



The Education Sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

In this Issue

Education, the foundation of future socio-economic development, has benefited from continual private and public support in Saudi Arabia since the 1930s. The Kingdom is an attractive market for education services, as it represents the largest education base, the largest market for education services in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, and accounts for 75 percent of total students in the GCC general education (K-12) system.

For the past several years, strong government budgets have accompanied the development of general education to emphasize governmental support for continued growth of the education sector. The upward trend of budgetary allocations highlights the Saudi Government's conviction that education is the cornerstone of sustained economic development, as it enhances human capital and knowledge, both essential ingredients for economic growth and social cohesion. Public spending for education is estimated at 5.7 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), compara-

ble with the UK (5.3 percent), Germany (4.3 percent), and South Korea (4.2 percent).

The Education Policy Document, which was issued by the Saudi Council of Ministers in 1969, is the foundation for the Saudi educational system. There are several organizations that work together to oversee, regulate, and create and enforce laws pertaining to the education system in Saudi Arabia.

These agencies include the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, and the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation, formerly the General Organization for Technological and Vocational Training.

The education system in Saudi Arabia can be divided into two broad categories – general education and higher education – with all public and private schools following the same general policies, curricula, and methods of instruction. General education includes 12 years of schooling, beginning with elementary school at age six, while higher education constitutes the training received at one of the various universities, colleges, or vocational training institutions. Over 90 percent of Saudi students are enrolled in public schools.

The Saudi Government has made a tremendous effort to enhance the country's educational system over the past decade by introducing new education programs, research and development initiatives, and building numerous schools and universities. A number of education projects coincide with the development of the six economic cities that are being built across the country.

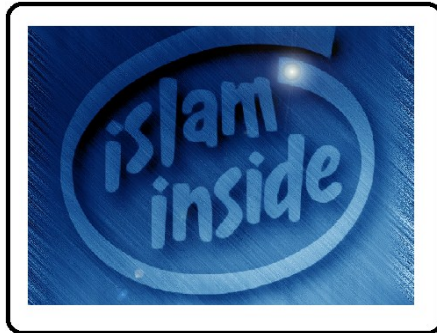
The private sector has become intensely involved in the development of knowledge-based industries in the Kingdom through participation in several initiatives, such as King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), the education section of King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC), and institutions in Prince Abdul Aziz bin Musa'ed Economic City (PABMEC) and Knowledge Economic City (KEC).

Courtesy: U.S.-Saudi Arabian Business Council Report

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An Excerpt from a book**Fundamentals of Islamic Economic System**

By Dr. Muhammad Sharif Chaudhry



Dr. Muhammad Sharif Chaudhry

Some of the principles of the Islamic economic system, as laid down by the Qur'an and the Sunnah, are discussed as follows:

1. Allah determines Right and Wrong: We have already discussed in the first chapter that Islamic economic system makes distinction between what is permitted being lawful (Halal) and what is forbidden being unlawful (Haram). To determine what is permitted or lawful (Halal) and what is forbidden or unlawful (haram) is the soul prerogative of God. None but God is empowered to pronounce what is right and what is wrong. Allah has made demarcation between lawful and unlawful in the economic sphere and has allowed man to enjoy those food items and other articles of use which are lawful and avoid those things which are unlawful.

The Qur'an says: "O ye who believe ! Forbid not the good things which Allah hath made lawful for you, and transgress not, Lo! Allah loveth not the transgressors. Eat of that which Allah hath bestowed on you as food lawful and good and keep your duty to Allah in Whom ye are believ-

ers." (5 : 87-88)

No human being has power to say what is right (Halal) and what is wrong (Haram). The Qur'an clarifies this principle in unambiguous terms when it commands: "And speak not concerning that which your own tongues qualify (as clean or unclean), the falsehood: "This is lawful, and this is forbidden", so that ye invent a lie against Allah..." (16:116)

2. Principle of Use: Within the bounds of lawful (Halal) and unlawful (Haram) prescribed by Allah and also keeping in view the rules of moderation and prudence, the man has been allowed to make full enjoyment of God's gifts bestowed on him. The Qur'an says: "O mankind ! Eat of that which is lawful and wholesome in the earth, and follow not the footsteps of the devil. Lo! he is an open enemy for you." (2:168). At another place, the revealed book of Islam states: "So eat of the lawful and good food, which Allah hath provided for you, and thank the bounty of your Lord if it is Him ye serve....." (16:114). However, the principle of use should not be over stretched so as to indulge in extravagance and wastage of economic resources. The Qur'an brings home this point when it addresses mankind: "O children of Adam ! Look to your adornment at every place of worship, and eat and drink, but be not prodigal Lo! He (Allah) loveth not the prodigals."(7:31)

All things have been created by Allah for man's use and service. To restrain oneself or forbid others from the enjoyment of lawful items of food and other articles of use tantamounts to renouncing the blessings and favours of Allah which has been strongly condemned. The Qur'an prohibits it in very clear words when it says : "O ye who believe ! Forbid not the good things, which Allah hath made lawful for you, and transgress not, Lo! Allah loveth not transgressors."(5:87). In another verse, the Holy Qur'an questions those who put restrictions

“Islamic principle of economic freedom means that an individual has been allowed liberty by God to earn wealth, own it, enjoy it and spend it as he likes.”

on the use of certain things without divine sanction: "Say! Who hath forbidden the adornment of Allah which He hath brought forth for His bondmen, and the good things of His providing?"(7:32). Thus the Qur'an has disapproved the ways of monks and ascetics who consider the satisfaction of physical urges an obstacle in spiritual development.

