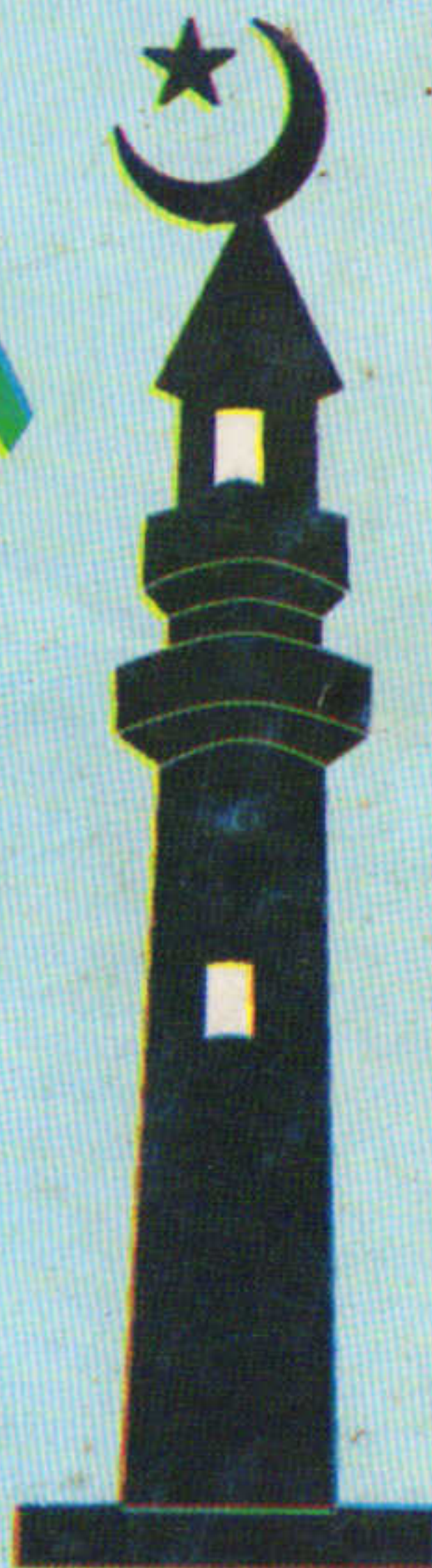


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ROLES OF PROPRIETORS FOR PRIVATE ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

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The inclusion of Islamic Studies into the school curriculum as a core subject in the 6-3-3-4 system is a right step in the right direction. However, it has failed to achieve its goals as it is like a living charcoal amidst ashes. It only succeeded in educating the students about Islam instead of students receiving Islamic education. It thus becomes the concern of the contemporary Muslim scholars that a new intellectual, behavioral and technological paradigm which will take care of the needs and aspirations of the Muslim community and will be in line with Islamic epistemology be evolved so that the potentiality of true agent of Allah on the earth is developed in the students.

The introduction of Western education to Nigeria has undoubtedly had negative impact on Islamic education. The initial Quranic schools where Muslim children received pure Islamic education were gradually relegated to the lowest ebb and the inclusion of Islamic Studies into the Western curriculum was used to lure Muslims into accepting Western education. In some of the schools where Islamic Studies was offered as a subject, Christians were sometimes employed to teach the subject while books written by the orientalist were recommended for the subject.

However, the National Policy on Education gives an opportunity of which Islamic education could be taught in an Islamic atmosphere. A section of the Policy stipulated that the government welcomes the contribution of voluntary agencies, communities and private individuals in the establishment and management of primary and secondary schools alongside those provided by the state government as long as they meet the minimum standard laid down by the government (Sec. 3, No. 15, sub. Sec. 13; Sec. 4, No. 22 (1), pp. 12 & 19).

It has to be mentioned that the acceptance of Western education by the Muslims helped in the separation of *wahy* and '*aql* knowledge. In fact, revelation as a source of knowledge was completely neglected while scientific epistemology which is purely mundane came to be accepted as an infallible and impeccable paradigm of inquiry. The opposition of *wahy* to '*aql* is inimical to the spirit of Islam. This is because '*aql* may have its illusions and aberrations as well as its uncertainties which can only be rectified by the illuminating light of the infallible source of knowledge – *wahy*. This is what is expected of all Islamic schools in Nigeria to differentiate them from the conventional schools.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight some of the roles that proprietors of any Islamic school have to play in order to justify the Islamic names they give their schools so that children are taught along the *fitrah* designed for them by Allah. It is not our aim to discuss in detail the necessary steps leading to Islamization of knowledge as this demands a separate thesis. However some conceptual issues related to the topic under discussion are hereby discussed.

