamic civilization. Hence, measures such as education system and the role of Islamic civilization have been revisited by many Malay-Muslim scholars – such as Abdullah Hassan (2009), Azwira Abdul Aziz (2006), Hamidah Sulaiman (2005), Husin Ali, S (2008), Mohd Yusof Hj. Othman (Ed.) (2010), Nik Hassan Shuhaimi Nik Abd Rahman (2000), Rahimin Affandi Abd Rahim (2005), Sidek Baba (2009 & 2010), and Siddiq Fadzil (2010) – to find effective ways in sustaining and securing the Malay-Muslim identity.

ARTICLES SYNOPSIS

The eleven articles included in this special issue of *Hadhari Journal* stem from selected papers presented at a two-day conference on ‘Islamic Civilization and Malay Identity’ held at Equatorial Hotel Malacca in October 2011. The purpose of the event was to bring together academics to reflect on the issues centered on Islamic civilization and Malay identity. The papers in this issue cover education in Islamic civilization and the role of Islamic civilization on the formation of Malay identity. The papers interrogated not only the breadth of Islamic civilization influence on knowledge acquisition of the Malays and on the identity formation of the Malays, but also the responses of the Malays to the influence.

Three articles focus on education in Islamic civilization in a Malay community in general: (1) Zakaria Stapa, Noranizah Yusuf and Abdul Fatah Shaharudin with an article entitled 'Education according to al-Qur'an and *Sunnah* and Its Role in Strengthening the Civilization of *Ummah*' (Malay: *Pendidikan menurut al-Qur'an dan Sunnah serta Peranannya dalam Memperkasakan Tamadun Ummah*) focus their attention on several examples of the verses of the Holy Qur'an and *hadith* relating to education in Islam, together with several examples of the acts of the Prophet Muhammad pbuh in promoting education among Muslims towards strengthening the qualities and values of the human civilization; (2) Abdul Hafiz Mat Tuah, Zakaria Stapa and Ahmad Munawar Ismail with an article entitled 'Strengthening Malay-Muslim Identity through Islamic Education and *Akhlak* Teaching' (Malay: *Memperkasakan Jati Diri Melayu-Muslim menerusi Pendidikan Islam dalam Pengajaran Akhlak*) discuss the moral teaching or *akhlak* of Islamic education in the efforts to strengthen the Malay Muslim identity; and (3) Ahmad Munawar Ismail, Zakaria Stapa, Mohd Yusof Othman and Mashitoh Yaacob with an article entitled 'Islam in Education and Its Relation to the Formation of Malay Ethnic Identity in Malaysia' (Malay: *Islam dalam Pendidikan dan Hubungannya dengan Pembentukan Jati Diri Bangsa Melayu di Malaysia*) discuss on the level of Islamic knowledge, i.e., *aqidah*, *syariah*, and *akhlaq*, amongst the Malay youth with and without a degree qualification.

Another three articles emphasize education in Islamic civilization to a specific group of the Malays: (1) Latifah Abdul Majid, Wan Nasyrudin Wan Abdullah and Nurul Hidayah Ahmad Zakhi with their article entitled 'Integrating Noble Values and Identity Formation into Kindergarten Children through the Use of Multimedia' (Malay: *Penerapan Nilai Murni dan Pembentukan Jati Diri Kanak-kanak Prasekolah melalui Penggunaan Multimedia*) discuss the application of values and identity formation of preschool children through the use of multimedia's materials as teaching aids; (2) Mohd Yusof Othman, Jawiah Dakir, Abd Latif Samian, Mohd Safar Hasim, Noor Aziah Mohd Awal, Shamsul Azhar Yahya, Rosilawati Mohd Hanapi, Noralina Omar and Mujahid Abu Bakar with their article entitled 'National Identity amongst Students of Higher Education Institutions' (Malay: *Jati Diri Kebangsaan dalam kalangan Pelajar Institusi Pengajian Tinggi*) study the strength level of identity, i.e., language, tradition, culture, religion, patriotism, integrity, idealism, and institutional contribution, amongst students of selective public higher educational institutions (PHEIs) in Klang Valley; and (3) Wan Ibrahim Wan Ahmad, Zainab Ismail, Muhammad Hafeez Zakaria, Siti Hawa Madan, Faraha Abdullah, Noredayu Abdul Ghani and Noraini Mohd Tajudin in their article entitled 'Religious Obedience is A Foundation to the Formation of *Ummah* Civilization: The Case of Religious

Obedience of the Elderly Women of Felda Chiku, Kelantan' (Malay: *Kepatuhan Agama Asas Pembentukan Tamadun Ummah: Kes Tahap Kepatuhan Agama Warga Tua Wanita Felda Chiku, Kelantan*) focus on the difference in levels of religious obedience amongst elderly women of Felda Chiku Kelantan.

The other five articles address the role of Islamic civilization on the formation of Malay identity: (1) Idris Zakaria in his article entitled 'Islam and Its Philosophy in Malay Culture' (Malay: *Islam dan Falsafahnya dalam Kebudayaan Melayu*) discusses the philosophy of Islamic thought serves as the foundation to the formation of Malay arts and culture; (2) Mohd Hazmi Mohd Rusli wrote on 'Straits of Malacca and Singapore: Pride of the Malay Archipelago, Priceless Maritime Heritage of the World' (Malay: *Selat Melaka dan Singapura: Kebanggaan Alam Melayu, Khazanah Kelautan Dunia yang Berharga*) relates the importance of civilizations in the Malay world evidenced by the many kingdoms thrived in the previous centuries, including the ones that were Islamic-based, leaving their legacy of economic prosperity to this day in the Malay world; (3) Zakaria Stapa, Noranizah Yusuf and Abdul Fatah Shaharudin in their article entitled 'Islam as A Foundation of Malay-Muslim Identity Formation' (Malay: *Islam Asas Pembentukan Jati Diri Bangsa Melayu-Muslim*) discuss the influence of Islam on the formation of Malay identity in terms of 'the way of life,' 'customs' and 'culture' of the Malays; (4) Ahmad Munawar Ismail, Zakaria Stapa and Siti Aishah Suhaimi challenges the connection between Islam, and the formation of the Malay identity through narrative approach towards thorough analysis of the documented history as well as recent research findings in their article entitled 'Islam and the Formation of Malay Ethnic Identity' (Malay: *Islam dan Pembentukan Jati Diri Bangsa Melayu*); and (5) Zakaria Stapa, Ahmad Munawar Ismail and Noranizah Yusuf in their article entitled 'Social Environmental Factors and Their Relation to Identity Formation' (Malay: *Faktor Persekitaran Sosial dan Hubungannya dengan Pembentukan Jati Diri*) discuss the reciprocal response effects of social environmental factors on the formation of individual behavior and identity of the Malays.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

It seems unquestionable that in the last decade the focus of discussion on Islamic civilization and Malay identity is centered on the issue of the erosion of Malay-Muslim identity and the challenges face by Malay-Muslim community to sustain their Malay-Muslim identity. Pressures from Malay-Muslim community have resulted in much effort being put by the government of Malaysia in

inculcating Islamic values into the national education system – the questions are: To what extent do these efforts affect the formation of Malay identity? And to what extent is the education system able to strengthen Malay identity through the inculcation of Islamic values from Islamic civilization? These questions are certainly needed to be answered, thus, we trust that Malay-Muslim experts in Islamic civilization and Malay identity would highlight, share and exchange views, and subsequently collaborate in research and publications on the issues centered on Islamic civilization and Malay identity, and perhaps consider to engage the views of non-Malay-Muslim scholars in order to see the Malay-Muslim identity in a different light. Ideas and practical suggestions to strengthen Malay identity through Islamic civilization as well as best practices in addressing issues centered on Islamic civilization and Malay identity are valuable aspects of the discussions on Islamic civilization and its relation with Malay identity.

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