



Muslim Voice

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Editorial

Muslim World Beginning to Heave

There are significant changes in the Muslim World that have begun to take place. It is the next stage of the Arab Spring that had shaken the Middle East, though it had not produced changes that one could visibly observe. The visible changes are now beginning to show themselves. A causal relationship between these changes and the Arab Spring is not clear. However, this is how the World history often moves forward. It moves ahead even though nobody specific is apparently pushing it in that direction.

Changes are taking place in the Muslim World even if some are not pleasant changes. If one is optimistic, we can hope that the pain we are currently feeling is the birth pangs for something good to happen.

Let us begin it with a positive note. The Middle East is going through striking changes, mostly positive. Leading these changes is Saudi Arabia. It is slowly moving away from the Western influences. It is beginning to bet on the gradual condensation of a new world order. This condensation is like cloud formation around small molecules. The most visible molecule is the BRICS. Saudi Arabia is beginning to move away from the West and towards the BRICS. The move is well deliberated.

With this deliberated move, it became clearly demonstrated that there was no chasm between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The chasm was artificially imagined under the Western influences: the West has traditionally thrived through the creation of such artificial constructs. With the chasm seen as not substantial, the war in Yemen looks more and more like a self-inflicted wound. Hence there was no clear need for US ammunitions which had not served Saudi Arabia at all, and had brought death and destruction to their brethren in Yemen. A veil had thus lifted, and the way forward was beginning to get illuminated.

The UAE has followed suit. Once the darkness was pierced through, it became obvious that Middle East should stay clear of the Western campaign to escalate the bloodshed in Ukraine. They stayed aloof and did not rush to fill the Western needs for energy after it had shot itself in the foot in its madness to hurt Russia. Such acts of madness did not produce the desired results, but they produced the expected results as would have been analytically anticipated. The ill-conceived sanctions did not hurt Russia much, but it brought Europe to its knees with respect to its energy needs.

Qatar hosted the World Cup. And it did so on its own terms, whereby it show-cased and demonstrated the clearly attractive Islamic values and culture; rather visibly more spiritual than those in the West.

These are positive things that have happened in the Muslim World. Unfortunately, that is not the whole story. Events in Pakistan are heart breaking. Pakistani Army has gotten used to owning everything in Pakistan: starting from Ayyub Khan through Yahya Khan, Ziaul Haq, Pervez Musharraf to current Qamar Bajwa. It seems by now that the Army is incapable to let go of this illicit ownership. That has brought a dangerous situation that has now pitted the people of Pakistan against the few corrupt generals in the Army. The crimes against humanity are now rampant in Pakistan.

There is a sad situation also ongoing in Sudan. The Army has similarly owned Sudan, and is now pitted against the people of Sudan. It is somewhat more involved because the Army itself got divided into two opposing factions.

The situation in Egypt is somewhere in the middle. Egyptian dictator has decided to shift away from the West and contemplate a move towards the BRICS. When a unipolar world transmuted to a multipolar world, choices show themselves. However, dictators are bad, very bad, at making choices.

Let us move again towards a happier scenario. The situation in Syria is improving with it being welcome back into the Arab League. Just as was the case between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the chasm between Syria and Saudi Arabia also was artificially created by the West. The West refused to face Russia and Iran in Syria and folded back. Saudi Arabia and the larger Middle East was left alone holding the bag of consequences. They decided to get rid of the undesirable baggage and recognized that there actually was no real chasm with Syria. What is most encouraging is that the Muslim World initiated these developments on their own, with slight prodding from China, but without consultation with the West.

The West is very unhappy at these developments.

Iran knows the West better than anyone else in the world. Iran did not need to think twice to partake in these developments.

Turkey is the bright star in the Muslim World. They have broken through the difficult frontiers on three main fronts: the political opposition from the West, the economic progress despite the opposition from the West, and substantial progress in its defense technology, such as the Drone Technology.

Other bright stars in the Muslim World include Malaysia and Indonesia. There are many who are getting ready to join this list of the bright stars. Central Asia is almost ready. This is getting facilitated by a sea change; a gradual move away from the West and more into their own interests.