1.1 CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

(a) Private proprietors of schools

Proprietor, according to Little and Coulson is an individual who has exclusive rights or title to the use or disposal of a thing, an owner of a property or properties. The fact still remains valid that Islamic education predated Christian or Western education in Nigeria by over three hundred years. Right from the introduction of Islam into the country, Muslim individuals had been establishing Quranic schools, each operating at its individual level with high level of autonomy which consequently gives the wrong impression that such schools were crude in terms of curriculum, administration and methodology and could no longer meet the challenges of the modern system of education .

Another dimension of private proprietorship of schools was introduced with the coming of the Christian missionaries to the country. For a period of about four decades (1842-1882) they dominated the educational scene using Western education as a weapon of evangelization. To bail out the Muslim children from the trap of Christianization via education, some conscious Muslims organized

themselves into societies and started establishing schools where Muslim children could receive Western education without losing their religious identity. Among such Islamic organisations that established schools are the Ansar-ud-Deen Society, Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission, Anwar-ul-Islam and Ansar-ul-Islam to mention but a few.

With the popularity and prominence of Western education among the Muslims, individual Muslims started founding schools of their own. Among the early Muslim individuals that championed the course of establishing Islamic schools were Mr. Idris Animasaun, Mr. Abu Ahmad Sadiq, Mr. Babatunde Salami, Mr. Tijani and Muhammad Augusto who opened one Islamic High School as far back as 1916.³

Another type of private proprietorship of schools is the group of communities who own schools. The Government Muslim School established and officially opened on June 1896 is an example of this. This type of school was founded by the Lagos Muslim community but assisted by the colonial government. Others include the Epe Muslim School and Badagry Muslim School. One can then conclude that the private proprietorship of schools can be classified into three groups namely sole proprietor, community proprietor and society proprietor.

In the contemporary situation, private Islamic schools are emerging from different parts of the country. Such schools as Adeen International School Ibadan, Ibikunle Lawal Comprehensive High School Ile Ife, As Sanusiyyah Comprehensive High School, Ode Omu, and Al Huda College, Ila Orangun, are examples of schools owned by Muslim individuals. Among the schools owned by Islamic Societies are Ansar ud Deen Schools in different parts of the country, NACOMYO Nursery and Primary School, Osogbo, Nurudeen High School, Ila-Orangun and some others. The prevailing society in a town is equally used by some Muslim communities to name the schools owned by them. Example of this is the Nawiaru Deen Comprehensive High School and Ansar Ud--Deen High School established by the Muslim community of Otan Ayegbaju and Odeomu respectively.

It should be noted that the National Policy on Education encourages private individuals, organizations and communities to establish private schools. It exclusively leaves the provision of preschool education to private and voluntary enterprises on the basis that every society has the right to determine what it hopes and wishes its young and

innocent citizens to learn.⁵ So if the Christians could use their private schools for their "catch them young" programme, then Muslim proprietors must leave no stone unturned in presenting the pupils with a set of knowledge which will be Islamically oriented so that they become used to it right from their tender age.

(b) Knowledge:

The word *al'ilm* in Arabic is regarded as a synonym of knowledge though other Arabic words like *al ma'rifa* and *al Shu'ur* equally convey the same message as *al ilm*. In the Quran, the Almighty Allah describes Himself in many verses as *al alim*, *al tafim* or *Allam*, the derivations of the root 'l m which occur 750 times and thus ranking it third in numerical tabulation and importance after the words Allah and *Rabb* which are repeated 2800 and 950 times respectively.⁶

