ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Malay Scientific Thinking in the context of MSS1292 Kitab Tibb

Roziah Sidik @ Mat Sidek

Department of Arabic Studies and Islamic Civilization, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This article analyses Malay scientific thinking based on the contents of the Malay manuscript MSS1292 Kitab Tibb. This analysis aims to investigate whether the Malays possessed the features of scientific thinking. It also serves the purpose of determining whether the Malays had integrated scientific thinking with their spiritual faith. This study adopts a qualitative study methodology through instrument analysis by way of textual and contextual study of main sources. The findings show that the Malays did indeed possess features of scientific thinking. This is proven by MSS1292 Kitab Tibb which reveals the use of logic, as part of the method of thinking. This study also finds that there was integration between science and spiritual faith in MSS1292 Kitab Tibb. This is evident in the method of treatment for a disease through the integration of science and faith.

Key words: scientific thinking, Malays, MSS1292 Kitab Tibb, science and faith/religion, method of thinking.

Introduction

Mohd Yusof Hj. Othman (1999) in putting forward his view on the term thinking, relates it to the technical aspect and method as well as to how a person perceives a certain phenomenon, his internalized value system and personal perspective. This view concludes that thinking is a product of brain activity, intelligence or mind. And the term scientific refers to a system or order of thinking process (Mohd. Yusof, 2000). Kamus Dewan (1994) defines the word scientific as that which is about or relates to science. It originates from the English word scientific which means that which is based on systematic knowledge; about science (Bilingual Dictionary, 1990). Thus, scientific thinking refers to a scientific way of thinking. As seen in Azizan Baharuddin’s perception, being scientific means not accepting something without proof or not accepting blindly (Azizan, 2003). If this perception is applied to the Malays, then they are said to possess scientific thinking only if they accept something with proof supporting it.

Further in the discussion of scientific thinking, I am drawn to refer to the views of several scholars such as Mohd. Yusof Hj. Othman, Mohd. Yusof Hasan, Osman Bakar, Abdul Latif Samian and Khairul Anwar Mastor as well as Ithnin Abdul Jalil. The view of each of the said scholars will be presented first and then followed by my conclusion of the view used in the context of this article. Mohd. Yusof Hj. Othman (1998) has the view that scientific thinking is linked to the intelligence and its associated activity. In one of his other writings, scientific thinking is linked to a system or order of thinking process (Mohd. Yusof, 2000). Kamus Dewan (1994) defines scientific thinking as a system of thinking which is orderly, systematic and based on scientific principles. In this matter, he relates thinking with logical thinking that is, a kind of thinking based on definite knowledge, scientific knowledge and mathematical knowledge. This kind of thinking is frequently linked with the left hemisphere of the brain (abbreviated as hoki in Malay) which by nature has the scientific and technological capacity.

Osman Bakar (1989) sees scientific thought which is translated as scientific thinking in his article as all views and ideas highlighted concerning any issues related to natural science or study of nature including mankind and the mathematical world. Among the main issues Osman had put forward which became the subject of debate in scientific thinking is the true purpose and objective of studying the world of nature and what are our assumptions or perceptions regarding the reality of the nature we have studied and wish to continue studying. The scientific thinking meant by Osman in his said writing is seen to be more related to the philosophy of science.

The same issue was also raised as an example by Abdul Latif Samian and Khairul Anwar Mastor (2000) who also brought up their view of scientific thinking, particularly when speaking from a philosophical view. Both of these scholars link scientific thinking with two components, that is, philosophy and method of thinking. From a philosophical standpoint, they explain that scientists question and think of the truth and the direction of
science. This is where they used the two issues from Osman Bakar as explained before. From the view of method of thinking, they explained that scientific thinking refers to the method of thinking practised by scientists. This method of thinking is related to the direction of science, that is, building laws and principles and theories to explain, predict, understand and control natural phenomena. Thus, they conclude that scientific thinking is a skill to think about nature and its phenomena according to a set of specific steps. These steps cover the issues being studied, the associated theory and concept, formulation and testing of a hypothesis, designing an experiment or study, understanding what is observed in experiments, making inferences from study findings, relating the data with the underlying theory of the study and making conclusions. These steps are related to method of thinking by way of induction, deduction, analogy and also being creative.