Our assessment overall is positive. Al-Hamd-o-Lillah.

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News in Brief

Please **click** on the hyperlinks for more details:

1. Read about ongoing [saga](#) in Pakistan.
2. [Post USA Middle East](#) has Dawned.
3. [Anti-US World Order](#) is taking Shape.
4. [BRICS will continue](#) to shine.
5. Tourists flock to Wadi Rum in Jordan. It has a house in the desert attributed to Lawrence of Arabia.
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7. Watch [Muslim Network News](#) for news coverage in [USA](#) and [Canada](#).
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Articles for Muslim Community

Mass Arrests in Pakistan

Pakistani police have carried out mass arrests and detained more than 4,000 people in the wake of protests over the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, including members of the political opposition, Human Rights Watch said today.

Police have arbitrarily detained many opposition political party members as well as people appropriately arrested for engaging in violence. Many have been charged under vague and overbroad laws prohibiting rioting and creating threats to public order. Pakistani authorities should release all those held for peaceful protest or supporting the political opposition and respect the due process rights of all those detained.

“The Pakistani authorities should end their arbitrary arrests of political opposition activists and peaceful protesters,” said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “Anyone committing violence should be appropriately charged and their due process rights respected.”

Violence swept across Pakistan after the police arrested former Prime Minister Khan on May 9, 2023, on corruption charges. Many of Khan’s supporters hurled rocks and Molotov cocktails, and in a few cases, used assault rifles to attack police, and set fire to ambulances, police vehicles, and schools. Police responded with tear gas, rubber bullets, and charged protesters with batons. In the ensuing days, police arrested hundreds of members of Khan’s political party, Tehrik-i-Insaaf, on charges of criminal intimidation, rioting, and assault on government officials. On May 12, Khan was released on bail.

A tense standoff continued between the police and Khan supporters in the city of Lahore, raising concerns about further violence. The United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials provide that security forces must use the minimum necessary force at all times. In dispersing violent assemblies, firearms may only be used when using less harmful means are not practicable, and only to the minimum extent necessary. Law enforcement officers may only intentionally resort to lethal force when strictly unavoidable to protect life.

On May 17, police arrested two former parliament members, Shireen Mazari and Maleeka Bukhari. After the Islamabad High Court granted them bail, the police immediately rearrested them on new charges. Mazari’s family members said that she has medical needs that require urgent attention. The authorities should release both women, drop all charges unless for a legally recognizable offense, and ensure that Mazari has immediate access to medical care.

Pakistani law requires all detainees to be brought before a court within 24 hours, which is consistent with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Pakistan is a party.

“The authorities should display restraint and respect for human rights and the rule of law,” Gossman said. “Fundamental guarantees of peaceful protest and due process should not become casualties of Pakistan’s political conflict.”

[Source link](#)

Mosques as Enablers for Community Development

Mosque is generally known as a house of worship for Muslims, mainly serving as a place that hosts the congregation of five daily prayers, weekly Jum'ah prayers, and two annual Eid prayers. In actuality, mosques throughout the world have also assumed various roles, making them an institution which is genuinely functional for the development of individuals in the society.

Historically, there have been exemplary roles of mosques, serving as the central spine for community development. During the Prophet's time, the mosque was a centre of activities that guide the community members to lead a good life, educating them to have good relationship with God, other individuals, surrounding and even oneself.

There are many instances when the Prophet (PBUH) made mosques as the centre for learning religion, sharing knowledge with others, exchanging information among community members and many other social activities. In the history of the education system, mosques in Morocco had stood as a center of higher learning, which eventually led into the formation of University of al-Qarawiyyin.

The activities conducted by mosques had empowered the society to attain progressive change, development, and improvement. For one, Islam encourages human beings to attain a good life, requiring the establishment of a system that provides guidance and support for individuals to deal with life activities.

While the mosque is regarded as a worship centre, the mosque also functions as a centre for community development. In this regard, the presence of mosques in the community must be leveraged and that their roles must be augmented. Besides serving as a center for religious education, mosques could provide support for the society to change their socio-economic condition. This could be accomplished by the development of interventions to strengthen the role of mosques, to make them accomplish the educational and social roles imbued with spiritual aspects. This entails various measures, aimed at enhancing the effort to strengthen the structure of mosque institutions.