According to Sha'ban, knowledge means sciences and its corresponding word in Arabic is *ma'rifah* or *ma'arif*.⁷ However, Al Alwani tries to distinguish between knowledge and science. To him science is that "which represents the fruition of knowledge, something logically or empirically demonstrable" while knowledge is something that is acquired but not necessarily capable of being proved.⁸ Zaghlul al-Najjar sees no distinction between science and knowledge. To him, "scientia" from where science is coined is a Latin word which means knowledge and any knowledge achieved in different places and at all times and arranged according to subject matter is science.⁹ From this, it is clear that the word "knowledge" means different thing to different scholars. This explains why there are as many types of knowledge as there are scholars. To Imtiaz, there are two categories of knowledge namely axiomatic knowledge and empirical knowledge. Axiomatic knowledge is the one that deals with the possibility of possible things and the impossibility of impossible things, while empirical knowledge deals with observation and experimentation.¹⁰

In his famous *Thya 'ulum ad Din*, Imam Ghazali classes knowledge into two branches, namely religious and non religious knowledge,¹¹ the classification which Sajjad and Ashraf see as the genesis of the crisis in Muslim education.¹² This classification further leads to the categorization of Muslims' knowledge of their jurisprudence by Audah into the uneducated, the European educated and the Islamically educated.¹³ One can then conclude that the separation of worldly

knowledge from religious knowledge has constituted problems to the Muslims, as it has successfully created a discrepancy between the Islamic view and intellectual activity. So a new attempt at marrying both the revealed knowledge and the rational knowledge together culminated into the Islamization of knowledge programme.

(c) Islamization of Knowledge

Islamization of knowledge according to Professor Khalil is an attempt to practice intellectual activities based on the Islamic concept of the universe, life and man.¹⁴ According to Omar Kasule, it is a process of recasting the corpus of human knowledge to conform with the basic tenets of *'aqidat at Tauhid*.¹⁵ Saidu Sulaiman sees the programme as an attempt through which those aspects of the body and purpose of knowledge and of the process and methodologies of discovering, validating, imparting and applying it, which oppose Islam, are identified and made subservient to the Islamic worldview.¹⁶

In the secular context, Islamic education has been conceptualized to mean Islamic Religious Knowledge and Arabic Language. That is the reason why Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK) was included into the Western curriculum to lure Muslims into attending their schools which they had previously ignored on the ground that it was inimical to Islam. The introduction of IRK as well as other so called secular subjects are thus being looked upon as two parallel lines whereas Islamic view of life is holistic.

The mundane, empirical, metaphysical and spiritual matter are regarded as continuous and inter connected and thus could not be separated. This is why education in Islam is seen as a means of ensuring "balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of man's spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses."¹⁷

The bifurcation of education is of serious concern to the Muslim world hence the need for Islamization of knowledge programme. At initial stage, this jihad was undertaken by some Muslim individuals. However, the urge to restore a purely Islamic education system became a global issue in 1977 when the First World Conference on Muslim Education was held in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Between then and now, six of its kind have been organized. The greatest consequence of the first conference was the establishment of the NIT in the United

States of America in 1981/C/E/ (1401A.H). The aim of the Institute is to revive and promote Islamic thought and the Islamization of knowledge in the contemporary disciplines.

2.0 ROLES OF PROPRIETORS OF PRIVATE ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

The fertile land on which the seed of Islamization of knowledge programme can germinate is the private Islamic Schools. For a proprietor of Islamic school to make any significant contribution towards the programme, he needs to be well informed about it and to be fully aware of his right to exercise some authorities on his school vis-à-vis designing the school's programme to train the future generations to work as agents of Allah on earth and to promote spiritual, moral, cultural, physical, mental and material development in the pupils. He can achieve this if he adequately takes care of his roles as a proprietor. Some of these roles are:

(i) Reframing the goals of education in the school:

The education of a nation is no doubt a tool of achieving the overall philosophy and objectives of that nation. The five main National objectives of Nigeria as dearly stated in the Second National Development plan are the building of

- (a) A free and democratic society;
- (b) A just and egalitarian society;
- (c) A united, strong and self reliant nation;
- (d) A great and dynamic economy;
- (e) A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

The national aims and objectives of education to which the philosophy is linked are:

- (i) The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- (ii) The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- (iii) The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and

- (iv) The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.

