

From *Jahiliyyah* To Islamic Worldview: In A Search Of An Islamic Educational Philosophy

Dr. Mohd Shukri Hanapi¹

Centre for Islamic Development Management Studies (ISDEV)
School of Social Sciences,
Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia.

Abstract

In solving Islamic-related problems, some Muslims hold to the belief that conventional ideas embedded in unIslamic worldview and philosophical construct can be used as long as they are not contrary to Islamic teachings. Such a stance has become a sort of philosophical underpinnings in Islamic education. One main justification given was the acceptance and adoption of the Jahiliyyah (ignorant) practices by Rasulullah SAW himself during his life time. But the question is, what was the nature of these Jahiliyyah-originated practices adopted and practiced by Rasulullah SAW? Were they adopted and practiced in full without any changes or were they revamped hence the difference? This paper attempts to seek for the answer through two main purposes. Firstly, to identify the Jahiliyyah practices allegedly to have still been accepted and practiced in Islam. Secondly, to analyze the worldview of these Jahiliyyah-originated practices within an Islamic philosophical construct. The analysis will be based on selected practices of the Jahiliyyah that have been adopted by Rasulullah SAW. This historiography study concludes that the similarities of these practices if any, eventhough seem to be similar to those practiced by the Jahiliyyah, only evolved around their names and terms, while the structures and its roots have been revamped by Rasulullah SAW. The concept of practices in Islam too is vastly different from the Jahiliyyah practices as they have been formed by an Islamic worldview which includes the elements of akidah, ibadah and akhlaq. The revelations received by Rasulullah SAW themselves are the proofs that Islam is absolutely free from Jahiliyyah practices. The arguments that are used by those who advocate the usage of conventional ideas to solve the problems that are related to Islam therefore are incorrect. When their justifications are refuted, then their claims inevitably have to be similarly denied.

Keywords: *Jahiliyyah*, Islamic Worldview, Islamic Philosophical Construct, Historiography

Introduction

In an effort to solve challenges and issues related to Islam, especially the Islamic education aspects, it is observed that conventional development theories are most usually used. For example, Hassan Langgulong (1997:269-270) in developing the basics of Islamic educational psychology used the conventional learning processes theory, namely behaviourism theory and cognitive theory as the model construct. Upon detailed examination, man in the behaviourism theory is regarded merely as a more advanced machine whose behaviour is determined by his environment. However according to the cognitive theory man is a living creature that can adapt, has purpose and whose behaviour is influenced and not determined. It is evidently clear that both of these theories relate to the horizontal relationship that is the relationship between men and men and man with his natural resources. It is undeniable that the vertical relationship, that is man's relationship with Allah SWT, is non-existent in these theories.

¹ Mohd Shukri Hanapi is lecturer of Islamic Development Management of the Centre for Islamic Development Management Studies (ISDEV), Universiti Sains Malaysia. He obtained his Ph.D and M.A from Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia and B.A (Hons) from Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. He has 5 books and about 420 other writings to his credit. His specializations are Epistemology and Islamic Worldview, Islamic-Based Development, Human Development, Al-Qur'an and Al-Sunnah for Development Management, Quranic Exegesis and Methodology of Quranic Exegesis.

In actual fact there is a group of scholars using these types of conventional development theories who are of the opinion that these theories can be applied or used to manage issues and problems relating to Islam as long as these theories do not run contrary to the Islamic principles. In reinforcing their views, they reasoned that there were a few *Jahilliyyah* practices that were accepted in Islam. Apparently they equated this process by using the theories and methods of conventional development in solving issues and problems relating to Islam. This pattern of thinking has existed for quite some time especially in the Islamic economy. It is known as the accommodative-modification school of thought with the eclectism-methodological characteristics. This accommodative-modification approach refers to the method of readily accepting and improving the non-Islamic economics thinking to make it as Islamic economics.

