

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Second Talk

Palestine

The Causes of the Education Crisis in the Islamic World

(Translated)

Praise be to Allah who obliged us to seek knowledge and who made the status of scholars follow that of the Prophets, and peace and blessings on the best of Messengers who said:

«يوزن يوم القيامة مدادُ العلماء بدم الشهداء»

“The ink used by scholars will be weighed on the Day of Judgment by the blood of the martyrs.”

Islam has given great importance to knowledge and education; it is one of the necessities of life and the manifestation of the revival and a sign of the elevation of nations. The objective of education is the formation of Islamic personalities and providing the society with whatever it needs from science and knowledge to achieve sufficiency and greatness, so that we become independent of other countries. In addition, it is the way to preserve the nation's culture and its propagation, which is the mark of its civilization and the foundation of its standards and its system of life which it seeks to implement at home and propagate it abroad.

It is definite that education in the Muslim world is suffering a crisis that makes our eyes tear and our hearts bleed; it impacts successive generations of our sons and daughters. The problems arising from the secular education system in Muslim countries are similar, though each is related with the domestic issues in that country, such as revolutions, wars, and conflicts.

The first and most prominent problem facing mainstream education now is that it is inherited and imposed upon us since colonial times. Most of the education systems in Muslim countries were imported from the West. Their objective is to memorize information to pass exams and get a certificate instead of giving students sufficient room to digest the subjects or to think, investigate and analyze to make connections and application ... the goal is the information not the student, the certificate but not the useful knowledge. This is done systematically, and is not coincidental; it is a form of colonialism and an intellectual and cultural invasion. Education given to our children in schools and universities is not aimed at building the Islamic basic rule which is the Islamic creed. Education turns them into secular people who advocate democracy and freedoms and thus defend them, and it instills the patriotic bond and nationalism to replace Islam and what a grave problem this is!

The frequent change of curricula in Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, etc, is a clear example of the malicious plans that distance the students away from their religion and their Ummah's issues. This is in addition to the rigidity of the curriculum, which is not adapted to the needs of students and the expectations of society.

One of the things that constitutes a crisis in the quality of education is the educational institutions. There is a lack of proper vision and they are poorly organized and have clear poor results. There is no correlation between the various stages of education. The basic principle is that the state is responsible for education and the creation of all requirements of the educational process including the institutions and means of education, schools and universities and libraries, laboratories, and more importantly, qualified teachers and scholars, etc. When highlighting the schools in most of the Muslim countries, we find that there are shortcomings in the provision of schools in every area, especially in villages and remote

areas and if it was provided, sadly they will lack the proper environment in terms of readiness with everything the educational process needs of appropriate buildings, electricity, clean water and ventilation and heating, means and tools... Classes are not suitable in terms of space or lighting, and seats are not comfortable nor suitable for students sitting for a long period. And there are numerous overcrowded classrooms, not only in places like Gaza, where teaching shifts are up to three time periods ... Or in Egypt, where sometimes the number per grade of students reaches 120 students. Or in Yemen, where a single classroom holds from 90 to 120 students. Or in Pakistan, where according to data published by UNESCO it has the most overcrowded classrooms in South Asia and the ratio of students per teachers is about 500 students to three teachers. Or in Afghanistan, where the number of schools is inadequate and classrooms are overcrowded, and there are even two shifts of teaching, which means that teaching occurs for only a few hours. Or in Sudan, Morocco, Jordan, Mauritania, and Somalia where there are thousands of schools that operate in tents... But also in Turkey (which is more advanced) where the educational system in general suffers a lack of resources, budget and has a large number of students per school. For example, there are classrooms in the eastern regions containing fifty students... There is also a shortage in terms of availability of libraries and laboratories, and if found, it is likely not sufficient enough – when comparing it to the number of students - to encourage students to read and to practice scientific research and develop their thinking and creativity... And we must not forget that the Arabic language is distanced and weakened, leading to a decline in creativity and capacity for an independent vision for education. It is therefore not surprising if a lot of students shy away from learning and creativity.

As for the problem of illiteracy, it is overwhelming... Illiteracy was virtually non-existent in the Islamic State, where learning the Qur'an in writing and reading was mandatory. Books and libraries were accessible for reading and borrowing, while the percentage of illiteracy in Europe was at that time over 95%. However today the situation is reversed, we the Muslims now suffer from illiteracy! This is a foregone conclusion for the education policies adopted by the systems in the Islamic world, which originally were developed and dictated by the Kaffir colonizers, and which wiped out the motivation of both students and teachers alike, not to mention introducing the high costs incurred by the parents, and not forgetting the absence of security due to wars and instability.