A critical examination of both the national philosophy and the national objectives of education shows that there is little or no room for spiritual development of the pupils. This shows that the society has been imbued with ideas of materialism and comfort of this terrestrial life, hence the need to reframe the goals of education in an Islamic school to reflect the Islamic teachings and tenets. In an ideal Islamic school, it is the role of the proprietor to reframe the aims and objectives of education to produce pupils who have faith as well as knowledge. Knowledge without faith is nothing but partial knowledge which is more or less a kind of new ignorance. According to the consensus of Muslim scholars, the true aim of education is that: Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of man's spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses. Education should therefore cater for the growth of man in all its aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively, and motivate all these aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection. The ultimate aim of Muslim Education lies in the realization of complete submission to Allah on the level of the individual, the community and humanity at large.¹⁸

iii) Provision of qualified and experienced teachers

No education system can rise above the quality of its teacher. In the word of Sir Ahmadu Bello:

Anyone can construct buildings and call them a university, but without competent and dedicated teaching staff, the correct and accepted international standards cannot be attained. It is the staff who set these standards and maintain them.¹⁹

It becomes a crucial role of the proprietor of an Islamic school to employ competent, dedicated and experienced teachers into his school. This is because the fulcrum of the educational lever is the teacher. A teacher in the school system is like the heart in the body through whose healthiness the whole body is healthy and through whose its being diseased, the whole body is diseased. As such, the community should found schools that will produce teachers with

Islamic orientations, but meanwhile, proprietors should organize orientation courses for newly employed teachers to meet their Islamic demands.

It is also the role of the proprietor to design good working conditions for his staff. Many dedicated teachers had left Islamic schools due to their poor working conditions, lack of motivation, lack of plan for pension and gratuity, poor school climate, inadequate educational facilities and poor leadership style. When this is assured and adequately taken care of, it is then that the proprietor could organize his Islamization programme effectively.

(iii) Infrastructure

In order to facilitate the observance of Islamic duties and rituals, there is the need to construct mosque in the school compound as one of the paraphernalia of our educational institutions. As laboratory is important to scientists, mosque is equally essential to the Muslims. There, moral talks and other Islamic teachings are practicalised. Buildings in the school must also be constructed to reflect Islam's world-view. Provision of infrastructure must also include library where relevant textbooks related to islamization of knowledge programme will be stored. This will assist the teachers to familiarize themselves more with the concept.

In order to facilitate proper teaching of the sciences, the proprietor must provide facilities for the teaching and learning of sciences in the school. Also, to promote scientific and technological advancement in the school, technical and computer education must be given the desired attention. This will erase the erroneous notion that Islamic education and science and technology are birds of different feather.

(iv) Organization of Symposium, Workshop and Seminar

Islamization of knowledge awareness could be created through seminars, symposia, group discussions, enlightenment programme and funding of educational searches. The proprietor of a private Islamic school must see this as a duty he must perform in the course of promoting Islamization of knowledge. He needs to sponsor his teachers to attend seminars and workshops related to the Islamization programme to update their knowledge.

(v) Re-Islamizing Secular Subjects:

In any Islamic school, all the teaching de Islamized subjects must be re-islamized. Such subjects as Social Studies, Biology, Agricultural Science and others could be islamized through the instruments such as the Quran, Hadith, Muslim achievements, non Muslim remarks, pinpointing plagiarism, counter information and universal experience.²⁰

It is believed by some scholars that such disciplines as civil and electrical engineering, mathematics, chemistry, physics and geology do need not much Islamization. However, the aims and objectives of these disciplines may not be in line with the Islamic paradigm. The methodology of teaching too may need a plethora of Islamization, so that in each aspect of teaching each of these subjects, the spirit of Islam is felt. For instance, at the Primary School level, Mathematics may be taught Islamically and the following questions may be set for the pupils:

- (a) A Muslim performed the following *rakats* in the following prayers:

Subhi — 2 rakats

Zuhr — 2 rakats

Asr — 2 rakats

Maghrib — 3 rakats

Isha' — 4 rakats

How many rakats did he perform altogether?

- (b) A boy met the Imam observing the third *rakat* in *Isha'* prayer. How many rakats has he missed?
- (c) Mrs. Rafat is expected to fast for 30 days during Ramadan. She omitted 5 during her menstruation and 7 when she was sick.
- (i) How many fast did she omit?
- (ii) How many did she observe?
- (iii) How many will she offer back after Ramadan?
- (d) What is the difference between the *rakat* of *Salat Subh* and *Salat Isha'*,?
- (e) Abdullah observed his *Zuhr* prayer at 2:00pm. He decided to stay in the mosque till *Magrib* time at 7:00pm. For how many hours did he stay in the mosque?

