



Infectious Changing of School Curricula... Coincidence or Dictates?!

(Translated)

A number of Arab states announced the undertaking of alterations and changes to their school curricula. From amongst these states infected by the changing of curricula this year were: Palestine, Algeria, Morocco and Jordan, whilst taking note that this is not the first time that these states have made alterations to their curricula. These alterations stirred a big debate within the masses of the public opinion and particularly upon the social media. This was in the case where many considered that they clashed with their Islamic values and identity, in addition to their containing a number of printing and educational errors. So, is the wave of alterations within the curricula that is sweeping the Arab world simultaneously just a coincidence?! What is the nature of these alterations? And what is the objective behind them? This is what we will attempt to shed light upon in the following lines.

The wave of curricula changes that have swept the Arab world in recent times specifically within the states that have had Arab Spring revolutions is not a coincidence. They have come in response to instructions of the western states and particularly America under the brandishing of the stick of cutting funding and aid from these states. For example, Jordan signed an agreement in 2013 with USAID to obtain a funding grant for the development of education worth \$235 million over a period of five years. Similarly, other countries signed agreements like Morocco and the Palestinian Authority amongst others. The official responsible for the US Middle-East Partner Initiative (MEIO) was Elina Romanski. In 2003, she stated: "There is no longer room from now on for hatred, intolerance and incitement. We are attempting to live together and any school curriculum that does not proceed upon this direction must be changed". Not long ago, and to be exact, on 20/09/2016, UNESCO held a conference for the prevention of violent extremism through education in cooperation with the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development in New Delhi. From its conclusions was that: "It is necessary to resolve the issue of changing education curricula within the Middle-East and other regions that have exhibited the flourishing of extremist thoughts, through rationality and awareness".

As for why these alterations have come at this time in particular, then that is because the Arab world is witnessing a popular people's movement for change and the voices have begun to be raised loud within them demanding the application of Islam and to cut the hand of the colonialists, and particularly in Ash-Shaam (Greater Syria region). For that reason, the western states are using the curricula as a means to bring about a generation of the children of the Muslims stripped of its Aqeedah (belief), Islamic values and morals. They want a generation brought up upon secularism and the separation of the Deen from life and a generation that adopts the colonialist thoughts and calls for them. By examining the nature of the alterations and the new subjects in the curricula contain this objective is clearly perceived.

The curricula alterations have pivoted around three matters which are:

1 – Extremism and terrorism in an attempt to link them to Islam. That is where a number of statements were issued by those responsible over the education sector and also by some of the ministers within the states in which the change of curricula has taken place. These stated that the change was to cleanse the curricula from extremist influences and from anything that encourages terrorism and violence. An example of one of these statements

was what the Jordanian deputy prime minister for economic affairs and the minister for industry, trade and supply, Dr. Jawad Al-Anani said: "That the Jordanian government is not shy of altering the curricula. That is because we want to revise the curricula because we discovered that within some of them there is that which incites terrorism" and he strongly reiterated that the curricula must teach "the students love and harmony, and not that he should carry a weapon and initiate killing". Another example is what came in a statement released by the Moroccan ministry of education stating: "The alterations came based upon the instructions of the King of Morocco, Muhammad the 6th to the government, about the necessity to revise the Islamic educational curricula and programmes across different levels of education to consolidate the values of moderation, tolerance and living side by side with different cultures and human civilisations".

This pivotal matter comes within the context of the global war against Islam and the continuous attempts to characterise it with "terrorism" and extremism, and to portray it as being a religion that encourages violence, killing and the shedding of innocent blood. That has reached the point that the two words "terrorism and extremism" have become synonymous with Islam, and where the Muslim's adherence to the Ahkam of his Deen, manifested in women wearing the Hijaab and Niqaab and men letting their beards grow, have become symbols indicative of "terrorism and extremism". That is due to media propaganda and deliberate distortion of Islam which is practised by the western media outlets, politicians and thinkers. As such, the western states and their followers from the regimes in some of the states of the Islamic world undertook the banning of the wearing of the Hijaab and Niqaab in public places and particularly in the schools and universities. They imposed penalties and fines upon those who wear them and they deprived many of the female students from continuing their education due to their wearing of the Hijaab or Niqaab. Similarly, these states banned men from letting their beards grow long and imposed fines too. Within this context, the pictures of men with beards were removed and replaced with pictures of clean-shaven men within the new curricula and particularly at the preparatory school level. They also removed the pictures of women wearing the Hijaab and replaced them with pictures of women not wearing it but rather wearing western clothing and adorned with make-up.

