

The Philosophy and Objectives of Education in Islam

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Abstract

Education is crucial for all mankind. It is gained in order to perfect all aspects of human's life. To achieve the true education, we must have the knowledge on the philosophy and objectives of education as stipulated in the Al-Quran and Sunnah. These sources help in the effective formulation of producing the complete growth of individual with integrated, balanced, and harmonious personality. The prime task of education is, to the nurture of personal growth. It is through this nurture of the individual and the preservation and transmission of culture that both the individual and society attain a quality of life. A good man is not necessarily a complete man. No one can be regarded as a complete man because there is no end to the growth of human personality. A wide knowledge of many subjects helps in the growth of personality provided a man knows how to adjust to knowledge to behavior, and how knowledge and action are integrated into a broad, total framework of life. Therefore, the aims of this paper is to identify and explain about Islamic education in terms of its concept, education in Islamic perspective, and focus on the philosophy and objectives of Islamic education in the wholly and holy concept of *JERISAH* as promulgated in the Education Conference in Makkah with some significant examples from the Muslims scholars as aspired in the Al-Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet SAW.

Introduction

Islamic education is an essential need derived from Islam as a religion or way of life, as Allah wanted. Thus Islam sources are the same for Islamic education. The Quran is the main source of Islam, which contains every principles of Islamic thought. The Quran demonstrates itself also to be a guidance book to the right path, and a call to eternal salvation and declaration of Allah oneness, all of which require reiterations. Islamic education also is uniquely different from other types of educational theory and practice largely because of the all-encompassing influence of the Quran. The Quran serves as a comprehensive blueprint for both the individual and society and as the primary source of knowledge.

Definition of Education

In order to have a better understanding about the aims and objectives of education, we first must have a clear understanding on the definition of education itself. Education can be defined into several definitions:

In the Arabic language there are three terms of education:

- Ta'līm, from the root 'alima (to know, to be aware, to perceive, to learn), which is used to denote knowledge being sought or imparted through instruction and teaching.
- Tarbiyah, from the root raba (to increase, to grow, to rear), implies a state of spiritual and ethical nurturing in accordance with the will of God.
- Ta'dīb, from the root aduba (to be cultured, refined, well-mannered), suggests a person's development of sound social behavior. What is meant by sound requires a deeper understanding of the Islamic conception of the human being.

According to Al-Attas (1980:22) education can be defined as “Recognition and acknowledgement, progressively instilled into man, of the proper places of things in the order of creation, such that it leads to the recognition and acknowledgement of the proper place of God in the order of being and existence”

In www.wikipedia.org/education, education means “Any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another through institutions.”

Based on the definitions mentioned above, we may conclude that education is one of the means through which a particular society transmits or renews its culture and values to the next generation. Through true education, it will lead man to the recognition and acknowledgement of the proper place in front of our Creator. Besides, as a teacher or educator, we should bear in mind and heart not only to be a ‘Mudarris’ but try to achieve a higher level of educating a person which is ‘Mujtahid’ or ‘Mujaddid’. We have to follow our role-model, the best teacher in Islam, Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Education in Islam

The importance of education is repeatedly emphasized in the Quran. There are also several hadith and saying of the companions that related to education. Some of the examples of the proof are as below:

➤ **Al-Quran**

- “Read! in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, who created.
Created man out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood.
Read! and thy Lord is Most Bountiful.

He who taught (the use of) the pen.

Taught man that which he knew not.” (Al-Alaq : 1-5)

This verse is the first and foremost indicates about education and the obligation for Man in seeking knowledge.

- “ ... Say: “are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition” (Az-Zumar : 9)
- “ It is He who has sent amongst the Unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom although they had been, before, in manifest error.” (Al-Jum’ah : 2)
- “...And when ye are told to rise up, rise up, God will rise up to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe and who have been granted Knowledge...” (Al-Mujadilah: 11)
- “ Nor should the Believers all go forth together: if a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies in religion, and admonish the people when they return to them, that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil)” (At-Taubah: 122)
- “...but say, ”O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge.” (Ta Ha: 114)
- “...ask of those who possess the message (knowledge).”(Al-Nahl: 43)

➤ **Sunnah**

- “When a man dies, his works also stop except three things: acts of charity, knowledge by which (all) profit, and righteous children who pray for him” (Abu Hurairah, Abu Daud, Tarmizi and Nasaie)
- “Who so walks in path seeking for knowledge therein, God will thereby make easy to him the path of paradise” (Abu Hurairah and Muslim)
- “To acquire knowledge is binding upon all Muslims.” (Anas bin Malik and Ibn Majah)
- “The worst of man in the sight of God in respect of rank on the day of Resurrection shall be the learned man who profited not by his knowledge.” (Abu Hurairah)

- “Allah gives understanding of the religion and guidance to him for whom He wants beneficence.” (Bukhari and Muslim)
- **Saying of the Companions (Shalaby, 1954:162-163)**
 - Ali bin Abi Talib is reported to have advised Kumayyil as follows: “ O Kumayyil, learning is preferable to wealth; you guard wealth while learning guides you, wealth will run short with spending while knowledge will be increased by dispersion.”
 - Mus’ab bin Al-Zubair advised his sons saying: “Acquire knowledge as it will be ornament if you are rich and a source of wealth if you are poor.”
 - Ibn Abd. Al-Hakam was sitting in the circle of Imam Malik when he heard the call of midday prayer. He then began to collect his books in order to go and pray. But Imam Malik said to him: “O man, what you are going to do is not better than what you are doing.”