Still on primary school subjects, such topic as "Domestic and Wild animals" must be Islamically understood. Students must be informed that Allah is the Creator of all these animals. While teaching "colours," references must be made to natural objects like leaves, sky, sand and their colours to show that Allah is the creator of the objects and colours.

While teaching the growth of plants in Agricultural Science, the teacher needs to emphasize that the essential force behind the growth of plants is Almighty Allah in addition to other necessary ingredients like fertile soil, rainfall and application of nitrogenous and phosphate fertilizer. Also, while teaching "Reproduction," students must be aware of the fact that it is Almighty Allah who does this mighty work and that He can create whatever He likes even without normal fertilization of egg by sperm. The case of Maryam, Prophet 'Isa's mother can be cited as an example. Such Quranic verses as 32:8; 36:77; 3:6; 22:5; 80:19; 82:7 8 could also be cited to show the stages of human embryos which were not described by scientists until 1941.²¹

In Yoruba as a teaching subject, the teacher must erase some erroneous raise statements about Islam from the students' minds. The words "imale" and "onimole" for Islam and Muslim, respectively, must be corrected. Correct pronunciation of Islamic names must be assured. For instance Yusuf must be said instead of Yesufu, Ibrahim instead of Buremo, Muhammed instead of Monmodu; while such derogatory statements like "ara ifa ni Fatimoh," "ofin to meegun to meleha," etc., must be corrected by the Yoruba teacher in an Islamic school.

(vi) Creating Islamic Environment

It is the role of the Muslim proprietor of Islamic school to create conducive environment based on the teaching of Islam. Spacious classrooms to allow male and female students to sit separately must be provided where separate classes could not be afforded. The students' uniform must conform with the dictates of Islam. Sport dresses must be designed in such a way that female students will not be exposing their privacy. Also, students must be encouraged to adopt simple Islamic etiquettes in and outside the school. *Al hamdu lilah* must be said by someone who sneezes while the second person says *yarhamukailah* instead of saying "excuse me" and "sorry," respectively. Instead of "Good morning" or "Good afternoon," they must be taught

to say the popular "as Salam alaykum."

At the nursery school level, teaching of un-Islamic rhymes, poems and songs must be replaced by Islamic values laden ones. Islamic etiquettes of table manners, toilet habit and others must be taught to the pupils.

(vii) Establishment of Higher Schools

The National Policy on Education gives room to any qualified individual to establish schools from the pre primary level to university level. For any proprietor of Islamic nursery and primary school pursuing the Islamization of knowledge programme, it is expected of him to struggle to establish higher school to ensure continuity of the programme. It has been conspicuously revealed that unless the private individual complement efforts of the government, it could not provide secondary education to all the primary school leavers. This is manifest in the number of primary and secondary schools established in Nigeria from 1991 1995 as indicated in the table below:

YEAR	ENROLMENT	
	PRIMARY SCHOOLS	SECONDARY SCHOOLS
1991	13,776,854	3,123,277
1992	14,805,937	3,600,620
1993	15,870,280	4,032,083
1994	16,190,947	4,451,329
1995	15,741,078	4,448,991

Source: Annual Abstract of Statistics, 1997

Apart from providing opportunities for education of a higher quality to the ever increasing products of the primary school system, the establishment of private Islamic secondary schools will afford its proprietors the opportunity to pursue the Islamization of knowledge programme at the secondary school level. At the post secondary school level where there is high level of autonomy, researches on the programme will be encouraged while Islamic related courses could be introduced into the curriculum.

3.0 CONCLUSION

So far, we have been able to throw light to what the concept "Islamization of knowledge" is, and the expected roles of the proprietors of private Islamic schools in the implementation of the programme. The programme should not be seen as a white elephant programme which cannot be accomplished in a secular state like Nigeria. After all, the programme started in the United States of America and it has been recording some successes. Many countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and South Africa are equally pursuing this programme relentlessly. It is our candid opinion that if the proprietors of Islamic schools could adopt this programme, it will help in promoting their schools morally and academically. The population of such school may be affected at initial stage, as Christian parents may not bring their wards and children, but, having it in mind that a more durable reward awaits him in the hereafter the proprietor will not hesitate to adopt the system in his school.

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