An augmented structure of a mosque would enable it to improve the design of mosque programmes, diversify the approaches of dealing with people, improve the function of mosque as public space, increase the population of beneficiaries, and many other interventions. Such are important enablers to making mosques as genuinely functioning community development centers.

As a community development center, mosques have critical roles in personal psycho-social-spiritual development of individuals in the society. This human development level requires strategic efforts of mosque management to provide activities that facilitate people to acquire knowledge, expand experience,

radiate wisdom to others, receive support on life matters, fulfill religious duties, and meet their spiritual needs.

For the educational activities, mosques could organise programmes to develop a good religious foundation for teenagers, nurture positive behaviours among youths, provide social support for adults, and guide good lifestyles for elderly people. Special programmes for women, people with special needs, or marginalised individuals could also be conducted, guiding them on ways to lead progressive life and curb negative behaviours.



The social activities entail programmes that focus on providing avenue for people to socialise with others, such as interacting during the breaking-of-fast or iftar sessions. Mosque-goers have been found to report a positive significant relationship between their religious involvement at mosques and their level of happiness, life satisfaction, morale, positive affect and other aspects of well-being (Shukran, 2021). This in turn strengthen the camaraderie among the community members.

Some mosques conduct or coordinate health-related programmes, as well as economic and welfare activities, to be benefited by many groups of people. Mosques could engage partnering service providers to conduct or fund activities that improve the well-being and economic condition of community members.

Some mosques have played the role of reference center on psycho-socio-spiritual issues. It was reported that mosques have altered certain spiritual-religious practices during the spread of transmissible diseases, like during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many adjustments have also been made on ways the worship or ritual activities were conducted in the mosques.

The spiritual activities are the cornerstone of mosque activities, in that all programmes should be spirituality based, being aware of the essentiality of religious teaching and values in substantiating the educational and social activities. Mosque has been providing a guide for people on matters related to religious obligation, and their spiritual development. In short, mosques carry significant roles to provide psychological, spiritual, and social support that help ease the individuals in the society to deal with pressing life demands.



A good mosque is the function of an efficient management team, to include mosque managers, imam, and other committee members. They are responsible for the planning, leading, organizing and managing mosque activities that could enliven the collective aspects of mosques and, in turn, bring about benefits to mosque goers, and others in the surrounding community.

Among the core duties and responsibilities of mosque managers include managing mosque workers, committee members, or volunteers. It is hence necessary to equip the mosque workforce with the required

knowledge and skills. It is important to facilitate mosque managers' participation in acquiring management competencies such digital skills, management skills, people skills and other mosques management enabling skills.

Secondly, mosque management should facilitate the process to equip mosque educators with relevant skills, essential to enhance their effectiveness when conducting religious education classes. This includes providing them with knowledge on contemporary issues, teaching skills, communication skills, and other related skills that enable them to take up new approaches to educating the community.

Thirdly, mosque management should be sensitive to the needs of people in the mosque surrounding, such as the circumstances they face, and the occasions they celebrate. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, mosques in some countries altered the regular activities of mosques. They also provided guidelines of the procedure to attend ritual activities at mosques by taking into account the importance of protecting good health, practicing hygiene related behaviors during certain circumstances.

Mosque management should organise activities which are to the benefit of various groups in the community, including the locals and expatriates. This entails attending to the needs and expectations of the community by taking into account the uniqueness and particularity of each locality in terms of their social, economic, and cultural background. This is important to ensure a good-fit between mosque activities and participants' needs and background.

In ensuring that the mosque has adequate manpower, the management should recruit volunteers to assist the operation of the mosque. This entails inviting youth and community members to become volunteers. They could be trained to become managers of activities, committee members of programmes, or volunteers in daily operations. They could also be a special task force to deal with any crises or difficult situations encountered by the community. There could also be a team who attend to various social scenarios, and provide solutions which suit the local context, such as in dealing with moral decadence or social illness.