3. Principle of Moderation:

Islam unequivocally discourages its followers to cross the limits and follow extremes. The Muslims have been called by the Qur'an a middle nation (2:143). Therefore, the principle of moderation carries paramount importance especially in the economic field. This principle is followed by the true believers in the production of wealth as well as in the consumption and spending of wealth. Although earning of wealth through permitted (Halal) means is allowed, yet the piety demands that a Muslim should not become mad after amassing wealth like a greedy materialist. He should exercise restraint and earn wealth to meet his lawful needs. Extra wealth, if at all is earned by him somehow, may be spent in the path of Allah on charity and relief of the poor. Similarly, in the consumption and spending of wealth, the believer is recommended to strike balance avoiding miserliness and extrava-

gance. Miser is he who does not even provide for the legitimate needs of himself and his family let alone spending on charitable and noble causes. Extravagant or spend thrift is a person who squanders his wealth in luxury, gambling, drinking, and on lavish expenditure on festivities, weddings, day to day living. Islam condemns both miserliness and extravagance and enjoins upon a believer to exercise moderation.

4. Economic Freedom:

Every individual, according to Islam, is accountable for his actions done in this world. He would be rewarded for his good actions and punished for his evil actions in the hereafter. Accountability for individual's actions is meaningless if the individual is not provided reasonable freedom to act independently. Therefore, Islam puts highest value on individual's freedom of action in every field of human activity such as social, political, economic religious, moral, etc.

Islamic principle of economic freedom means that an individual has been allowed liberty by God to earn wealth, own it, enjoy it and spend it as he likes. It also entails freedom to adopt any profession, business or vocation to earn livelihood. But Islam has not allowed unlimited freedom in the economic sphere. As we have already discussed, Islam makes distinction between

Halal (lawful) and Haram (unlawful). In the field of production, distribution, exchange and consumption, only Halal (lawful) means are permitted. Remaining within the restrictions of Halal and Haram, an individual enjoys full freedom to earn and spend wealth as he likes. Thus Islam recognises free enterprise, human initiative, and individuals potential. It also recognises role of organisation, capital, labour and market forces in economic field. No unnecessary curbs are placed on the individual or the organisation regarding earning or owning of wealth. No upper limit or ceiling is imposed on properties or holdings. Besides restrictions of Halal and Haram, other restrictions are rarely placed on economic activities, prices of goods, ownership or on monopolies unless the same are really necessary for safeguarding the common interest of Muslim community.

5. Principle of Justice:

Islamic principle of justice operates in every sphere of human activity, may it be legal, social, political or economic. Islamic economic system, in fact is based upon the principle of justice which governs all the basic aspects of economy like production, distribution, consumption and exchange.

In the sphere of production, Islamic principle of justice en-

"None but God is empowered to pronounce what is right and what is wrong. Allah has made demarcation between lawful and unlawful in the economic sphere and has allowed man to enjoy those food items and other articles of use which are lawful and avoid those things which are unlawful."



Matthew Paul Glotfelter
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IN DEFENSE OF THE THOBE

When I first arrived in Saudi Arabia, I found the thobe vexing to say the least. When I saw students wearing thobe and shmagh/khutra, it left me looking at a face only. How was I ever to adapt to "face only"? It seemed unreasonable -- not to mention, boring. Since I came in the summer, everyone was wearing white thobe. I thought, this must be the most unimaginative place I have ever been!

And, when I met the same people outside of school and they wore Western clothes, I didn't recognize them. Some people would come up and start chatting to me and I'd think "I have **no** clue who you are!" Honestly, the whole thing seemed a huge joke on me!

However, with the passage of time, I got more used to identifying people by face only **and** I even bought a thobe for a wedding. I decided to wear it to KKU and got such positive feedback that now I own three!

There is something MORE I came to appreciate about the thobe though, and that is its great effect as a social leveler. Coming from the USA, people wear a wide variety of clothes -- clothes are, in fact, an extension of yourself. They represent who you are in a way. And, of course, we are all human beings and we are all influenced by things that should NOT influence us such as appearance. A student who is dressed impeccably with designer clothes will get my attention faster than a student who is wearing old jeans and a t-shirt. It is a fact that dress does affect how people perceive you.

Wearing a thobe obviates this issue.

