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GUEST EDITORS' NOTE: THE ROLES OF MUSLIM SCHOLARS IN DISSEMINATING THE QUINTESSENCE OF BARAKAH THROUGH MULTI-DISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE

Editor Tamu: Peranan Sarjana Muslim dalam Pengembangan Nilai Barakah Melalui Kepelembagaan Bidang Pengetahuan

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This special issue reflects the focal discourses of 13 articles presented at the International Conference on Islamic Higher Education 2018 (SeIPTI 2018) which was held in Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia. All articles convey the equivalent connotation entitled *The Roles of Muslim Scholars in Disseminating the Quintessence of Barakah through Multi-Disciplinary Knowledge*. The topics presented discussed on multiplicity of angles in knowledge, but shared the same aim in offering benefits for the *ummah* (community)'s needs.

Islam places a high value on education, and, as the faith spread among diverse people, education became an important channel through which to create a universal and cohesive social order. By the middle of the 9th century, knowledge was divided into three categories: the Islamic sciences, the philosophical and natural sciences (Greek knowledge), and the literary arts. The Islamic sciences, which emphasized the study of the Qur'an (the Islamic scripture) and the *Hadith* (the sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad) and their interpretation by leading scholars and theologians, were valued the most highly, but Greek scholarship was considered equally important, albeit less virtuous.

The one who calls people to Islam or teaches what knowledge he has with a sincere intention can be certain of a great reward. Prophet Muhammad SAW said, "*Convey from me, even if it is a verse*" (Bukhari). He did not stipulate that the person should have vast knowledge; rather he stipulated that he should have knowledge of what he

is teaching. Those who teach are not automatically scholars. Scholars possess certain traits and qualities and are highly respected in Islamic education.

The role of a Muslim scholar is to guide people to the right path and to help people feel and be closer to Allah. They need to be able to interpret not only the Quran and *Sunnah* but the body of scholarship that developed since the dawn of Islam. This is not a position to be taken lightly. In fact, it holds so much responsibility that the *sahabah* and those who followed them avoided giving religious rulings if they were able to do so. Because of his level of study, the scholar holds a very high status amongst the Muslim *Ummah*. It is his or her role to help and encourage people to obey the rules of Allah and stay on a middle path in all things, belief, worship, ethics, morality, behavior, and social interactions. It is also important to understand that scholars are not infallible. They might be the inheritors of the prophets but they are also human beings with all the foibles and imperfections that come with humanity. This is one of the reasons why scholars do not take religious rulings or *fatwa* lightly.

In the realm of higher educational sector, a case study conducted by Setiadi, Rahmat, Nandang and Hernawati (2020) examined the development of the quality of Islamic spirituality and the improvement of religiosity as systems which are seen through individual behavior based on religious motivation among lecturers and education personnel at Universitas Islam Bandung (UNISBA). Among the findings of the study shown in their paper entitled ‘*Religiosity Improvement and Development of Islamic Spirit: Case Study of Lecturers and Education Personnel in Universitas Islam Bandung*’, that an institution’s policy developing Islamic spirituality is written rules as a formal decision by university are binding to regulate organizational behavior in creating Islamic values for the academic community and for the ummah in general. The results achieved were the formulation of a model for increasing the religiosity and development of the Islamic spirit in UNISBA, and in turn it was expected to be used as a model by other Islamic universities.

Disasters workers found to require both conventional and Islamic approaches of psycho-spiritual competencies to cater to the needs of disaster victims during the rescue process take place. The finding in the article by Khatijah, Nurhafizah, Suhailiza, Nik Nadian Nisa, Muhammad Khairi, Yuseri, Marina Munira, Mashitah and Nor Adila Syahira (2020) ‘*The Needs For Psycho Spiritual Competencies For Disaster Workers In Malaysia*’ displayed the essential effort for scholars to contribute in preparing and developing the competencies among the disasters workers to enable them contribute successfully to the community involved in natural disasters. Hence, Islamic psycho spiritual competencies contribute to the inner strength of the Muslim disaster workers as its emblem the soul and the

spiritual heart *qalb* which correlated as the determinant factor of the well-being of the physical body of the human being.

