



Education and its Role in the Destruction of the Khilafah

The European states, particularly England and France, and later America, succeeded to deal the Uthmani Khilafah State (Ottoman Caliphate) a destructive blow. That was after the states of disbelief agreed upon the elimination of Islam and the division of the Muslim lands. To accomplish that they followed a number of various paths. Education was one of the doors that they preoccupied themselves with for a long period of time through the missionary and cultural invasion that took place in the name of 'ilm' (knowledge). They put together huge budgets for this purpose and they recruited an army of missionaries, orientalist, teachers and priests whilst taking Istanbul and Beirut as the two main centres acting as their base, and afterwards Cairo and the lands of North Africa became their areas of focus. In spite of the disparity in the European and American political methodologies in regards to their international interests, they nevertheless were in agreement upon the objectives and that was to spread the western culture in the East and to generate doubt amongst the Muslims in respect to their Deen so as to make them be resentful of it and have contempt for their history.

The activities of the missionary movements intensified particularly after the founding of the Beirut Missionary Centre in the year 1820 CE. The American missionary, Eli Smith, was involved in open activity; and was engaged in voluntary missionary activities and supervised the printing-press missions in Malta. He and his wife opened a girls' school in Beirut and he stopped everything else to concentrate on his work in Beirut and the lands of the Levant (Ash-Shaam) in general. The missionary movements participated openly within the educational movement by focusing on the Arabic language to sever it from the Qur'an. This provided a wide doorway for the return of the Arabic language to its first descriptions by presenting the old literary arts and issuing the Arabic books and writings that played a major role in diverting the people towards the West and their thoughts. For that purpose, they recruited a Christian, Nasif Al-Yaziji and Father Louis Cheikho who from amongst those who oversaw the Beirut Centre that targeted the Islamic belief and its concepts. It led to extremely heinous results which had a wide ranging impact in respect to removing Islam from relations, societal transactions, modes of living, the destruction of the Islamic State, the opening of Jesuit schools and colleges belonging to them like the well-known faculty in the Joseph Jesuit University and the opening of the American Protestant College in the year 1866 which is known today as the American University of Beirut which undertook the ugliest of campaigns of distortion against the ideas of Islam and the history of the Muslims. The situation was the same in respect to the lands of the Levant, in Syria and Palestine, through the encouragement of Ibrahim Pasha, the French influence and recommendations from them. The doors were opened wide before the missionaries and the French, English and Americans found a warm welcome from its government which allowed them to move around freely in the land as they pleased; opening schools and printing books and translating them into Arabic in the name of "Knowledge and Culture" ...

As for the Istanbul centre, then it harmed many who held onto the Islamic culture through the educational movement that was far away from the state's supervision as it was not subject to the Uthmani (Ottoman) Ministry of Endowments (Awqaaf). Consequently, schools and institutions were established and the printing of missionary missions was consecutive and their creating of doubt in respect to the Islamic thoughts and rulings. From another angle, the issuing of the law of reform in the Ottoman educational curricula to accommodate the scientific development in Europe opened the door to send Muslim students to France and England to influence them with the western lifestyle, material development and mode of life. That made them enthusiastic to campaign for educational reforms in every one of the state's provinces.

In the year 1876, a law was issued making primary level education for all children within the state compulsory and that it was to be provided free of charge. Then secular schools arose alongside religious schools which were administrated by the 'Ulemaa. The Ottoman State guaranteed its non-Muslim subjects the right to education and so schools were established for different beliefs and these are the schools that were established by non-Islamic religious factions which were subject to the State.

Then missionary schools were initiated for the American, Austrian, French, English, German and Italian Christianisation missions that opened up in a number of major cities within the Ottoman provinces. The weakness of the Ottoman State led to a great number of these schools opening and to a lack of regulation over them, so much so that these schools played a role in the destruction of the Khilafah.

The American missionary Samuel Zwemer said when addressing his colleagues in the missionary conference convened in Islamic Al-Quds "We have taken, O brothers, in this period of time, from the third of the 19th century until our current day, over all of the educational programmes within the Islamic kingdoms ... And the merit belongs to you O colleagues. You have prepared a generation that does not know a connection with God and does not want to know one, and you have taken the Muslim out of Islam".

Immediately following his assumption of the rule in Turkey, Mustafa Kemal launched a relentless campaign against the school curricula which had been authenticated upon the Islamic Sharee'ah and the Arabic language. He abolished (Islamic) religious education, he fought the Muslim 'Ulamaa, he changed the Arabic script to Latin and he imposed a policy of secularisation within the state, law and education using an iron hand.

As for Egypt, then Muhammad Ali Pasha waged a campaign against the religious education after monopolising the rule in Egypt in the year 1805 CE until 1842 CE and his leaving of the Ottoman state. He was supported by France internationally and politically in an undisclosed manner. He occupied Palestine, Lebanon and Syria and proceeded towards Anatolia. Upon that course he neglected the education of Al-Azhar and the Kuttaab (Local Islamic and Qur'an schools in towns and villages) as that was outside the scope of his concern and interest. His primary concern was with a modern educational system to form a strong army that would fight the Ottoman state, first and foremost.