Meanwhile, Ithnin Abdul Jalil (2001) associates scientific thinking of Malays with thinking based on scientific methods. This matter is stated in his article which specifically discusses Malay scientific thinking through proverbs. Even though there is no additional information given by him concerning scientific method, the explanation on it can be obtained through the writings of many scholars such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Osman Bakar, Endang Saifuddin Anshari, Mohd. Yusof Hj. Othman, Abdul Latif Samian, Khairul Anwar Mastor, Shaharir Mohamad Zain and Mohd. Hazim Shah Abdul Murad. According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1980), scientific method, particularly in Islamic science, depends on the particular field of science itself. Different fields involve different methods. However, generally, the scientific methods stated in his writing entitled, Reflections on methodology in the Islamic science are deduction, induction, demonstration, observation, experiment, clinical observation, and illumination of the mind. Still within the scope of Islam, Osman Bakar (1994) is seen as outlining several scientific methods including reasoning, interpretation of the Holy Book, investigation and scientific experimentation.


In spite of various definitions of scientific thinking brought up, the scientific thinking in the context of this article means thinking which is linked to the component of method of thinking. Regarding this component, I will lead this discussion to the method of logic. However, since scientific thinking in science has the purpose of systematically solving problems, it thus depends on the level of ease and difficulty of the problem itself. If a problem is simple, then the capacity of human intelligence required to solve it is indisputable. On the contrary, a difficult problem, specifically one involving the supernatural, requires a much needed religious spiritual contribution (Abdul Latif and Khairul Anwar, 2000). Thus, this discussion on scientific thinking in the context of this writing also leads to integration of science and religious faith.

**MSS1292 Kitab Tibb:**

MSS1292 Kitab Tibb which is the basic material of this article, is said to originate from Pontianak (Harun, 2004: 25). It was copied by Haji Mahmud al-Jawi who originated from Terengganu, without any notes on the original author and the date it was written. However, information on the copying of the said manuscript is quite complete, as there are notes which mention that copying of the manuscript was finalized in the year 1235H/1820AD in the district of Sungai Tok Gali in Pejut in the state of Fatani (MSS1292 Kitab Tibb: 137).

This manuscript is in the possession of the Malay Manuscript Center, National Library of Malaysia. The manuscript is 142 pages thick and written in Jawi Malay script. However, there are foreign words found inserted in it, such as Arabic and Persian words. Each page has 19 lines except on pages 1-4, 68-70 and 138 – 142. Page 1 has 9 lines, page 2 has 10 lines, whereas page 3 contains 20 lines. Pages 4 and 139 have 22 lines, and pages 68 – 69 contain 13 lines. In addition, pages 70 and 137 contain 15 lines, pages 138 and 140 have 17 lines and pages 141 – 142 each has 5 lines. On the whole, the writing in the manuscript is legibly clear and simple. However, there are a few parts which are damaged either at the top, bottom, beginning of or end of the lines. Several pages at the beginning of the manuscript are also missing.

This manuscript contains at least 133 pages. I use the words at least because several pages of the first chapter could not be traced. This manuscript contains 14 chapters. Each chapter has its own clauses.

The first chapter contains at least 15 pages. It begins with page 8, followed by pages 7, 47, 48, 45, 46, 43, 44, 41, 42, 39, 40, 49, 50 and ending with page 5. It contains 16 clauses. The first clause is about taking general (preventive) care during times of good health. The second clause is about drinking water, the third clause is about taking care of body movement, the fourth clause is on taking care from sitting idle, the fifth clause is on
taking care of sleep, the sixth clause is on taking care during wake hours, the seventh clause is on female matters, the eighth clause is taking care from wind, the ninth clause is taking care of all that will come with desires, the tenth clause is on taking care of the body parts by cleansing, the eleventh clause is taking care of the eyes, the twelfth is on taking care of the teeth, the thirteenth is on taking care of hair on body parts, the fourteenth clause is on taking care from restraining oneself to pass urine or motion, the fifteenth clause is taking care by applying henna to the beard, hair, palms and soles and the sixteenth clause is on improving body tone to be yellow (light).