[Source link](#)

Community Empowerment Through Integration of Knowledge

The current reality of human life has been expressed in many descriptors, all pointing out to the necessities of having relevant establishments which could put in place suitable measures in equipping individuals to effectively deal with situations encountered. The increasingly challenging life among individuals requires them to possess certain types of knowledge, master relevant skills, and develop appropriate abilities in order to respond to life issues or societal demands they face.

On the side of the coin, there have been an increasing number of education institutions, established to equip people with values-added competencies. Among them are what appear to be operating as faith-based academic institutions, including Islamic universities or Higher Religious Education and Training Institutions (HiRETI). In most places, HiRETI adopt the integration agenda in that their focus has been mainly on nurturing holistic individuals who aspire to gain knowledge, skills, and abilities that lead them to serving the world, and helping the society to attain well-being in this world and hereafter. In delivering this function, the institutions:

- a. design academic curricula which adopt an approach that links Islamic studies knowledge with other knowledge, highlighting or emphasising the humanity perspectives for Islamic studies specialisation.
- b. design academic curricula that relate non-Islamic studies subjects (e.g. humanities) with Islamic knowledge and principles, focusing on didactically-sound and religious-based perspectives of the subjects.
- c. implement teaching and learning methods which position a good connect between any subjects with religious aspects, including in the learning materials, assessment processes and other learning activities.
- d. incorporate philosophical, logical, psychological, sociological, historical, and legal approaches in the training of Islamic-studies students.
- e. develop analytical and critical skills among scholars and students in the teaching and learning processes as well as research outcomes.

The above paragraphs suggest that individuals could be empowered to lead good life if given the required knowledge as well as relevant skills. If sufficiently given, individuals would be able to attain balanced life or well-being, including that of in the hereafter. Such is the objective of education at HiRETI, which main orientation reflects the integration of knowledge agenda that underscores:

- a. the essentiality of nurturing holistic individuals who are capable of recognising the importance of certain knowledge and linking it with principles in other domains of knowledge especially the religious knowledge, hence producing values-added ideas which lead to holistic explanation or solutions to the issues under investigation.
- b. the publication of comprehensive knowledge literature entailing the documentation of invaluable literature based on the work of students and academics. The work on integrated teaching and research should benefit the community of academia working on integration of knowledge; community of practitioners; policy makers, and the public at large.
- c. the development of strategic mechanisms to support the implementation of the agenda, encompassing the initiatives to:
 - i. assess the extent to which there exists the right understanding among academics and students on the concept of, and need for, integration of knowledge.
 - ii. emphasise on the right nature of integrated approach in research and teaching, by deliberating its process to bring about meaning to the studied subject matters; substantiating its utility in the society; and making it beneficially applicable to the society.

iii. develop awareness among workers of integration (i.e scholars, academics and students) that integration is not without any real purposes. Integration is not conducted merely for meeting the institutional requirement but adopted due to the objective of making knowledge genuinely beneficial to its stakeholders.

With regard to the scholars or academia, there should be a certain set of common attributes they subscribe to and implement in the process of integration of knowledge. Scholars, instructors and students should have the ability and passion to

a. be highly ready to accept, participate, support and advocate the concept of integration of acquired knowledge (e.g humanities, social sciences, economy) with Islamic studies (e.g Fiqh, Hadis, Quran studies); and to not feel or cause inconveniences to its implementation.

b. develop sound language proficiency, in that language should be treated as a tool to understand and communicate the available knowledge resources from Islamic heritage or other sources.

c. widen knowledge sources, in that the study of languages should not be viewed as fulfilling the core requirement of an academic programme but a competency set that enables students (and researchers) to widen their knowledge, access wider scope of information and discover unexplored sources of knowledge. As such, the teaching of other than English and Arabic languages (e.g Hebrew etc) should be provided or strengthened in order to enable students to access the many readily available comprehensive knowledge but unexplorable due to language incompetence.