During that time, he sought to appoint foreign French and English directors of education over the Egyptian schools to directly supervise and oversee the educational operation and prepare the local competencies within foreign student programmes, the students of which would later be considered as pioneers of educational reform. The number of students who went to study in Europe in his time reached 319. A model example of them was Rifaa'ah At-Tahtawi who authored the book *A Paris Profile* which he wrote following his return from France in which he praised the French life in all individual elements, from its way of thinking, education and how individuals interact with or treat one another. And there is nothing more to the point than what Lord Cromer said in respect to the intellectual penetration accomplished by these student programmes when he stated: "The youth who have received their sciences (i.e. education) in England and Europe are losing their cultural and spiritual connection to their homelands and they are incapable of belonging, at the same time, to the land that granted them its culture and so they swing back and forth, torn (i.e. between this and that)".

Muhammad Ali Pasha and his family proceeded upon preserving civil education and marginalising the Azhariy education and excluding it, making their primary objective of this policy to make Egypt a part of Europe just as his son Ismail used to say. He was certain that change would never take place unless the education was westernised.

Generations became infatuated with Egypt after him. They carried his torch and led a war of secularisation and hostility against the Islamic culture in the name of development, knowledge (science) and keeping up with the times. That was particularly after the mixing between genders in education and the following of curricula influenced by western culture in the sciences, arts, literature and history.

The matter was not restricted to the curricula of Cromer and Dunlop, because the followers of the Western culture were no less in their desire to dye Egypt and the Islamic world with a western colouring with the Deen removed. The ideas of Muhammad Abduh and Jamal Ad-Din Al-Afghani had a major role in influencing the teaching and education within Egypt with the effect of the western culture and particularly the English being clear within them. Egyptian writer Qasim Amin author of the book, *The Liberation of Women*, enjoyed the support of Muhammad Abduh and particularly after he travelled as a foreign student to France and enrolled in the Montpellier University. Only to return in 1885 CE fully saturated with the western thought to go on to criticise the

Hijaab, plurality of wives (polygyny), divorce and inheritance in his books, writings and articles in newspapers which proliferated the western thought and the idea of unrestricted freedoms. Then, Taha Hussein and Lotfy El-Sayed, afterwards had a big stake in carrying the secular thought and its manifestations and propagating it. The same applied to Ali Ash-Sha'rawi the husband of Huda Ash-Sha'rawi and many others beside them ...

Ibrahim Pasha was influenced by the experimentation of Muhammad Al-Pasha and so he sought to bring about a change in the educational programme within the two regions of Syria and Lebanon, inspired by the educational programmes in Egypt which had been taken from the French programmes. This provided a golden opportunity for the missionaries to participate in the education movement in an open and evident manner within the lands of Ash-Sham (the Levant).

In all of this, there was a great disparity between the development of the civil education as compared with the freezing of the religious education within the Ottoman state. That was by neglecting the 'Uloom Ash-Shar'iah (Study of Islamic Studies), the Katateeb (Qur'an schools) and centuries old Islamic universities like Azhar and Ez-Zitouna whilst restricting their role to religious education. As for the students who had been sent abroad then they were the ones who filled the employment positions in the state's institutions because they possessed the educational competency capable of managing and running the development. In the era of Khedive Ismail, the law was issued in the year of 1872 which was specific to the regulation and reform of Al-Azhar. Paragraph B of this law stated: "The specification of the study subjects to be provided in Al-Azhar to eleven subjects which are: Al-Fiqh, Usool ud-Deen, At-Tawheed, Al-Hadeeth, At-Tafseer, An-Nahw (grammar) and As-Sarf (etymology), Al-Ma'ani (meanings), Al-Bayan (eloquent speech), Al-Badee' (rhetoric) and Al-Mantiq (logic)".

From that time, there have been consecutive secularising campaigns against the lands of Islam and they took education as a cultural weapon to destroy the fortresses of the Ummah from the inside and the calls of orientalism, missionary activity and westernisation dominated over the educational curriculums. Alongside that began the promotion of the Aqeedah (belief) of separating the Deen from life by linking it to the word 'Ilm' (knowledge) when presenting this belief that is opposite and contrary to Islam. It was a great act of deception to present the word 'Ilmaaniyah' (secularism) which is derived from the word 'Ilm (knowledge) in the Arabic language as the translation for the word 'secularism' as it stands in the English language and which has no connection to the word 'knowledge' in their dictionaries. Rather, it (i.e. secularism) represents the West's comprehensive thought or belief about the human, the universe and life.