According to the Arab Knowledge Report 2014, the number of illiterates in the Arab region in 2012 reached around 51.8 million from the age of 15 years and above, of which the larger portion were female, representing 66 percent ... The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2015 reported that more than 12 million children in the Middle East and North Africa are out of school or are prone to drop out, and that 40 per cent of children in Afghanistan are not in school, and 90 per cent of Afghan women are illiterate, in rural areas. Also a government report showed that 24 million children in Pakistan are without education... and the number of elementary school students who cannot read and write are approximately half! And the quality of education in Bangladesh is mediocre due to fraud and the leaking of exam questions at all levels and stages.

This applies to universities, too. If we look at the costs of education under the capitalist ideology that we live in – in which the family is responsible for the education of its members and not the state - we find that university education is expensive and burdensome for the budget of families, which makes some people give up on their ambition to go to University, despite their high academic achievement due to the inability to bear the cost. Parents are forced sometimes to sell their land and property, or borrow or take on more than one job, or the student himself works to be able to pay exorbitant college fee costs for books, transportation and other needs.

We wonder: isn't education one of the needs that Islam entrusted the State to provide for its citizens?!! How much expenses did these countries (May Allah remove its rulers) dedicate for the education sector?!! We know that countries in the Muslim world are rich in human and material wealth but their resources are not in their people's hands, but in the hands of the

Kaffir colonizers through these destructive rulers who are subordinate to their masters;

﴿إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا﴾

“[And they should consider that] when those who have been followed disassociate themselves from those who followed [them]” [Surah Al-Baqara: 166]

The decline in spending on the education sector is an obstacle to its development. 41 countries in the Muslim world spent only 6% of their budget on education in 2011, and 25 countries spent less than 3% of GNP in 2011. Turkey occupies second place before the last among the OECD countries in the allocation of resources from its national income for education. The proportion of total spending on education development in Pakistan in 2015 - 2016, was only 2.3% of GDP! While the Jewish entity (the alien body imposed on us) spends 10% of GDP on education and supports most universities and spends an average of \$1100 per student per year. Whereas statistics reported in Al-Jazeera Net showed that the Arab countries, especially those in Asia are the countries which spend the least on scientific research, where their spending does not exceed 0.1%, and those in Africa did not exceed 0.5%. According to the academic ranking of the Shanghai Jia Tong, of the universities in the world, four universities of the Zionist enemy are included in the list of the best 150 universities in the world.

However, none of the Arab universities were mentioned on this list! Among the results of classification of the top 500 universities, only one Arab University entered the rating. It is the King Saud University and it was ranked at 428!! According to QS World Ranking for the year 2014/2015 for the top 100 universities, none of the universities in the Islamic world ranked high in it, and among the 400, there were only 11 universities among them. In addition, the latest results of 2016 of the Times Higher Education ranking, showed that there were only 10 universities in the Islamic world among the top 400 universities!

Even scholarships and fellowships are mostly given to the wrong people, and in addition, the so-called "top colleges" are not fairly accessible, and seemingly limited to certain people! This suppresses creativity and limits the number of workers for the development of science, research and scientific progress as well as the writing of books, while this should rather be open for everyone as a right. Furthermore, we find that some poor families prefer educating males over females because they do not have means to afford it for all members of the family, and this is because males are responsible for the family and spending, and thus they believe that education is more useful for males, than females ... and even then, those who manage to complete their university education have little work opportunity and low pay, while living requirements are expensive, and they feel the insecurity and injustices in their own country, as the university and research institutions and jobs are dominated by cronyism, centralism and tyranny.

As aforementioned, regarding the miserly spending on scientific research, compounded with all other dilemmas, students get frustrated and sometimes despair, leading to one of the most important problems that reflects the reality of the Ummah in various Islamic societies, and impedes providing a better future for them. This is the problem of the "brain drain" which exports minds, experiences and skills to Western countries, and in turn weakens the Islamic Ummah intellectually, culturally, educationally, and scientifically. There are hundreds of thousands of students from Islamic countries who continue studying in the West, especially the graduates who on obtaining a doctorate degree do not return to their countries. Some studies carried out by the Arab League, UNESCO and the World Bank have shown that the Arab world contributes to one-third of the brain drain from developing countries. Whilst Turkey (which is taken as an example in the field of education in a number of Muslim countries) occupies 11th place among the states with the largest number of students abroad. Foreign universities hunt for the brilliant minds of Pakistan through collaboration with private schools - to exploit them for the benefit of Western countries and not for the benefit of the people of Pakistan, or the rest of the Muslim world.

After all this, we wonder: Why are they advancing and we are going backwards?! They attract our scientists and celebrate them at the time that the governments in the Muslim world, with their rulers and their media, celebrate the artists and dancers and do not provide scientists and innovators any interest or necessary care! And so Muslim competencies are stolen and become a force for the Kaffir countries and a weakness to us.