The eclectism-methodological approach on the other hand refers to the flexible, selection based on what is deemed good from the various sources approach and thereafter used it collectively in the Islamic economy. These accommodative-modification and the eclectism-methodological approaches provides the justification that the contributions from the sources of other disciplines such as the neo-classical theories could be accepted (Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2011). The logical argument that is usually referred to by the scholars from the accommodative-modification and the eclectism-methodological schools of thought is in accordance to the ones presented by Mohammad Umar Chapra (2001) and Abdel Rahman Yousri Ahmed (2002). According to Mohammad Umar Chapra (2001:30), the Islamic economy can use the conventional economics theories as long as these theories are not contrary to the logical structure of the worldview of Islam. This is in line with the views of Abdel Rahman Yousri Ahmed (2002). For him, the Islamic economy is a unique combination of syar'iah principles and conventional economy. As long as the concepts and economics principles are not contradictory with the Islamic principles, it can be adapted into the Islamic economy (sourced from Muhammad Syukri Salleh, 2011).

According to Muhammad Syukri Salleh (2011), the existence of the accommodative-modification and eclectism-methodological approaches are the results of their advocators' incoherence between the difference at the philosophical stage and the operational stage of the Islamic economy itself. The Islamic economy philosophical stage encompasses components that build the Islamic economy framework. Within it contained the Islamic worldview, philosophical basis and definitions of the concepts of the Islamic economy. Furthermore the Islamic economy operational stage encompasses values, theories, tools and methods of implementing the Islamic economy. It represents the components which allow for the realisation of the Islamic economy. Between these two stages, the core is the philosophical stage whereas the components in the operational stage will be shaped in accordance to its philosophical basis. If only the components in the operational levels are chosen, accommodated and thereafter modified in accordance to Islam whereas its framework at the philosophical stage is allowed to be based on the conventional economy framework, then the components at the operational stage will not be absolutely and truly Islamic.

It is in relations to the accommodative-modification with its eclectism-methodological characteristics issues that this working paper is written. It has two main purposes. First is to identify a few *Jahilliyyah* practices that were accepted by Islam. Second to analyse the worldview of those *Jahilliyyah*-Islamic practices as well as its concepts. The analysis is based on the a few selected *Jahilliyyah* practices that is used in Islam. Findings from this analysis will then determine whether the Islamic approach used by Rasulullah SAW is the same as the accommodative-modification and eclectism-methodological approach or vice versa.

All these discussions are arranged into five sections. The first section examines the definition and time frame of the *Jahilliyyah* period. The second section examines the worldview of the Arab *Jahilliyyah* society. The third section examines the Arab *Jahilliyyah* societal practices that are accepted in Islam. The fourth section analyses the worldview of the *Jahilliyyah*-Islamic practices and the fifth section concludes this paper.

***Jahilliyyah* Defined**

The term *Jahilliyyah* originated from the arabic language *jahala*. It means not knowing or not having knowledge. In the Quran (al-Maidah, 5:50) the term *Jahilliyyah* refers to the pre-Islamic society in the Arabian Peninsula. They are a society plagued with ignorance, rejected Allah SWT guidance, had no moral values, had no civilization, could not read or write and were disobedient to the laws of Allah SWT (Mahmud Syakir, 1991:10; Malik Bennabi, 2009:65).

The Jahilliyyah Period

The Arab *Jahilliyyah* society lived in the Arabian Peninsula in the period after the destruction of the Ma‘arib Damp in Saba’ in the year 300 AD . The duration of this *Jahilliyyah* period is about 310 years beginning from 300 AD until 610 AD. This is represented in Table 1. The Arab society that lived during this period were known as Arab *Jahilliyyah* as they did not follow the teachings of the earlier Prophets and Messengers such as Prophet Sulaiman a.h., Prophet Ibrahim a.h, Prophet Ismail a.h., Prophet Musa a.h., Prophet Isa a.h. and others (Akashah Ismail, 2003:85).

Table 1: Duration of the Jahilliyyah Period

DATE	EVENT
300 AD	Destruction of the Ma‘arib Damp
570 AD	The Birth of Nabi Muhammad SAW
610 AD	Beginning of Revelation to Prophet Muhammad SAW. It is from here that the Islamic period begins

The *Jahilliyyah* period is regarded as the dark period. At that time the Arab *Jahilliyyah* did not worship Allah SWT the One and Only. In fact most of them worshipped idols and believed in animism. The Arab *Jahilliyyah* society lived chaotically as there were no Prophet or Messenger and holy books that could be used as a guidance in their life at that time. Their good manners were almost non-existent, for example they were cruel, proud and stubborn (Mahmud Syakir, 1991:10). With the advent of Islam in the year 610 AD, the Arab *Jahilliyyah* society started to change. All aspects of their life were shaped by the Islamic *tasawwur* (worldview) which encompassed aspects of *aqidah* (faith), *ibadah* (worship) and *akhlaq* (manners).

Worldview of The Arab Jahilliyyah Society

As mentioned above, the Arab *Jahilliyyah* society did not devote themselves to Allah SWT, whether in the aspects of faith, worship or manners (Malik Bennabi, 2009:60-61). In other words their life was not based on *tauhid* (oneness of Allah SWT). All their actions and practices were shaped solely by their minds and desires. With such a worldview, the Arab *Jahilliyyah* characteristics could be discerned from the few following aspects:-

a. Religion and Belief

In the Arab *Jahilliyyah* society, the rejection to any form of religion could be due to a few factors. First they did not believe the Prophets and Messengers sent by Allah SWT in the period before; second they changed the contents of the *Taurat* that was brought by Prophet Musa a.h.; third there was no particular Prophet or Messenger and holy book that were sent specifically for them; fourth the spread of various religions within the Arabian Peninsula, the Persians spread the Magi religion whereas the Romans spread Christianity; and fifth there were some quarters who brought back external religions into Mecca. For example. ‘Umar bin Luai who had gone to Syams and saw the Balqa’ sect worshipping idols and thus brought back the religion to Mecca (Ibn Kathir, 1989:174).

The effect was that Mecca became the centre for worshipping idols at the time. The religious sect on the other hand could be categorised into 5 sections that is Wathani, Christianity, Magi, Jews and Hanif. Besides that a part of the Arab *Jahilliyyah* society practised animism such as belief in the spirits, protector, unseen powers, sun worshipping and tree worshipping. There were also beliefs that were regarded as nonsensical and imaginative such as fortune telling and observing the direction of birds flying. If the birds flew in the left direction then it is an omen that the journey was perilous and not safe and *vice versa*.

b. Social

The Arab *Jahilliyyah* society was generally divided into two groups, that is the Bedouin and the *Hadhari* (Civilized) society. The Bedouin lived in the valleys and upcountry, that is in the middle of the Arabian Peninsula. The *Hadhari* society on the other hand lived along the coast of the Arabian Peninsula. The differences in their settlement indirectly affected their different ways of life and achievements.

In addition the Arab *Jahilliyyah* society was made up of various clans and tribes. Such situation provided a number of negative effects. Among them is the emergence of '*asabiyyah*' (extreme feeling of closeness to one's clan and tribe) and resulted usually in the onset of war within the society. The emergence of this '*asabiyyah*' was due to the set up that was based on clans and tribes. Each clan lived with their groups and were bound to abide to rules set by the clan. This has further solidified the feeling of clanship within clan members. They were prepared to seek revenge to safeguard their self-respect and clan.

Besides that the emergence of such social traits were closely related to the geographical circumstances that they lived in which was very hot and dry. In ensuring survival, each clan would need to overcome the problems collectively. The solidification towards the feeling of clanship had resulted in the Arab *Jahilliyyah* life to be chaotic and disordered. This usually became the source of animosity within the Arab *Jahilliyyah* society. War between differing clans could exist even on trivial grounds. The al-Basus war between the Bakr clan and Rabi'ah exhibited a trait of the Arab *Jahilliyyah* society that took pleasure in fighting one another.

Furthermore women were not given the status they deserved whether within the family or the society. They regarded daughters upon reaching full age as plaguing them with social and economical problems. As such the Arab *Jahilliyyah* society were willing to bury their daughters alive such as was prevalent in the Tamin and Asad clans. They also wed without any limit.

c. Economy

The destruction of the Ma'arib Dam in Yemen had brought about a decline in the economy. Agricultural yield decreased badly due to the poor irrigation system. The northern part consisted of the desert. As such trading activities were conducted in Mecca, Hirah and Ghassan. However trading was not profitable due to the bickering amongst clans. The Quraisy exploited trade and practised usury and suppression. They pressured the Bedouin who lived in the desert. In retaliation the Bedouin robbed the Quraisy's caravans. Actually the main economics activities of the Bedouin were rearing cattles nomadically such as camels, goats and sheep. They migrated constantly in search for greener pastures for their livestock. Their economics activities symbolized a primitive life.

d. Politics

During the *Jahilliyyah* period none of the governments had a systematic and strong administration. Politics were jeopardized due to colonization. The north was governed by the Roman and Persian empires, whereas the south was governed by the Habsyah (Euthopia) government. Mecca was badly affected by these conquests. The political climate of these colonized areas such as in Ghassan, Hirah and Yemen were unruly. The society lived by tribes and were regularly at war with one another. Although the country had its own administration nonetheless it could not be regarded as an advanced or civilized government because it was under the colonialists.

Based on the above discussions it could be seen that the worldview is the core or mould to all aspects of life. If the worldview is shaped by illicit means, then the whole aspects of life became chaotic. Such would also be the case if *vice versa*.

The *Jahilliyyah* Practices Accepted In Islam

The revelation to Rasulullah SAW in the year 610 AD signified the beginning of the Islamic era. The coming of Islam had changed the Arab *Jahilliyyah* lifestyle. There were surmountable numbers of Arab *Jahilliyyah* practices that were destroyed by Islam, beginning from *syirik* rituals and life's daily practices to the smallest details consisting of the teasing methods of one another and other practices. However not all the Arab *Jahilliyyah* practices were discarded. On the other hand a few of these Arab *Jahilliyyah* practices were accepted and used in Islam. This is as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Jahiliyyah Practices Accepted in Islam

No.	Type of Practices	Practice Concept in <i>Jahilliyyah</i>	Practice Concept in Islam
1.	<i>Tawaf</i> (Circumbulation)	Executed in nudity and through piercing of spikes on the body. According to them the <i>tawaf</i> could not be carried out when using clothes that were worn when making the sinful act (Jalaludin Ismail, 2011)	It is obligatory to perform the <i>Tawaf</i> while all the physical bodily aspects (<i>aurat</i>) are covered. (al-A'raf, 7:31)
2.	Marriage	A man can marry as many women as he pleased. In fact some of them had hundreds of wives (Idris Musa, 2009).	A man is only allowed to marry up till four wives at any one time. However it cannot be practiced according to one's whims and fancies such that women are oppressed (al-Nisa', 4:3).
3.	<i>Zihar</i> (a husband equating his wife with one of his <i>mahram</i> such as his mother or sisters)	<i>Zihar</i> was a way to divorce the wife. One way for a husband to solve his problem of no longer wanting to be with his wife is to utter the <i>zihar</i> by equating his wife to that of his mother (Zulhazmin Mohd Nasir, 2010)	<i>Zihar</i> is not a way to <i>talak</i> (pronunciation of divorce), however <i>kaffarah</i> (fine) is imposed (al-Mujadalah, 58:1-4)
4.	<i>Qisas</i> (Retaliation)	When a member of a clan is murdered then that clan can retaliate by killing as many members of the murderer's clan (Nuralhadi, t.t.)	Only the proven murderer is to face the death penalty since Islam forbids killing without any lawful basis (al-An'am, 6:51)

Continuation of Table 2

No.	Type of Practices	Practice Concept in <i>Jahilliyyah</i>	Practice Concept in Islam
5.	Distribution of Estate	Women were oppressed. They were not in receipt of inheritance from their husband or family's estate. This negation of inheritance is because women were regarded as weak and of no use to each clan or tribe (Smith, 1990:117).	Women have the rights of inheritance on her husband or family's estate (al-Nisa', 4:11, 12 & 176).
6.	Sale and Purchase	Filled with usury and fraud especially in measurements of weight (Muhammad Asrie Sobrie, 2009)	Sale and Purchase are allowed and usury is forbidden. Furthermore Islam provided the ethics of sale and purchase such as measurements need to be accurate and precise (al-Baqarah, 2:275)
7.	<i>Karam</i> (Nobility)	Nobility is earned because of wealth, stature and many children (Izutsu, 1964:36-38)	Nobility is due to <i>taqwa</i> (piety) to Allah SWT (al-Hujurat, 49:13).
8.	War	War as a result of pride and the <i>'asabiyyah</i> spirit. In addition it is regarded as a noble profession.	Safeguards the sanctity of the religion, race and society from intrusion. A few guidelines which are obligatory to be followed are also provided. (al-Baqarah, 2:190; al-Baqarah, 2:193; al-Baqarah, 2:224)
9.	Social Relations	Separated life within each clan and tribe. Each individual is very proud of his clan and prejudicial against the other clan. This caused them to be partial to one tribe regardless whether they are in the right or wrong. This situation has led to animosity amongst tribes.	The Muslim society in Medina was able to successfully build an Islamic society regardless of race and tribes. Loyalty to tribes no longer existed and replaced with the bond of brotherhood (al-Hujurat, 49:10). For example, Rasulullah SAW successfully tied the kinship of brotherhood among the <i>Ansar</i> with the <i>Muhajirin</i> .

Continuation of Table 2

No.	Type of Practices	Practice Concept in <i>Jahilliyyah</i>	Practice Concept in Islam
10.	Slavery	The master-slave relationship was full of oppression, humiliation and exploitation. As an example when a person failed to pay his debts or was a bankrupt then he can be made a slave. Slavery could also occur as a punishment on a criminal offense. It was also the case if a man from one tribe was captured by a stronger tribe, the man together with his tribe could be subjected to slavery.	The advent of Islam did not obliterate slavery but Islam provided guidelines on the laws regarding slavery since slaves are also humans whose intrinsic nature are the same with a free man. Allah SWT forbids the exploitation of slaves by their masters (al-Nur, 24:33)
11.	' <i>Aqilah</i> (Compensation for Murder or Blood Money)	Should a murder occurred, the murderer is required to compensate (<i>diyat</i>) to the family of the murdered. The compensation was collected from amongst members of the clan or tribe of the murderer.	The compensation is only to be paid by the men of sound mind from the father's side (' <i>asabah nasab</i>) (Mohd Shukri Hanapi & Tajul Sabki Abdul Latib, 2003:14-15).

Figure 2 shows 11 practices of the Arab *Jahilliyyah* that were accepted in Islam, that is, *tawaf* (circumambulation), marriage, *zihar*, *qisas*, inheritance, buying and selling, *karam* concept, war, social relationship, slavery and '*aqilah*. Actually the identified 11 practices in this working paper represents only a part of the Arab *Jahilliyyah* society practises. However it is sufficient to prove the existence of major revamping to the structural basis of the *Jahilliyyah* practices before they were accepted.

Analysis of The *Jahilliyyah*-Islam Practices Worldview

Based on the *Jahilliyyah*-Islam practices shown in Table 2 above, it is shown that there are two glaring differences. According to Ibn Kathir (1989:177), the Arab-*Jahilliyyah* practices were based solely on *al-syara'i' al-batilah* (mind and appetitive) especially on the thinking of their leaders such as 'Amru bin Luhai. At that time (for a period of 310 years) no Prophet and Messenger was sent to provide guidance, whereas the Arab *Jahilliyyah* practices that were used in Islam were restructured at its core from the *Jahilliyyah* worldview to the Islamic worldview. Islamic worldview here refers to the comprehensive view and a true and correct picture of Islam that aims at explaining the whole basic principles of Islam truthfully and holistically such that it becomes the basis of our life's views and ingrained within one's self (Haron Din, 1992:3; Ramli Awang, 1997:6). All these basic elements, that is *aqidah* (faith), *ibadah* (worship) and *akhlaq* (manners) are contained in Allah SWT revelation sent to Rasulullah SAW beginning 610 AD.

It is evidently clear that Islam did not accept the Arab *Jahilliyyah* practices whole heartedly without changing the structural basis and its concepts. Although there are some similarities on the terminology of the practices, however the structural basis had been revamped and replaced with Islamic worldview. This revamping process had actually changed the concept and operations of the Arab *Jahilliyyah* practices. In other words, the concept and its operations are in accordance to the mould of Islamic worldview.

Thus these give rise to *ibadah* (worship) and *akhlaq* (manners) practices which has *aqidah* (faith) as the core. If a tree is alluded to, the core root is *aqidah*, other roots are *ibadah* and its trunk is *akhlaq*. From here sprouts its branches and vines that are the concept and the operations.

All these discussions on the worldview of Arab *Jahilliyyah* practices can be summarized through Figure 1.

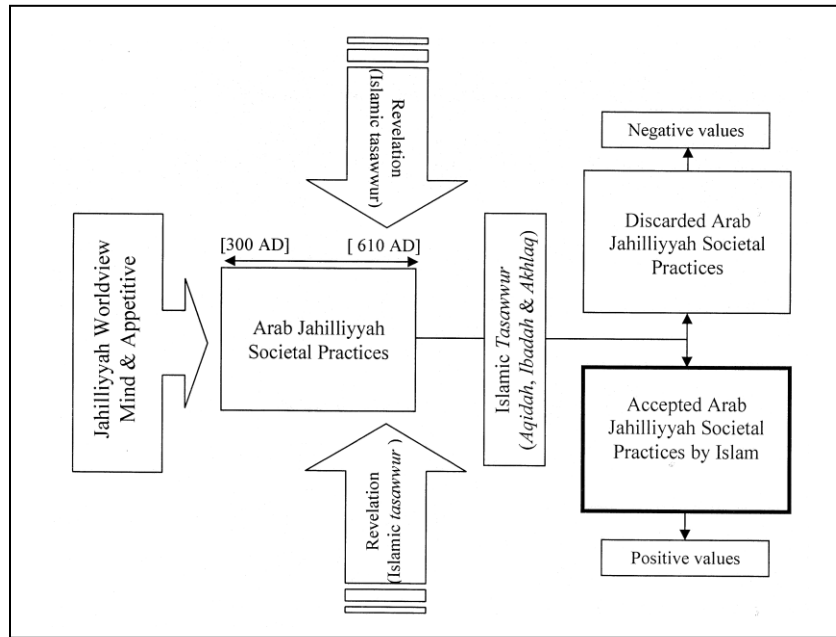


Figure 1: Revamping Process of Structural Basis of the Arab *Jahilliyyah*-Islam Practices

This figure shows that Islam as brought by Rasulullah SAW has revamped the worldview of the Arab *Jahilliyyah* practices and replaced it with Islamic worldview that is *aqidah*, *ibadah* and *akhlaq*. The revamp on the worldview had given a positive effect to the concept and operational aspects of Arab *Jahilliyyah* practices that are accepted in Islam.

It is evident that the approach of Islam revamps “in totality” from within the roots is not the same as the accommodative-modification and eclecticism-methodological approach that revamps only the operational aspects. Actually these Islamic educationists that supports this accommodative-modification and eclecticism-methodological approach are confused about the differences at the philosophical level and the operational stage of Islamic education itself. The philosophical stage of Islamic education encompasses components that caused the Islamic education framework to be built. In it contained worldview, basic philosophy and definitions to the concepts of Islamic education. The operations of Islamic education on the other hand encompass values, theories, tools and pedagogy of Islamic education. It represents components that allow for Islamic education to be realized. Between these two levels, the core is the philosophical stage or worldview whereas the components in the operational stage will be shaped according to its philosophical underpinning. If only the components in the operational level is selected, accommodate and thereafter modified according to Islam whereas its framework at the philosophical stage is still left to be based on conventional education framework, then the components in the operational stage will not be absolutely and truly Islamic.

Conclusion

Based on the holistic discussion in this paper it is shown that Islam that was brought by Rasulullah SAW was not only able to revamp the concept and operational stage of the Arab *Jahilliyyah* practices but it also included the philosophical or worldview aspects. It is thus evident that the logical reasoning that is usually resorted to by the supporters of the accommodative-modification and eclecticism-methodological approach as mentioned before are not accurate. They are actually confused on the differences between the philosophical stage and the operational stage.

It is this “in totality” revamping approach brought to by Islam that should be used in the realization of Islamic education today. The act of selecting what is deemed good from various sources and using it collectively in Islamic education is not correct. A truly Islamic education system cannot be realized, built and implemented as long as its core which is its philosophy or worldview is still conventionally based.

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