The matter does not stop there, rather included within the changes in those mentioned states and others which preceded them in respect to following the western ways, was the removal of some of the Aayaat and Ahadeeth using the argument that they encourage "extremism and terrorism"! Indeed, even some of the lessons that spoke about the Sahaabah and personalities from Islamic history were removed based on the argument that they incite violence and extremism. This is like what happened in Egypt following the (latest) uprising where the lesson about the Commander Salah ud-Deen Al-Ayoubi was removed from the primary year six curriculum and six chapters about the story of 'Uqbah Bin Naafi' were removed from the first year of middle school. This happened based on the claim that they were revising the curriculum to remove everything that incites violence and extremism, and to appease the voices that propagate haphazardly that Islam was spread by the sword. There isn't enough room here to mention examples of the curricula changes from all of the lands.

2 – The issue of Palestine and the work to strike at the relationship of the generations arising from it, in an attempt to make the existence of the Jewish entity a normal and regular matter and in particular within the framework of the treacherous agreements that the regimes of betrayal signed with the criminal Jewish entity. This is where they wrote "Israel" instead of Palestine in some of the set school subjects. That is like what happened in respect to Geography in Algeria. This then set off the anger of the Muslim Algerian people leading them

to demonstrate in the streets and burn copies of the book, which in turn put pressure upon the ministry to say that it was a misprint and that they have currently withdrawn the textbook. Is the occurrence of a mistake such as this in such an issue credible?! It is also like the alterations which Jordan made to its 2014 study curricula where the adjustment made to the teacher's guide distributed to the teachers erased the word Palestine from some of the illustrative maps in the subject of Geography for the middle school years, and was replaced with the word "Israel". In addition, a lesson about Al-Quds was removed and another also removed which praised the heroics of the Jordanian pilot Faras Al-'Ajlooni who was the first Arab pilot to bomb the Jewish entity. Also, to please the Jewish state the scissors went to work in the Egyptian curriculum to remove paragraphs that accused the Jewish entity of "terrorism" within the religious education textbook for the third year of middle school. This doesn't even include the promotion of the treacherous agreements that the regimes have signed with the Jewish entity just as the concept of peace has been included within the curricula.

3 – The consolidation of the patriotic bond and the attempt to build generations upon it: They strive through this pivotal matter to implant in the souls of the Muslims' children their belonging to the soil and to the piece of cloth (flags) placed by the colonialist and not their belonging to the Ummah of Islam that does not recognise or acknowledge the borders between us. In this context, we see them focusing upon the two concepts of the nation and citizenship and inserting lessons and songs that sing praises of the nation and whom they call leaders and national symbols. They include within that what they call the symbols of "National sovereignty" like the Kufiyah for example within the Palestinian curricula. Above and beyond this and that they focus upon the necessity of the students performing the ritual of greeting the flag and repeating the national anthem for their countries and issuing instructions and circulars to the schools in respect to that.

So, will the West succeed to destroy the minds of the sons of the Muslims and inculcate them with its rotten thoughts? And will they be able to win this round in their war against Islam?!

The protests and the angry reactions that have arisen from the teachers and parents against the new curricula changes reaffirm the goodness of this Ummah and that it is being nursed and will not die, and that it is not possible to strip the Islamic Aqeedah from the breasts and minds of their children. They have not and will never stand for one single day as bystanders to any attempt to attack their Deen and their principles, whatever the criminals utilise in terms of means and styles to eliminate Islam and the Muslims. Verily, Allah will make their plots and schemes the means to their own destruction by His permission:

﴿وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ﴾

"They plot and Allah plots and Allah is the best of plotters" [Al-Anfaal: 30]

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir

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