The second chapter of the manuscript is about getting rid of all diseases in the body. It contains six pages beginning from page 5, followed by page 6, 9, 10, 11 and page 12. This chapter contains five clauses. The first clause is on bloodletting, the second clause is on scratching, the third clause is on the benefits of laxatives, the fourth clause is on remedies after taking laxatives, and the fifth clause is on curing the stomach after vomiting.

The third chapter discusses medicine for head pains. It begins with page 12 through to 23. It contains nine clauses. The first clause is on the medicine for head disease named tha’labah (dropping of hair), the second clause is on medicine to grow more hair, the third clause is on the cure for grey hair, the fourth clause is on the cure for probable growths from bad hair on the body or the head, the fifth clause is on the cure for dryness and coarseness, ringworm on scalp and dandruff, the sixth clause is on medicine for head pains, the seventh clause is on cure for headache, the eighth clause is the cure for smarting or gnawing pain and the ninth clause is on the cure for blackout.

In addition, the fourth chapter discusses cures for the face. This chapter is contained in only two pages, that is, pages 23 and 24. It contains only a single clause, that is, on a facial disorder i.e. face looks older from discoloration.

The fifth chapter discusses remedies for eye disorders. It consists of 13 pages, beginning from page 24 to page 36. It contains 12 clauses. The first clause is on remedy for obstructed, unclear vision (Harun, 2006), the second clause is on the cure for framboesa tropica of the eyes, like sores which grow in the eyeballs (Harun, 2006), the third clause is on the remedy for growths in the eyes, the fourth clause is on the remedy for bloodshot eyes, the fifth clause is on the remedy for fleshy growths in the eyes, obstructing vision (Harun, 2006), the sixth clause is on the remedy for squint, the seventh clause is on the remedy for dim or unclear vision, the eighth clause is on the general remedy for eyes, the ninth clause is on the remedy for going blind, the tenth clause is on the remedy for lakup hayaman, clause eleventh is on the remedy for short-sightedness, and the twelfth clause is on the remedy for punctured eyes.

Besides that, the sixth chapter is on remedies for ear problems. It consists of only three pages, beginning from page 36 to page 38. This chapter also contains only two clauses, that is, on bleeding or suppurating ear and eliminating lice and mites in the ear.

The seventh chapter contains discussion of nose disorders. It consists of eight pages, beginning from page 38 and followed by pages 51 to 53. It also contains only two clauses. The first clause is about nasal cold and the second clause is on the remedy for sinusitis.

The eighth chapter gives an explanation on the remedies for mouth and teeth disorders. This chapter is comprised of three pages, beginning from page 53 to page 55. It contains two clauses, that is, a clause on toothache and another on curing dental cavities.

Besides that, the ninth chapter discusses the remedies for neck disorders, that is, swelling and cough. This chapter consists of ten pages, beginning from page 55 to page 64. This chapter also contains five clauses. The first clause is on cough medicine, the second clause is on the remedy for breathing difficulty, the third clause is on the remedy for hiccups, the fourth is on hoarseness or cough, and the fifth clause is on the remedy for throat disorders.

The tenth chapter is on the remedies for flatulence or sharp stabbing pain or abdominal pain and stabbing pain in left and right sides of chest or lower abdomen. This chapter consists of six pages, beginning from page 64 to page 69. It also contains three clauses. The first clause is on the medicine, the second clause is on the medicine for nausea and the third clause is on medicine for wasting away/emaciation.

Besides these, the eleventh chapter is concerned with remedies for stomach/abdominal disorders. This chapter consists of 19 pages, beginning from page 69 to page 87. It is divided into parts and clauses. There are eight parts and nine clauses in it. The first part is on heart disorders, the second part is on abdominal pain from wind, dry by characteristic, part three is on disorders which originate from the ma’idah (stomach/belly), the fourth part is false hunger, the fifth part is on nausea with inability to vomit and disgust for the smell of food although hungry, the sixth part is on pain in the navel with wave-like movement of veins or blood vessels, the seventh part is on swelling of body and inflated abdomen, and the eighth part is on extreme fullness of stomach.

There are nine clauses contained in this chapter. The first clause is on medicine for fullness of stomach, the second clause is on medicine for blood in stool, the third clause is on medicine for distension, the fourth clause is for piles, the fifth clause is on medicine for staining or spotting, the sixth is for oral thrush, mouth or tongue is red as if blistered, the seventh clause is for tapeworm, the eighth clause is on medicine for intestinal colic with vomiting and frequent stool/food poisoning and clause nine is on remedies for old persons and children.
In addition, the twelfth chapter deals with diseases of the loin. This chapter consists of 20 pages, beginning from page 87 to page 106. It contains 11 clauses. The first clause is on the cause of pain in the loin, the second clause is on the medicine named mani, the third clause is on stones, the fourth clause is on the medicine for hernia, the fifth clause is on leprosy, the sixth clause is on medicine for bright skin spots, the seventh clause is medicine for ringworm or scabies, the eighth clause is on medicine for chronic skin disease with fissures, discoloration, depigmentation and desquamation, the ninth clause is on medicine for vitiligo, the tenth clause is on medicine for warts or callosity and the eleventh clause is on ointment for lompat.

The thirteenth chapter contains explanation on syphilitic sores and so on. This chapter consists of seven pages, beginning from page 106 to page 112. This chapter contains one clause only, that is, on medicine for skin disorder in nose or nape or syphilis.

Other than that, the fourteenth chapter is on concocting tonic. It is quite a big chapter, consisting of 26 pages, beginning from page 112 to page 126 followed by pages 131 to 133, 128 to 130, 127 and then 134 to 137. This chapter contains ten clauses. The first clause is on conditions for taking of borax, the second clause is a copy of makjum from Syeikh Nazaruddin, the third clause is on the seven causes of female infertility, the fourth clause is on the wisdom of sexual locking, the fifth clause is on the wisdom of weakening male potency, the sixth clause concerns the condition for strong erection and ejaculation, the seventh clause is strengthening male potency, the eighth clause is on medicine for ejaculation, the ninth clause is on love potion for women and the tenth clause is to identify the thief who stole one’s property.

With the explanation on the meaning of scientific thinking and the contents of MSS1292 Kitab Tibb, I will focus the following discussion on scientific thinking and method of thinking based on the contents of the said manuscript.

Scientific thinking and method of thinking in the context of MSS1292 Kitab Tibb:

Scientific thinking in this part will be focused on thinking related to method of thinking, specifically to the logic method. I will link usage of this method in MSS1292 Kitab Tibb which is an old scientific heritage and the main material for this article. My examination of MSS1292 Kitab Tibb, particularly the first clause of the first chapter, reveals the existence of the expression “it is obligatory to look after oneself during good health to avoid sickness”. Following this, several suggestions have been put forward as (preventive) steps to take care of one’s health. Amongst these is the avoidance of drinking alcohol, reducing frequency of sexual intercourse and refraining from eating to fullness. Other suggestions include eating and drinking only when hungry or thirsty, not eating or drinking to fullness as well as not to combine foods of the same nature such as meat and eggs, fish and milk, buah kayu (tree fruit, perhaps papaya) and milk, avoiding slimy or undercooked or tough foods and not alternating drinking with eating during a meal. Other suggestions are to have enough sleep, not to waste one’s life with futile deeds, controlling the desires and feelings so as not to be too happy or too sad, annoyed or angry, to keep cleanliness of the body by washing, cleaning the teeth, not to resist passing urine or motion and to subscribe to cupping and use laxatives.

However, my examination of MSS1292 Kitab Tibb also finds that a substantial part of it focuses more on treatment after falling ill. On this basis, I therefore conclude that scientific thinking in the context of method of thinking, particularly the logic method, is used here. If it is obligatory to maintain good health while being healthy, then it is only logical that it is also obligatory to be treated when becoming ill. For this reason, MSS1292 Kitab Tibb consists of numerous treatment methods for various types of diseases.

Throughout the examination of MSS1292 Kitab Tibb, it was found that the treatment methods offered involves 13 types of diseases including diseases of the head, face, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, teeth, in the neck, related to wind, within the stomach or abdomen, in the loin and syphilitic sores as well as general care of bodily health.