In their article entitled '*The Contribution of Muslim-Buddhist Relation on Islamic Civilization*', Ahmad Faizuddin, Jaffary and Zaizul (2020) asserts that Islamic civilization is made up of various civilizations, particularly in the Central Asian region where Buddhist and Islamic scholars from the Middle East are emerging. As a result of the interactions and relationships in the areas of science, literature, medicine and the architecture, Islamic civilization reached its peak in that era, particularly during the Abbasid period (750-1258 AD). Some salient points via their content analysis found that past studies have found the intellectual activity of Muslim-Buddhist dialogue to be one of the contributing factors to the excellence of Islamic civilization, especially in the Abbasid times. Furthermore, the exchange of knowledge and religious heritage developed mutual understanding and tolerance among both the religious followers.

The next article by Muhamad Zaki, Mohd Faizal, Mohd Yahya and Khairunneezam (2020) entitled *Perhubungan Awam, Media Sosial, Etika Kerja Islam Serta Trend Penggunaan Media Sosial di Sektor Awam Kementerian di Malaysia (Public Relations, Social Media, Islamic Work Ethics and Trends Use of Social Media Use in the Public Sector of Ministry in Malaysia)* reflects the effort of cultivating knowledge of public relations and Islamic work ethics among the new media practitioners and users. The article is important to the field of new media where it showed the new media usage trends among public relations units in ministries of Malaysia. The findings elaborated in the article provided a guidance on how public relation officers could implement Islamic work ethics simultaneously with the 'Code of Athens' as proposed by the International Public Relations Association (IPRA).

In the realm of higher educational sector, there are plenty of rooms for the scholars to contribute their quintessential knowledge in forming the value of *barakah*. This is obvious in the article entitled *Pembangunan Instrumen Pengukuran Amalan Wasatiyyah dalam Kalangan Mahasiswa di Malaysia (Instrumentation Measurement Development of Wasatiyyah (Islamic Moderation) Practices among Malaysian University Students)* by Muhamadul Bakir, Khatijah and Nik Nadian Nisa (2020). The authors had developed a Wasatiyyah Practice Measurement Instrument among Muslim students at the Malaysian Public Higher Learning Institution which consists of four dimensions: Understanding Dimensional Scale; Self-strength Dimensional Scale; Attitudinal Dimension Scale and Learning Dimension Scale. It is evidenced in the article that there is a positive relationship between *Wasatiyyah* practice and overall students' academic achievement.

Another article by M. Rachmat, Edi Setiadi and Malki (2020) shares on the religious practice of indigenous community in Kampung Dukuh, Indonesia which could be benefited by the other Muslim communities. The findings strengthened the knowledge and understanding about indigenous, among others, between Islam and local traditions influence and interdependence, so that it can survive. It is also found that the tradition of diversity (Islam) of the indigenous community is the result of social construction of local elites who have their own uniqueness and distinctiveness recognized as Islamic custom.

The virtue and crux of knowledge are also reflected in the article entitled *Governance Reporting in Humanitarian Philanthropic Organizations*. Nur Solehah Aqilah and Nathasa Mazna (2018) observed five selected humanitarian philanthropic organizations which are listed on Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM). These organizations formed for the non-profit activities also known as company limited by guarantee (CLBG). They analyzed each company’s latest annual report and website using content analysis and evaluation of the level of disclosure by using binomial logic. The findings shared in this article suggested the need for philanthropic organizations in Malaysia to enhance its governance reporting especially in their annual report. The results of the research indicate that maintaining and strengthening governance reporting practices in humanitarian philanthropic organization in Malaysia to the accountability system.

One of the good attributes and values of human beings is the possibility of being caliph or representative of Allah on His earth. According to Muslim scholars, this is the highest value or perfection that one may reach. Because of the importance of this subject, Islamic scholars should speak and enlighten others more and more so that the *ummah* will understand their importance of being the appointed *khalifah* on earth. This is the gist of the article (in Arabic) entitled *مسؤولية الإنسان في بناء الحضارة المثلى في القرآن* (*The Responsibility of Human Being in Building the Ideal Civilization in the Perspective of al-Qur’an*’ by Rochmad) (2020). The article elaborates those elements in accord to the main role of mankind as the *Khalifah* of this world. Applying analytical method in reading the text as well as using the thematic approach to discover the key points from both sources, this article shows that both Quran and hadith have clearly stated the exact formulas in building the superior civilization of mankind, namely; soul purification, character nobility, sound mind and high intellectual capacity.

Today, the world is exposed to the scourge of terrorism unprecedented in the history of mankind, and these scourges grows, unfortunately, from the vagaries of organizations, movements and terrorist groups that belong to Islam unlawfully, the intensification of its criminal presence in many countries of the world, especially in the Islamic and Arab countries, and the consequent loss of innocent lives, disturb the security and stability, destruction of property and means, is considered a great

disaster and great strife that requires the movement of the Muslim scholars and Media practitioners to provide a necessary information about Islam. The next article by Ahmed (2020) entitled *دور الإعلام الإسلامي في مكافحة الإرهاب (The Role of Islamic Media in Combating Terrorism)* elucidates the role of Islamic media regarding the issue of terrorism and aims to expose the causes of terrorism and to provide solutions to this phenomenon. The article found that the involvement of Islamic Media is proposed as a very important solution to the scourge of terrorism in the present day.

Najib and Ibrahim and Ibrahim Fahad Sulaiman (2020) in their article *العولمة وموقف الفكر الإسلامي المعاصر منها (Globalization and the Position of Contemporary Islamic Thought on it)* discuss about the emergence of the term globalization and its spread among intellectuals in the world. They argue that the ambiguity surrounding the globalization is almost the expression of the fields that revolve around it. It is obvious that, despite the huge amount of writings, articles, conferences and scientific symposia that address this concept in the world, it is difficult to define all aspects of globalization as a process that has multiple dimensions and intertwined aspects and is not limited to one side, although it is mostly an economic goal, where practically the other political and cultural aspects are absent.

دراسة تحليلية لاحتياجات الدارسين العربية لأغراض أكاديمية (Arabic for Academic Purposes: A Needs Analysis Study) is the article written by Zakaria, Abdullah Muhammad and Nordin (2020). The paper investigates the needs of Malaysian learners in learning the Arabic for Academic Purposes (AAP) course. The authors investigated and shared appropriate contents for the Arabic for Academic Purposes course which aimed to contribute to those who teach AAP or develop it at the university.

On the same virtue of Al-Qur'an as the main reference to Muslim scholars, Ousmane Manzo (2020) argues that among the most important issues on which the Holy Qur'an focused are the fulfilment of covenants and promises, fulfilling trusts to those who are entrusted with them. In His article *القرآن الكريم والمساحة المشتركة في التعايش ماليزيا نموذجا (The Holy Quran and the Common Space in Coexistence: Malaysia as a Model)*, the author stresses out the needs of respect for others' feelings, no matter how different the belief and the origin of religiosity and the practices of ritual is. The article also mentioned, about great significance and contribution to achieving peaceful coexistence between Muslims and others, and between the state and its citizens as the Holy Qur'an focused on.

The effort of sharing the essence of al-Qur'an is further reflected by the work of Aishah and Mukhamad Hadi (2020). Through the article *التمسك بالعقيدة الصحيحة في إصلاح الفرد والمجتمع (The holding on to the Right Faith for the Betterment of Self and*

Society), the authors aim to understand and manage the Qur’anic verses in order to reach the importance of adhering to the true faith to reform the individual and society, by referring to the concept of the faith. The concept presented by its definition of language and terminology, and what scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah and the community have defined in a clear definition of the faith with the importance of adhering to it. The study concluded that adhering to the correct doctrine is one of the requirements of reforming the individual and society, which is the first thing that will be asked on the Day of Resurrection.

In summary, the collection of articles in this special issue highlights that Muslim scholars, those educated to advise and make religious rulings, do their best to help believers stay firmly on the right path, the middle path. The scholars occupy a noble status in Islam, and which is higher than the position of others in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah SWT says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge” (al-Mujaadalah, verse 11).

As a scholar who knows, and has spent many hours and years, even decades, acquiring that knowledge, hence, they are not only relevant but will continually contribute different insights to the general readers, researchers and the *ummah*. Finally, with the effort of sharing multidisciplinary knowledge to others, with the acquiescence from Allah SWT, those scholars will be praised by their God, as Allah says in al-Qur’an:

“Say: ‘Are those who know equal to those who know not?’ It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson from Allâh’s Signs and Verses)”
(al-Zumar, verse 9).

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