

LEARNING CURVE PERSPECTIVE

The world in harmony

IT has often been said that after knowledge comes wisdom. Being wise is considered the apex in the hierarchy of data, information and knowledge. But little is known about the way this evolution comes about.

Universiti Islam Malaysia (UIM) organised the recent *International Convention on Wisdom* themed *Wisdom: Harmonising the World* in an attempt to garner collective commitment to knowledge acquired from various traditions and to adapt, where necessary, to new contexts.

Allegedly the world's first convention of its kind, it also aimed at reaffirming inherited wisdom as a central pillar of our worldview. It hopes to harmonise the world in establishing a more peaceful one through wisdom, thereby contributing to the resilience of a community by reducing its vulnerability.

These goals are apt given the UIM motto, Elevating Global Wisdom, with the vision of integrating wisdom and knowledge to produce visionary and balanced scholars and thinkers. The university hopes to make a difference in the understanding of global wisdom by seeking to impart a sense of excitement in the acquisition of knowledge and learning.

Apart from its application to the world at large, it believes that a contingent of the learned will be formed to spread knowledge and wisdom gained globally.

Interestingly, UIM fundamentally evolved from the esteemed Muslim College Malaya or Kolej Islam



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Wisdom can be a **beacon** to keep harmonising the diverse and complex Malaysian society.

Malaya, which in 1955 envisioned to harmonise the relationship among ethnicities through a more universal system of education.

Carrying on the vision, UIM has proposed a model where components such as IQ, EQ, PQ (Creative Quotient) and SQ (Spiritual Quotient) are balanced or complement each other as mediated by values.

UIM refers to this as a "harmonisation model of wisdom" which allows other forms of wisdom to interact, depending on the

situation and context.

Wisdom has its own diversities and cultural connotations, including what is commonly called conventional wisdom.

It has been observed that conventional wisdom could act as a barrier to advancing and expanding various aspects of wisdom in tandem with changes in the world today.

As such, conventional wisdom needs to be challenged if we are to move forward, especially when it is understood within the confines of "human" wisdom in contrast to that of the "divine" which has

greater depth. In this context, the "heart" as a seat of the intellect has a significant role to play in "receiving" and "transmitting" wisdom in its proper context and meaning.

This is, no doubt, a vital aspect that needs much deliberation because the "heart" is never considered a part of the notion of human capital that is pervasive in almost all aspects of human development.

This has led to a "heartless" model where wisdom remains wanting. It is worthwhile to note that in almost all major traditions and be-

liefs, the "heart" is a key component of the human person.

This is more so when considering "folk wisdom" of traditional societies, where wisdom permeates in bottom-up fashion through "daily practice of the ordinary" in contrast to systematic, top-down approaches of the academe.

The wisdom emerging from the former allegedly allows it to be adapted and/or adopted to its own constructed world, or even to creatively borrow for this purpose.

In so doing it can eventually contribute to the building of an indigenous civilisation supported by its own values and norms.

In the final analysis, all these boil down to the system of education we want.

One speaker, through his vast interactions with Malaysia while he was in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, felt that the country offers a great hope.

The Malaysian experience has shown some good workable examples on the manner wisdom can be a beacon to keep harmonising the diverse and complex Malaysian society.

What is clear is that the combination of the appropriate knowledge, expertise and virtues is vital to creating and serving the common ground. In other words, it is not only about competency but also being wise at the same time.

While the journey ahead is still arduous and complicated, it is to its credit that UIM has taken the first important step in the right direction.

As the current global situation becomes increasingly chaotic, it cannot be overemphasised that wisdom is one fundamental element that cannot be overlooked any longer.