Saudi Arabia (like the USA) is a country with vast differences in income. What I have come to appreciate about the thobe is that it forces me to look upon all my students equally in class. And that is what education really is all about -- all people should be equal in the eyes of a university. If Saudis dressed just like people in the USA, I might be tempted to favor one student over another due to his choice of clothing or style. With the thobe, there is none of that. Everyone looks the same, and I view my students FAR more equally.

So besides being the national dress of Saudi Arabia, let's appreciate some other benefits of the thobe. It forces one to see and judge others more "fairly". And **that** for me is a very good thing!



Literary Criticism in the 21st Century

BY DR. IUSTIN SFARIAC



Reported by
Muhammad Adil
Lecturer,
English Department

Language Research Center at King Khalid University organized a seminar on April 14, 2014. The seminar included a presentation conducted by Dr. Iustin Sfariac, which was titled *Literary Criticism in the 21st Century*. It was primarily centered on the challenges and opportunities associated with literary Criticism in the current century. He began by quoting Professor Mark Roche who compared Science and Technology with Arts and Humanities the latter of which had been under increasing pressure. He also quoted a cultural theorist Cath-

erine Belsey who focused on how criticism is eclipsed by the serious issues the whole world is concerned about. In this regard, Dr. Iustin Sfariac also focused on Deconstruction, Marxism, Feminist criticism, and Post-colonial criticism etc. He finally emphasized four types of needs for meaning, namely purpose, value, efficacy and self-worth. Overall, the presentation was worthwhile, which eventually led to an interactive discussion where the participants shared their views on literary criticism and the essence of literature.

“Dr. Iustin Sfariac also focused on Deconstruction, Marxism, Feminist criticism, and Post-colonial criticism etc.”





By Erich Beer

Language Instructor, Faculty of Languages and Translation

something funny

something funny happened on the way to my grave:

I started living
uproariously
gravely
(not) out of sight
(not) out of mind

secret makeover

trans.form.ation
pains.taking.ly
from the inside
out
delicious secret
to emerge fully fledged
an overnight succation
didn't see it coming?

empty boxes

empty boxes
stacked (on) high
let me stuff your foursquareness with more
emptiness
so you can overflow with
clutter-
-less-
-ness
and your joy be complete
and mine

ffluff

empty suitcases on top of closet
 misnomer: suit + case
 who still wears them anyway
 (ridiculous convention)
 and who needs to encase them
never being able to fill one
resorting to pillows for bulk
for fluff
fluffcases
cases of fluff
the more fluff, the less non-fluff
fluff makes the world go round
seemingly
endlessly



By Eyhab A. Bader Eddin

Lecturer in Translation, Faculty of Languages and Translation

** To the Blue Haven of my Life: My Mother*

This stanza, as it were, represents an example of 'pattern poem' which is a kind of poem whose lines are arranged to represent a physical object to suggest an action, motion or feeling.

This type first appeared in works of Greek poets (4th B.C). In English literature, this type began to appear in 16th century.

What shall I wordlessly say
 On such a day save to pray
 To God to preserve you stay
 By me since I was motes of clay
 Till in a grave I dwell and myself lay
 Never will I forget a many night and day
 Which you warmed and made bright of grey

Pruned rhyme

To the cosy pairs of hazel eyes
 At the sight of which fade my cries

To the rain-washed face with shiny smile
 Whose honesty actually sticks out a mile
 From the bottom of my chilly pain-wrung heart

As long as the present is not the past
 As long as future hopes are not the last
 As long as the dark is not a glinting part
 As long as ocean water is not azure or blue

Full (perfect) rhyme

I utter countlessly 'I LOVE YOU'
 As long as tulips stop sprouting out
 'I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU', my heart oozes out

These two lines represent an example of 'pruning poems'. In this verse form, which is very rare, the second line is formed by pruning the 1st consonant of the preceding rhyme. A renowned example of this type is George Herbert's Paradise.

* This poem is an imitation of old English verses which make use of such schemes as assonance and alliteration.



Continued from page 3

sure that nobody is exploited by the other and that nobody acquires wealth by unjust, unfair, unlawful and fraudulent means. The followers of Islam have been allowed to acquire wealth through just and fair means. Islam admits the right of every individual to earn his livelihood, to acquire wealth, to own property and live a comfortable life. But it does not allow that people should amass wealth through bribery, corruption, embezzlement, stealing, robbery, gambling, trade in narcotics, exploitation, gambling, interest, fraud, hoarding, black marketing, prostitution, malpractices in business, immoral professions or through other unjust methods.

In the field of distribution, the Islamic principle of justice plays the most vital role. One of the greatest contribution of Islam to humanity is that Islam ensures just and equitable distribution of wealth among the people. Justice in distribution, which is called by various names like economic justice or social justice or distributive justice, demands that economic resources and wealth should be so distributed among the members of the community that on the one hand the gulf between the rich and the poor should be bridged and on the other hand everyone should be provided with basic necessities of life. Islam discourages concentration of wealth in few hands and ensures its circulation in the community not only through moral education and training but also through effective legal measures. System of Sadaqat, Zakat and voluntary alms along with laws of inheritance helps distribution of wealth among the larger sections of society.

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