I also found that for each type of illness related to the head, there are offered 70 methods of treatment, three methods of treatment for diseases of the face and 78 methods for eye disorders. Whilst there are offered 17 methods of treatment for ear disorders, 15 methods of treatment for nose-related diseases, 9 methods of treatment for mouth and teeth related disorders, 66 methods of treatment for diseases related to within the neck and 33 methods of treatment for disorders related to wind. Meanwhile, there are 109 methods of treatment for diseases of the stomach/ abdomen, 124 methods of treatment for disorders of the loin and 21 methods of treatment offered for syphilitic sores. And there are 149 methods of treatment offered for general health care.

On the whole, the total number of methods of treatment offered by Malays in MSS1292 Kitab Tibb is 694. This total involves various methods of treatment. It is not limited to only concoctions of medicines which require use of flora and fauna as well as other materials. In fact, there are instances whereby the methods of treatment offered involves the use of supplicatory prayers, use of Quranic verses, non-Quranic readings, use of talisman or amulets, incantations or spells, invocations of the Prophet, pbuh, and also use of diagrams or written expressions inscribed on an object. There are also suggested methods of treatment which involve activities such as physical exercise (physiotherapy).
Methods of treatment which use flora are seen to prevail in as many as 522 methods of treatment. These cover all diseases in the MSS1292 Kitab Tibb which are related to the head, face, eyes, ears, nose, mouth and teeth, in the neck, related to wind, stomach/abdomen, loin, syphilitic sores and also general health care. The use of flora is traced mostly in methods of treatment which involve diseases of the loin. And the use of fauna is not as frequent as the use of flora. This is evident by its use in only 42 methods of treatment. Besides, its use involves only 7 types of diseases, that is, those related to the head, eyes, in the neck, within the stomach/abdomen, the loin, syphilitic sores and general health care.

**Scientific thinking and spiritual faith:**

As scientific thinking involves use of mental intelligence, it would surely have limitations as human intelligence itself. Moreover, one of the components of being human is spirituality. Thus, scientific thinking alone is insufficient. There are times the spiritual faith element is needed together with scientific thinking to fulfill the need for the human spiritual component. I find that MSS1292 Kitab Tibb is full of this element, thus it may be within the scope of integration between science and spiritual faith.

While examining MSS1292 Kitab Tibb, I found the usage of Quranic verses, invocations of the Prophet, pbuh, supplicatory prayers and talismans or amulets is part of or singly used as a method of treatment for a disease. 21 methods of treatment involve the use of Quranic verses to cure diseases. The verses used encompass various surah such as surah Fatir, surah al-Fatihah, surah al-Inshirah, surah al-Ikhlas, surah al-Shu’ara’, surah al-Baqarah, surah al-Hajj, surah Maryam, surah Yasin, surah Taha, surah al-Nazi’at, surah al-Nahl, surah Ali ‘Imran, surah Sad, surah al-Anbiya’, surah al-Tahrin, surah al-Falaq, surah al-Nas, surah al-Isra’, surah al-Qalam, surah al-Takwir, surah Sad, surah Yusuf, surah al-Qadr, surah al-Shura, surah al-An’am, surah al-Nisa’, surah al-Anfal, surah al-Jinn and surah al-Waqi’ah. Amongst the diseases which are offered this method of using Quranic verses are those related to the head, eyes, neck, wind and stomach/abdomen.

The use of recitations other than Quranic verses involve 6 methods of treatment. Amongst the recitations used is “subhan man ikhtajab bi jabaruth ‘an khalqih fa la ‘ayn tarar”, “bi ism Allah ma sha ‘Allah la yasrif al-su’il’ ila Allah bi ism Allah ashkur Allah wa ma bi kum min ni’matin...bi ism Allah wa la havla wa la guvwat illa bi Allah al-alyy al-‘azim” and “ya qadiya al-hajat”. And the diseases offered this method of treatment are related to the Head, ears and loin. Whilst invocation of the Prophet, pbuh, is also used as a method of treatment to cure diseases, it is not, however, that much used. I found its use in only 2 methods of treatment, that is, in disorders of the eyes and the loin.

The use of supplicatory prayers can be found in 14 methods of treatment. It involves treatment to cure diseases of the head, stomach/abdomen and the loin. Amongst the doa suggested are “bi ism Allah al-shafi bi ism Allah al-kaafi bi ism Allah al-ma’ani bi ism Allah al-ladhi la yadurr ma’a ismih shay’ fi al-ard wa la fi al-sama’ wa huw al-sami’ al-‘alim”, “wa nunazzilu min al-Qur’an ma huwa shifa’ wa rahmat li al-mu’minin” and “bi ism Allah al-rahman al-rahiim nun wa al-qalam wa ma yasturun ma anfa bi ni’mat rabbi bi majnun in huwa illa dhikr li al-‘alamin wa ma tasha’un illa yashka Allah al-‘alamin”. The use of talismans or amulets can be seen in 8 methods of treatment. A number of the talismans or amulets have written on them Quranic verses such as “‘li yundhira man kan hayyan wa yahiqqa al-qawl ‘ala al-katifin”. There are also talismans or amulets which have on them writings such as the declaration of faith, “la ilaha illa Allah Muhammad Rasulullah”. Amongst the diseases suggested for this method of treatment using talismans or amulet are head diseases, specifically headache/migraine and gnawing head pains, as well as stomach/abdominal pain, specifically tapeworm and cholera.

All usage of religious spiritual element explains the existence of integration between science and faith. Moreover, this matter is also seen as an element of worship in Islam which has its own strength to resolve various problems. In reality, MSS1292 Kitab Tibb does not merely display integration between science and faith in medical treatments. In fact, the same matter can be traced in other matters. Thus, I am drawn to see integration between science and faith in the following context:

First, harmonious integration between science and faith is seen on the basis that religion commands man to perform acts of worship which is proven in the purpose for man’s creation and as expressed in verse 56 of surah al-Dhariyat which means “And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” This religious commandment is aligned with the scientific element as a method to increase man’s capacity for the purpose of performing acts of worship. Here it means that man is required to improve his health to enable him to perform acts of worship at the maximum level. The way to do this is as mentioned in MSS1292 Kitab Tibb either through suggestions for avoiding diseases or through methods of treatment offered after becoming ill. In fact, clause 1 of the first chapter of MSS1292 Kitab Tibb contains the expression to the effect “the first clause is about taking care of the self during good health so as not to fall sick because taking care of oneself is obligatory as from it one becomes strong to perform religious acts for God’.

I see this expression as a preliminary picture of the existence of a harmonious and compatible integration between science and faith. The scientific element here is the information on the methods of health care which
eventually would increase the human capacity to perform acts of worship. And its religious element entails the duties of acts of devotion to God which is a religious commandment and the reason for man’s creation. This devotion can be done to the maximum level when the physical health of a person is at its finest. Thus, it can be inferred here that religious duties can be discharged through science. Or in other words, science becomes the method to achieve religious aims. Therefore, science and faith are integrated.

Second, harmonious integration between science and faith is looked at from the viewpoint of information on health care and various methods of treatment offered to cure diseases. The methods of treatment show the existence of a harmonious integration between the two said elements. In this context, the scientific part is the information on health care and the methods of treatment offered. And its religious part is the information and methods of treatment linked with religious practice, along with the use of Quranic verses, recitations related to faith, supplicatory prayers or invocations of the Prophet, pbuh. I will not touch on the methods of treatment involving the use of Quranic verses, and so on, as these have been dealt with before. My focus at this point is only to look at methods of treatment which are related to religious practice.

Information on health care mentioned in MSS1292 Kitab Tibb covers preventive care during good health with the aim of avoiding sickness. It includes suggestions such as to eat only when hungry and to stop eating before feeling full, to get enough sleep at night between six to eight hours and to sleep during the day for not more than an hour which is said to be sufficient to enable one to perform acts of worship. Science aids in implementation of religious duties when a short sleep during day-time is said to be helpful for a person to perform acts of worship. Faith also aids in implementation of science when the short sleep taken for the purpose of health care is begun and ended with a certain doa. This proves that faith and science complement each other indeed.

Other than that, information on health care also touches on taking care of waking hours. When in a situation of being awake, it is suggested that man does things which are beneficial for this life and the hereafter. The three matters suggested are to gain knowledge which will be one’s provisions in the hereafter, to be occupied with a job to sustain life in this world and to learn medical knowledge in order to get rid of diseases in the body. Evidently, here is that harmonious integration between science and faith. This harmonious integration can be seen as follows:

First: when the matter suggested to be done during waking hours will become provision for the life hereafter.

