

Invitation to attend a workshop on:

SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS IN THE THOUGHT OF PIONEERS OF ISLAMIC REFORM AND RENEWAL

(Under the patronage of Qatar National Research Fund and College of Islamic Studies, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Qatar)
March 15 – 16, 2020

The answer to the famous question posed by the late Shakib Arslan in the title of his book: “Why are Muslims delayed and why are others advanced?”, has been the main concern of intellectual pioneers of reform and renewal and renaissance advocates for more than two centuries.

Contemporary researchers have concentrated their efforts on studying the answers provided by these pioneers about the foundations of reform and renewal and the Muslims’ intellectual, political, philosophical, and social renaissance. However, the clarification of these spiritual foundations is largely absent from their research and does not receive sufficient attention despite the centrality of these foundations for the pioneers of reform projects, as they were always present in their theoretical and practical work. Hence, the idea of this workshop aims to shed light on these foundations and conduct in-depth research which reveals their role and value in the process of reform and renewal, and prepares to discuss the various approaches that have prevailed at the expense of the spiritual educational aspect.

It is well known that Islam placed great importance on spiritual education in terms of purification (Tazkiyah) of the self and meditating on the universe and human existence to know its secrets. Moreover, this education was one of the greatest purposes of the Prophet’s mission as ALLAH the Almighty said: “Certainly did Allah confer [great] favor upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error” (Al-Imran: 164).

The noble spiritual education that the Prophet (peace and blessings of ALLAH be upon him) brought to his

companions brought about a complete change in souls, awakened spirits, and created a tremendous renaissance and a complete civilization which mankind had never known, until the companions were described as “monks at night and knights by day”. Then the followers of the companions inherited the companions’ spiritual path, and this spiritual trend remained pure even after its development and its transition to a school of thought in Sufism since the third century AH. With its pioneers, such as Maarouf al-Karkhi (255H), al-Harith al-Mahasabi (243H), and Junaid al-Baghdadi (298H), this school was able to develop deep educational thought about the reality of monotheism and devotion to worship of ALLAH, rejecting slavery, and recognizing the reality of life and the status of man therein. This educational thought also used and developed a vocabulary of education and behavioral references based on the Qur’an, Sunnah, and disciplined Shari’a controls. Throughout the centuries, new intellectuals in this school continued to influence this thought. They fought the deviations of mysticism and extraneous elements and called for reforming mysticism and liberating it from myths and heresies.

Pioneers of reform and renewal traced the path of those intellectuals and they utilized the spiritual dimension in the reform process.

What is needed today is to restore the centrality of spiritual education in reform and renewal projects of knowledge, action, and thought, to take their proper position along with other aspects; in order to achieve comprehensive reform and a real renaissance, which extends its branches, diversifies its fruits and spreads its shadows in the lives of Muslims in particular and humanity in general.

Objectives of the Workshop:

The workshop aims to achieve a set of scientific objectives, as follows:

1. Reveal the centrality of the spiritual foundations of many pioneers of reform and renewal, and try to identify the causes and effects of the absence of this trend at the theoretical and practical levels in the literature of modern and contemporary reform.
2. Highlight the unknown pioneers of reform and renewal who cared about spiritual education, in the era of modern renaissance (1750 – 1950) and the contemporary era.
3. Track the impact of education on the intellectual and behavioral direction of the pioneers of reform and renewal.
4. Highlight the practical implications of spiritual education in the thinking of reformers and innovators by linking them to major issues, such as their pivotal role in the liberation movements from colonialism, the pursuit of independence, opposition to political corruption, the preservation of Islamic identity and the confrontation of intellectual invasion and civilization pillage.
5. Present general features of a spiritual education project derived from those presented by the pioneers at the theoretical and practical levels.
6. Preparation, editing, and publication of a collective book containing the work of the workshop.

Themes:

The First Axis: Concept of Spiritual Education and Its Importance in the Projects of Reform and Renewal

This theme focuses on clarifying the concepts related to the concept of spiritual education such as purification (Tazkiyah) of the self, mysticism, etc. It asks to what extent this education is related to the concepts of reform and renewal, and the foundations of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The importance of spiritual education and its position, from the literature of education and behavior scientists is examined, taking into consideration the importance of integrating these three concepts (reform, renewal, spiritual education) in achieving Islamic advancement.