In light of all this, what do we think the conditions of teachers will be like in such countries in terms of their status and preserving their dignity and their salaries and working conditions? If education is one of the most important foundations of Revival, then the teacher is one of its most important pillars. Indeed Islam raised the status of teachers, and their efforts and the generosity of their quest, for the Messenger of Allah (saw) said:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ وَأَهْلَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ حَتَّى النَّمْلَةِ فِي جِجْرِهَا وَحَتَّى الْحَوْتِ لِيَصَلُّوا عَلَى مُعَلِّمِ النَّاسِ الْخَيْرِ»

“Allah and His angels and the people of the heavens and the earth, even the ant in its hole and even the whale pray for the teacher of good to the people”

But the injustice and tyranny of these rulers did not value any one of the sons of this noble Ummah, not even the teachers whom were described by the Prophet of Mercy as the inheritors of the Prophets! While capitalist states - countries in which benefit and profit is the criteria for action like America, Japan and Germany – value scholars and teachers. They are revered by providing them with higher wages and privileges and they are honored the way they deserve, not the other way around. We find that the Islamic world, including the Arab countries pay teachers lesser wages and lower salaries, which forces the majority to get additional work that does not fit their profession to meet the high cost of living. This is in addition to the lack of good and proper working conditions for the nature of the work and its prestige, which affects the view of their students and the community towards them negatively. And we must not forget the policy of appointing unqualified teachers who lack the competence to teach, especially in the primary grades where students learn basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Or they are forced to teach subjects that are not their university specialization which affects the quality of education. In its annual report on education for 2014, UNESCO said that 43% of children in the Arab countries lack access to the basic principles of education because of the deteriorating quality of teachers and lack of appropriate training to perform their job in addition to the decline in the status of the teacher which affected performance, productivity and delivery. It is also not unlikely that he is subjected to humiliation and sanctions if he demands his basic rights as what happened in Tunisia, Palestine, Egypt and Jordan.

And we must not forget as well the teaching methods and failed methods that lack flexibility, creativity, diversity and vitality that lead to boredom and lack of thinking ability and creativity, for it is based on instruction and teaching theories, and focuses on the memorization of abstract information that is not perceived in their minds rather than linking it to the reality or analysis and understanding, resulting in a lack of desire to learn and thus leading to dropping out of school. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned that 12 million children in the Middle East are out of school as a result of poverty, sexual discrimination and violence; let alone the statistics about children who were forced to leave school because of the wars in Iraq and Syria, which number more than three million.

All of this is a natural result of the regimes' policy of these countries, not in particular countries, but in all the countries of the Islamic world. They are subordinates of the Kaffir colonizers, since the colonizer succeeded in demolishing the Ottoman Khilafah and drew plans to colonize these countries to remain affiliated to it and implement their policies and maintain their interests and give them access to the Ummah's wealth. Agent rulers are the tools created by the hands of the colonizers and under their eyes to be loyal slaves to them, and indeed they were. So they carried out their orders and adopted all their policies relating to governance and the economy, education ... etc. And so that they cannot get out of the limits of their control they invented the so-called International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to tie them up to the colonial countries, especially America, by forcing them to resort to

borrowing from the World Bank which on the one hand identifies projects and investments on which loans are spent, which of course are not needed for vital projects by the state nor do they contribute to progress. On the other hand, they are loans from capitalist countries, which means that the interest (Riba) multiplies and cannot be repaid by state such that they are unable to disengage from them and remain hostage and subordinate to the colonizing countries!!

What concerns us in this sector is that education is not a priority to those rulers and their masters, only in what serves their interests and implements their plans and their plots on this Ummah, that has its own ideological heritage. They adopted the Western secular agenda and view point of capitalism in education, especially in the development of curricula for secularization and Westernization of successive generations as we mentioned earlier, and they imported educational models implemented in the West, or adopted educational solutions from Western organizations that are only aimed at increasing secularization of education and implementing them in our countries under the pretext of promoting education! Such as the Finnish model which is adopted in the UAE and the Singapore model and the Japanese model in Egypt, and the American model in more than one Arab and Islamic country. And of course they were unsuccessful experiments, since the education policy in those models are stemming from the ideology those countries carry. Their ideology is contrary to the Islamic beliefs of Muslims, as well as its means and its components and methods of teaching and system and its curriculum and its infrastructure which are different from what we have, and it is not connected with reality and does not meet the needs of students and society.

All of these problems and issues will not be resolved and education, knowledge and teachers' prestige, stature and strength will not return, except by the existence of the sponsoring state that cares about the quality of education and considers it as one of its interests and basic facilities for its citizens, which it provides as much as required to become engaged with life, and does not expect anything in return from its citizens for educating them, for education is its own duty. Education shall be free of charge for all and everyone, whether male or female, and it will make the Islamic creed its basis, and ensures the teacher's stature... It is the state that is able to embrace the scientists and provide a decent living for them so they return to contribute to technological and scientific progress, Allah willing, the State of the Khilafah on the Method of Prophethood soon with Allah's help...

O Allah enable us to implement your Deen that you chose for us by the establishment of the Islamic Khilafah and make us its witnesses and soldiers.

Muslimah Ash-Shami (Umm Suhaib)

Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir