

FESTIVAL OF IDEAS

Speech of MKH in “Festival of Ideas” event, under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education, organised by the Research Centre of IIUM, in July 2021

Ladies and gentlemen, Assalaamu alaikum and a very Good Morning to all of you.

I am honoured to be invited to say a few words on this occasion of Festival of Ideas organised by the Ministry of Higher Education. I would like to give the title of “Passion for the Ultimate Truth in a Post-Truth and Nihilist World” to this brief speech of mine.

An interesting development in contemporary Western philosophical thought has been going on for quite some time now. That is the reassertion of the theistic perspective in the interrogation and investigation of nature and the natural phenomenon, in spite of the assertiveness of the neo-atheistic perspective represented by Richard Dawkins in his *The God Delusion* (2006) and *Outgrowing God* (2019). The recent contribution of Stephen C. Meyer -- in addition to Phillip E. Johnson, J.P. Moreland, Alvin Plantinga and Rupert Sheldrake -- in his *The Return of the God Hypothesis: Three Scientific Discoveries that Reveal the Mind Behind the Universe* (HarperOne: 2021) is most gratifying as it keeps alive and strengthens the theistic vision of reality in the ongoing philosophical struggle between theists and atheists in the Western world. What we can be sure of is that the prospect of *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (1998) in the West as envisaged by the secular-humanist and eminent socio-biologist Edward O Wilson (1998) is still a far away dream.

. Today, after three hundred years of the dominance of the secular-materialist worldview and modern techno-centric civilisation, the world is going through an age of global turbulence, disruptions, post-normal weirdness and global environmental emergencies – with COVID 19 pandemic as the latest catastrophe. In my humble opinion, the post-pandemic period provides a new window of opportunity for scholars, intellectuals and thinkers in non-Western societies who have the passion for the Ultimate Truth and committed to the vision of the unity of

knowledge to take up the mantle of civilisational leadership as the old paradigm of man's conquest of nature crumbles and, one by one, the economic, political and intellectual pillars of the technocentric civilisation are collapsing.

Based on the ontology and cosmology taught by monotheistic faith and complemented by the epistemology which unifies Divine revelation with reason, those who have the passion for the ultimate truth shall reconstruct human knowledge and civilisation within the framework of the worldview of *hasanah f-dunya* and *hasanah fi akhirah*. This theistic worldview becomes the foundation for attaining a virtuous individual, a virtuous society, a virtuous state and a virtuous civilisation.

Examples of *ululalbab*, *ulama* and *rabbaniyyun*. which The nature of the intellect from theistic intellect to agnostic, atheistic and absolutely rationalist intellect.

This requires Islamic higher educational institutions to reunify human knowledge: natural sciences, human sciences, humanities and theology to reconstruct the new pillars of human civilisation. This is the noble civilisational mission of IIUM and the KIRKHS must be ready to lead the way in decolonisation, integration and islamisation of human knowledge and education. We hope that IIUM and similar universities in the Muslim world would be able to produce the right kind of social scientists, humanists and theologians who will also function as problem solvers and civilization builders not only for Muslim societies but also for the whole of humanity threatened by soulless materialistic and nihilistic modernity.