Second: when the matter suggested to be done during waking hours is used for the benefit of life in this world. Life in this world is the bridge to life in the hereafter.

Third: when the matter suggested is to learn medical knowledge to rid of bodily diseases. Health care is obligatory because it enables a person to increase his capacity to perform acts of worship to God. Thus, it is one of the rights of the body to be fulfilled. What is explained here shows that science and faith integrate because they complement each other.

Information on health care also touches on personal cleanliness by washing the body from impurities. What is interesting here is that health care is associated with sunnah practice in Islam, for example, to clip the nails, trim the moustache, remove armpit hair and shaving of pubic hair on Fridays. For women, it is sunnah to remove pubic hair, oil the head and body, to bathe with lime fruit and comb the hair either on Fridays, Mondays or Thursdays. This shows the implementation of science is aligned with religious practice.

The same goes with information on health care which is related to the care of teeth. The scientific part here is information on care by the manner of brushing teeth while the religious part is when brushing teeth is linked to the sunnah of doing it before each of the five daily prayers. The religious element is also when this manuscript reveals the sunnah (commendable but not obligatory) and the makruh (despised but not forbidden) manner of brushing teeth. It is sunnah to brush teeth crosswise three times, while it is makruh to do it lengthwise. Makruh is associated with Satan’s ways, thus brushing teeth his way is makruh. Satan is the archenemy of Muslims. Thus, Muslims are not commended to copy the Satanic practice by brushing teeth lengthwise. Further, 3 out of 10 benefits of brushing teeth are related to Islam such as, those who brush their teeth will earn God’s pleasure, according to the Messenger’s (pbuh) sunnah, and brushing teeth is liked by Angels. More interestingly, God’s pleasure earned by the manner of brushing teeth is clearly supported by a hadith of the Messenger (pbuh). All these are evidence of the harmonious integration between science and faith.

I am drawn to infer here that the integration of science and faith shows that they form a harmonious relationship, are intertwined and inseparable (Azizan, 1995; Azizan, 2006). And, looking at it out of the context of MSS1292 Kitab Tibb, integration of science and faith can be understood if both of them are found using the same object, that is, nature. In the religious context, nature is an object which needs to be studied by mankind to better understand the signs of God’s authority. The same nature is also the subject of scientific study (Endang, 1982). This means that all scientific study is about nature and its phenomena including humans who inhabit the said nature. When science and faith use the same object to be studied and examined, it becomes very difficult to find the points of difference between the two.
In fact, if seen from the viewpoint of study methodology by science and religion, their integration can be further understood. Religion, for example, commands man to read nature in the sense of observing and studying nature to enable him to know and be convinced of God’s authority followed by an increase in his level of awe of God. In fact, Zakaria Awang Soh (1990) found more than 550 Quranic verses which urge man to conduct investigation and observation of nature. When man carries out activities of observation and investigation of nature, then he himself is carrying out scientific activity. This is because science uses the methods of observation, investigation and experiments on nature which is the object of study. This means that man is involved in activities which are simultaneously scientific as well as religious. This shows that there is no boundary at all between science and faith. In fact, science in this matter is seen as enhancing man’s understanding of God’s authority and supremacy and further, increasing his level of awe of God. This is also the idea which was once raised by Azizan (2006) when he brought up his view on the complementary approach between science and faith.

Conclusion:

It is interesting to conclude here that the characteristics of scientific thinking already existed amongst Malays as pictured in MSS1292 Kitab Tibb. Although there is not one explicit statement in MSS1292 Kitab Tibb which mentions that the Malays had possessed the features of scientific thinking, yet what is displayed in the said manuscript has given a clear picture on the existence of such thinking within the society. What is clearer is that the Malays, as pictured through the said manuscript, had inserted the faith element as a complement for the limitations of scientific thinking. It seems as if to convey a statement that the Malays realized the existent shortcomings in scientific thinking, and hence integrated it with spiritual faith.

References


Shaharir bin Mohamad Zain, 2000. *Introduction to the History and Philosophy of Science*. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Publisher.