It spread greatly in the Islamic lands during the fall of the Khilafah. The West found itself unrivalled in the Ummah and so the animosity that had deeply penetrated their souls and the malice that used to eat away at their hearts was towards Islam. The afflictions were great within the Ummah and the cultural colonialism was represented in facets. In the Edinburgh Missionary Conference, convened in 1910 CE, the third commission examining the school activities undertaken by the missionaries (Education in Relation to the Christianization of National Life (Jun 17, 1910)) said: "*It has been the frequently expressed opinion of distinguished Ambassadors to Turkey that the institutions of higher education have done more towards the settlement of the Eastern question than the joint action of all the European Powers.*"

As for the land of the Morocco, the French colonialist sought to oversee the education directly, considering it fertile ground to plant the Francophone seeds. That was by waging war on the Arabic language and replacing it with the French language so that the people of Morocco would be subjugated (or enslaved) and stripped from their civilizational and cultural roots connected to the Islamic expansion.

General Lyautey, the Resident-General of France in Morocco during his notorious stay (1921) said: "Arabic is a factor from amongst the factors for the spread of Islam because the learning of the Qur'an is completed by this language. That is whilst our interest dictates that we develop the Berbers outside of the scope of Islam".

Consequently, the entry approach was cultural and linguistic, from the point of view of eliminating the Islamic culture and the Arabic language, so that the French language would become more than the language of teaching but rather it is by the pedagogical meaning, and ideology that connects the Muslims to France and blurs their identity and belonging. This was reiterated by

George Hardy the director of education in Morocco during the colonial period when he said: “As for the general subjects that will permeate the applied education, then naturally it will be the French language through which we will be able to connect our students to France and the history which must provide them with the idea about the greatness of France”.

As for Algeria, then the following was mentioned in one of the French reports (Committee of Exceptional Loans, 1847 CE): “We have left the schools to collapse and we have broken them up. The lights around us have been put out. Meaning, we have transformed the Muslim society into a society that is more ignorant and barbaric from any prior time we know of”.

The educational level that had been prevalent in Algeria before the French occupation was expressed by Dechy, the official responsible for general education in Algeria, when he said: “The schools in Algeria and the internal towns and even within the midst of the tribes, were many, well equipped and full of manuscripts. So, for instance in the city of Algiers there was a school by every Masjid in which education was provided free of charge whilst the teachers would attain their wages from the incomes of the Masjid. There were amongst their teachers, bright professors who would draw the Arabs of the tribes to their lessons ...”

For that reason, the occupation sought to close many of the schools, fire the teachers, fight the Arabic language, take the emerging students out from the Islamic cultured environment into one of illiteracy and ignorance. In addition, a law was made to prevent the opening of Arabic schools and to constrain the Qur’an schools within a policy of integration and then secularisation. The colonialism employed all of its capabilities for the sake the colonial strategy so that it was able to shape a group of Algerians who believed in the French fatherhood, like Sa’eed Al-Fasi, Rabee’ Az-Zananti and Farhat Abbas, amongst others who worked to spread the western culture, became alienated from their Ummah and integrated into the European culture through the education policy.

As for in Tunisia, then the French teacher took a pioneering role in this field to accentuate the merits of the western civilisation and direct the new generation to imitate the Europeans and to repudiate their heritage which belongs in their viewpoint to a fanatical Ummah. This is what enabled Europe to continue its colonialist project by appointing (in positions) the Francophone followers which formed the background for France in respect to its colony. This is what was expressed explicitly and unequivocally by the French orientalist “Jude Froui” where he said: “All means under our authority must be utilised to fight the march of Arabic and Islam”.

Bourguiba, the president following the ‘illusionary’ independence, deliberately sought to secularise the education in a clear manner and to target the Islamic identity of the young according to what the periodical of the conditions of the personality that he issued stated, taking “Mustafa Kemal as an outstanding model for him”. There was nothing more damaging than the curriculums taught in the government schools which were full of defamation and poison in regards to what was related to Islam, its history and civilisation. That was whilst they were packed full of esteem and great respect reaching the level of sanctification in respect to that which was related to the European history and civilisation. As for the University of Ez-Zitouna considered to be the first Islamic university to be built in the Islamic history, was targeted by Bourguiba directly and he made one of his first “accomplishments” upon reaching the rule was to close Ez-Zitouna, confiscate its properties represented fundamentally in religious property bequests and endowments, turning out its graduates and abolishing teaching lessons in it, all under the pretext of unifying the educational curricula. Consequently, 1965 represented the “effective end” of the rays of the minaret of Ez-Zitouna radiating upon the world and the extinguishing of its flame as a source of knowledge.

In this way, the West’s targeting of the educational curricula and containing them played a great role in the destruction of the Ottoman Khilafah and in asserting control over Muslim generations after the loss of their state and in respect to severing the Islamic Aqeedah and diverting the path of the Ummah intellectually and in terms of its civilisation ... And there is nothing truer than the testimony of one of the Muslim poets from India where he said: “Colonialism is smarter than Pharaoh who employed the policy of killing the boys but didn’t open schools and colleges for them to kill them in a way that they don’t sense it, like the colonialists did”.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir

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