

Introducing a Civilisation Subject is More Appropriate Than Interfaith Understanding in School

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INTRODUCING A CIVILISATION SUBJECT IS MORE APPROPRIATE THAN INTERFAITH UNDERSTANDING IN SCHOOL

The Islamic and Strategic Studies Institute (ISSI) applauds the proposal by the Chairman of the Committee to Promote Interfaith Understanding and Harmony (JKMPKA), Datuk Azman Amin Hassan for the Ministry of Education to introduce a new subject in Malaysian schools by the name of “Interfaith Understanding” or “Kenali Agama Lain,” which would enable students to deepen their understanding of the religions that are practiced in this country and to develop respect for their adherents. Nonetheless, we believe that a subject such as “Kenali Agama Lain” must be presented within a broader civilisational context so as to highlight the pivotal points and achievements that were attained by many great civilisations due to the teachings of the religions from whose bosoms their civilisations were born.

A subject of Civilisation rather than “Interfaith Understanding” that we refer to here employs a combination of the historical perspective, thought process (critical thinking), cultural analyses and religious worldviews – encouraging a deeper appreciation and understanding of religions as opposed to the rather doctrinal and dogmatic approach suggested for the “Interfaith Understanding” subject. There is a dangerous pitfall to the doctrinal and dogmatic approach when it is implemented without wisdom, resulting in a compounded misunderstanding and confusion that could make everyone feels uncomfortable.

We would like to propose that the first step towards this effort begins with a pre-existing compulsory course in the public universities, namely the Islamic Civilisation and Asian Civilisation (TITAS) – a course that should serve as a basis to determine the content of the new subject of Civilisation. In lieu of the growing dissatisfaction with TITAS, its content should be improved through the introduction of global and contemporary themes such as those that deal with the threat of extremism and terrorism, which incidentally, is linked to the Islamic religion and civilisation, along with its adherents. Public university lecturers of TITAS and Comparative Religions who in fact number in the hundreds, are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach this subject. They are the untapped group of trainers for teachers in government schools, who happen to be in dire need of guidance in this subject.

A teacher who is an expert for a particular religion may not be suitable to teach the subject of Civilisation or the “Interfaith Understanding” component within it if he or she lacks sufficient awareness about civilisation. Those who lack knowledge and expertise on civilisational topics might not be able to demonstrate objectivity in their approach and might come across as bias in their explanation.

ISSI calls upon the government, especially the Ministry of Education, to take more positive

action and to be more pro-active in designing the “Interfaith Understanding” component within a Civilisation subject. It is hoped that Malaysia’s future generations would be open-minded and eager to celebrate their diversity by living peacefully side by side despite their different identities and religious traditions. All this should be implemented in cognisance of the borderless global village that we live in today – and so Malaysian citizens should be equipped to deal with the presence and influence of great civilisations and other parts of the world through knowledge gained in relation to their history, thoughts, culture and religions.

The role of a Civilisation subject is pivotal in preparing the future generations to revel in the diverse world that they live in without insecurity and awkwardness, or culture shock while remaining proud of their own identity and continuing to observe their own religious traditions. Through such a subject, there can be clarification and prevention of religious confusion. Most importantly, a subject of Civilisation protects our future citizens from the threat of secularisation and globalisation which come to eliminate the existential (ontological) manifestations and reality of all religions in the world – be it Islam or other religions.

Subjek ketamadunan lebih sesuai di sekolah

ISTITUCY Pendidikan Agama dan Sivik telah mendapat persetujuan daripada Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Malaysia untuk memperkenalkan subjek ketamadunan di sekolah. Menteri Pendidikan, Datuk Seri Mas Mansor, berkata subjek ini akan memberi manfaat kepada pelajar untuk memahami dan menghormati perbezaan budaya dan agama di negara ini.

Subjek ketamadunan ini akan menggantikan subjek Pendidikan Agama dan Sivik yang sedia ada. Subjek ini akan menekankan aspek-aspek budaya dan agama yang berbeza-beda dalam masyarakat Malaysia. Subjek ini akan memberi peluang kepada pelajar untuk memahami dan menghormati perbezaan budaya dan agama di negara ini.

Subjek ketamadunan ini akan memberi peluang kepada pelajar untuk memahami dan menghormati perbezaan budaya dan agama di negara ini. Subjek ini akan menekankan aspek-aspek budaya dan agama yang berbeza-beda dalam masyarakat Malaysia. Subjek ini akan memberi peluang kepada pelajar untuk memahami dan menghormati perbezaan budaya dan agama di negara ini.



AMER MUHAMMAD

Pendidikan ketamadunan akan memberi peluang kepada pelajar untuk memahami dan menghormati perbezaan budaya dan agama di negara ini.

Subjek ketamadunan ini akan memberi peluang kepada pelajar untuk memahami dan menghormati perbezaan budaya dan agama di negara ini. Subjek ini akan menekankan aspek-aspek budaya dan agama yang berbeza-beda dalam masyarakat Malaysia. Subjek ini akan memberi peluang kepada pelajar untuk memahami dan menghormati perbezaan budaya dan agama di negara ini.