The Second Axis: Centrality of Spiritual Education in the Thought of Pioneers of Reform and Renewal

This theme aims to clarify the centrality of spiritual foundations in the thought of the pioneers of reform and renewal, and to highlight their interest in this direction, which formed what we might call the "Spirit of the Renaissance". A comprehensive study of a number of cases is required, which show their theoretical and practical consideration of these foundations, and their methodologies in dealing with them, as well as their availability in the reform projects.

The Third Axis: The Difference in the Spiritual Education Previously and Recent

This axis aims to reveal in particular the bases

and reasons for the difference on Sufism, both by those opposed to it and by its defenders, and to indicate the position of the pioneers of reform and renewal from that difference.

The Fourth Axis: General Features of a Project of Contemporary Spiritual Education Based on the Experience of Reform and Renewal Pioneers

This axis seeks to develop the general features of a contemporary project of education and purification of the self clearly derived from what the pioneers of reform and renewal presented in the Islamic world, and can be adopted and employed in the realization of Islamic advancement.

General Guidelines for Those Who Wish to Participate:

Those wishing to participate should send the following:

1. The researcher should choose one of the four axes of the workshop and identify it clearly after writing the title.
2. An abstract (300 – 500 words), illustrating the research idea and approach in light of the vision outlined in this paper.
3. A brief curriculum vitae (not exceeding 500 words) that includes the scientific background of the researcher in addition to his scientific interests and most prominent published works.
4. Accepted abstracts will receive a notification of acceptance with an invitation to submit the full paper (8,000 – 12,000 words) within the time limit specified below.
5. For accepted papers, a selected group of authors will be invited to participate in the closed seminar in Doha, while the remaining accepted papers will be considered for possible inclusion in the above mentioned academic publishing project.

Advantages:

- ▶ Accepted papers will be subject to rigorous scientific arbitration, and approved papers will be published in an academic book.
- ▶ Researchers of the accepted papers will be invited to participate in the closed seminar, with their travel and accommodation expenses in Doha covered over the days of the seminar.

Important Dates:

Deadline for Submitting (Abstracts):
October 15, 2019

Notification of Acceptance (Abstracts):
October 20, 2019

Deadline for Submission (Papers):
January 15, 2020

Notification of Acceptance (Papers):
January 20, 2020

Conference Dates:
March 15 – 16, 2020

Writing and Publishing Rules:

1. Research accepted in both Arabic and English languages.
2. The researcher must not have been published the paper in any way, or have submitted it for publication in another place, which the researcher must undertake in writing. If it appears that the research has already been published, the researcher will bear all legal, material, and moral responsibility resulting from breach of this condition.
3. The research volume should not exceed 12,000 words, including figures, drawings, tables, and references, and not fewer than 8,000 words, in accordance with the following guidelines:
 - 3.1: [Word MS 2003] or later with IBM compatible system.
 - 3.2: The text to be in (Traditional Arabic) font - (size 16) for Arabic research, and (Times New Roman) font (size 12) for English research.
 - 3.3: Space between lines (1.5).
 - 3.4: Footnote board (Traditional Arabic) Normal (size 12), and font (Times New Roman) Normal (size 10) for English research.
 - 3.5: Headlines (Traditional Arabic) Black (size 16), and (Times New Roman) font (size 12) for English research.
 - 3.6: Subtitles (Traditional Arabic) Black (size 16), and font (Times New Roman) normal (size 12) for English research.
4. The Qur'anic verse numbers and name of Surah should be written at the end of the page, and the verse is placed in brackets.
5. Footnotes are placed at the bottom of each page from the first research to the end and the sources and references are proven, and then the researcher includes proven sources and references at the end of the research, all according to the method of authentication (APA).
6. The research should be accompanied by a list of the main terms and a summary in Arabic and English not exceeding 500 words.

7. The researcher should adjust the linguistic aspect of the research, taking into account the rules relating to font and punctuation, and checking the editorial aspects of the material.

To Communicate and Send Contributions:

Please send the abstracts, biographies, and research papers to the following e-mail address:
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