The Way Forward

Given the above thought, HiRETI leaders should give attention to developing the ways moving forward which should take into account the following observations;

a. The importance of emphasising the necessities of integrating knowledge. This is justified by the need to provide comprehensive perspectives of knowledge and link them to the principles covered in any body of other knowledge, especially Islamic knowledge. Furthermore, a knowledge and principle will not be bringing any meaning, let alone informing solution to certain issues, if not blended, contextualised, or integrated with other knowledge, data, policy or information.

b. The need for adequate focus is given to conducting comparative studies on religions and other subjects in the discipline under investigation, including the subjects under humanities. The outcomes of these projects should be to nurture positive co-existence or harmonious relationships across all beneficiaries of knowledge. Scholars of different backgrounds and zeitgeist should be studied by the current students so as to identify the points which address the ways they derive their method of sourcing knowledge, learning the subjects explored or established, the values upheld, and the solutions or applications introduced.

c. The essentiality to conduct research in humanities areas by integrating them with Islamic knowledge and principles; and that the methods of sourcing knowledge should encompass both the empirical and divine approaches. Likewise should be the case for research conducted on Islamic studies subjects, in that the subject matter and the methods are to be related and integrated with humanities areas. This should happen across all levels of research, by students and academics. Academic leaders at HiRETI should facilitate the process of levelling up the integration agenda at research activities.

d. The essentiality to develop collective effort in embarking on the agenda, requiring coordinated, sincere, generous and goal-oriented collaboration among academics and institutions. Given the different strength

and uniqueness an academic or institution possesses, it is only a smart move if prudent engagement could be established among the community of academia throughout many institutions at local and international levels, but mindful of the different culture and nature of the participating community.

e. The essentiality of developing academic leaders to champion integration agenda. There should be scholars who could lead integration projects, i.e to set direction, inspire others, generate funds, gather resources and guide the community of academia on the ways to embark on the Integration agenda. This could be done through a structured leadership training programme that specifically focuses on equipping identified academics with leadership competencies so that they can lead others on the agenda. Institutions with this project must not only assign or expect the attainment of Islamization goals without facilitating the process to implement it.

f. The importance of having appropriate mechanisms to deal with:

i. the lack of understanding or the absence of true ideas on the nature and structure of the integration process.

ii. the presence of academics and students who are not ready to be involved, let alone lead or initiate, teaching or research projects which adopt integrated approaches.

iii. the high level of disconnect between the domain of knowledge taught or studied, despite their involvement in University education process; or them being hired to work on integration of knowledge agenda.

iv. the lack of coordinated interventions to roll out the proper integration process. In many cases, academics and students are expected to be highly involved in the integration agenda, though little effort has been put in place to guide them on the ways to implement or support the agenda.

g. The need to give attention and provide supports to students and academics to share their process of adopting integrated methods in:

i. deriving knowledge from divine sources and Islamic heritage; and at the same time generating knowledge using empirical approach, contributive of availing literature on integrated epistemology.

ii. presenting the blended or contextualised knowledge and principles, hence providing alternative explanation on the existing knowledge vis a vis the contemporary life issues, styles, and direction. This contributes to producing literature that address or highlight the integrated ontology of knowledge.

iii. positioning the need to be ethical knowledge workers among students and researchers, in that teaching and learning are remarkable processes that prepare individuals to have the right, needed, true, and useful knowledge, information, belief, data, facts and figure which would lead to the development of knowledgeable and God-conscious individuals. Adequate focus should be given to developing the right values when dealing with knowledge, knowledge workers, and knowledge outcome, contributing to the literature of axiology of knowledge.

iv. sharing the findings on the newly derived knowledge from the divine sources or relevantised principles to the contemporary scenarios in order to inform the development of policies, solutions, and practices. The integrated epistemology, ontology and axiology of knowledge would be able to lead to the availability of practical interventions among researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to manage the contemporary psycho-socio-spiritual issues. This is to nurture the development of individuals who benefit from the

knowledge for their well being in this world and the hereafter. Literature of such orientation is needed to address the integrated teleology of knowledge.

The above is the recapitulation from the Conference on the Teaching of the Humanities in Institution of Higher Religious Studies: Realities and Prospects, organised by Dar Al-Hadith Al-Hassaniah Institute, Qarawiyn University, Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, 16-17 May 2023. See the picture below.



[Source link](#)



The Great Muslim Nation

We are the only organization of its kind in North America

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