Formulation of Philosophy of Education in Islam

Islam affirms that three important elements that are necessary ingredients in the formulation of a philosophy of Islamic education - namely, learner, knowledge, and means of instruction. The learner, being human, is made up of a dual nature of spirit and body. The spiritual faculty is known as: the *ruh* (soul), *‘aql* (mind or intellect), *qalb* (emotion), or *nafs* (self) according to the function that is ascribed to it.

‘Aql (the faculty of reason), unique to human beings, elevates them above the rest of creation. The soul could be elevated to the noblest of positions but it could also be debased to the lowest of the low. The body consists of several faculties corresponding to the physical senses. The nature of the learner with regards to learning has been the subject of study in psychology. It is common knowledge that the learner is inquisitive and flexible and can be molded especially at a tender age. The learner has physical needs for food, activity, and sex; social needs for affection, belonging, and status within a social group; and spiritual needs relating to something larger and beyond one’s self, that is, the need to reach for God. Islam believes in the possibility of obtaining knowledge of Truth and Reality. In Islam there has not been much debate on this matter. Unlike in the Western philosophical tradition where there has been constant debate

since Greek philosophy, as demonstrated by Plato's Theatetus. We know that man is equipped with a soul and physical senses and prepared by Allah to acquire knowledge.

According to Al-Attas, *'ilm* (knowledge) is the arrival of the ma'na (meaning) of an object in the soul or the arrival of the soul at the meaning of an object of knowledge. Thus the soul is not merely passive but active too. *Wahy* (revelation) and intuition are received by the soul. The five physical senses are the windows of the mind, particularly for obtaining empirical and the rational knowledge. In the Islamic worldview, there exists a hierarchical structure to knowledge, and, just as there exists a dual nature in mankind, there exists two categories of knowledge, the *'ilm alnaqliyah* (revealed)—some of which is *fard 'ayn*, individual duty—and the *'ilm alnaqliyah*—which is *fard kifayah*, which is a communal duty. These correspond to the different degrees of certainty of knowledge and the means of procuring it. *Fard 'ayn* knowledge is finite, certain, and obligatory for every individual Muslim to acquire. It includes the knowledge about the pillars of the religion, the articles of faith, and the Shari'ah.

On the other hand, *fard kifayah* knowledge is obligatory upon the community. Each community should ensure that there are some people who are knowledgeable in the acquired or intellectual knowledge essential for the survival of the society, such as medicine, mathematics, natural and applied sciences, and social sciences. In this manner, Islam ensures that every individual is anchored to his faith while exploring new horizon. The analogy of flying a kite can be used to describe the relationship between faith and reason, where faith is the string and reason is the kite itself. There is always tension between faith and reason just as there is between the kite and the string; if for some reason the string is broken, the kite will fly off in any direction. Similarly, if reason is not grounded in faith, then it will wander in all directions without knowing its limit. Knowledge is integral or holistic as suggested by the "tawhidic" worldview. There is no compartmentalization of knowledge into religious and secular spheres. Both *fard 'ayn* and *fard kifayah* knowledge have the purpose of strengthening faith, the former through careful study of the words of Allah in the Holy Qur'an and the latter through a meticulous, systematic study of the world of man and nature.

Knowledge is integral to action, spirituality, and ethics. The nature of the knowledge that provides the content of education is the major concern of the curriculum, and these views of man and knowledge have a great bearing upon Islamic education.

The Philosophy of Education in Islam

The philosophy of education determines the aims and objectives of education. There are different philosophies of education. Naturally there are different aims and objectives of education. One of the aims and objectives is to transmit the experiences of one generation to another generation. The educationists have emphasized the experiences of the whole society and not experiences of the individual person. Individuals develop several types of beliefs, different forms of opinions, generalize various kinds of principles and publish these experiences in the form of literature. These beliefs, opinions, principles and literature take the shape of experiences of one generation and are transmitted to another generation. This transfer is continuous and nobody feels its transfer easily.

How human nature is perceived from the Islamic perspectives? Man is the core of the educational process. It involves with directing human behavior towards certain objectives. It is like a blacksmith or carpenter needs to know the characteristics of the materials with which he deals, the educator is helped in his profession if he has a clear idea about the nature of man.

We clarify the concept of khilafah whereby man is considered as Khalifah of Allah. The Quranic concept of the good fitrah will be illustrated and contrasted with some different conceptions. The harmony between the fitrah and the bodily needs will be emphasized with reference to the influence of the ruh (spirit).

Generally, the Islamic concept of man has the width and range no other concept of man has. As man can become Khalifatullah by cultivating or realizing within himself the attributes of God and as these attributes have a limitless dimension, man's moral, spiritual and intellectual progress is potentially limitless.

Secondly, as knowledge is the source of this progress and development, Islam does not put any bar to the acquisition of knowledge.

Third, the range of this acquisition must be all acquiring an intellectual expertise in isolation a person cannot maintain a balanced growth.. This implies that education must be planned in such a way that it has a balanced interdisciplinary pattern. An informed man or trained expert is not necessarily an educated man.

Fourth, the spiritual, moral, intellectual, imaginative, emotional and physical aspects of a man's personality are kept in view in establishing the interrelationship among the disciplines. The growth of a child's mind and abilities must be taken into

consideration in order to plan subjects and courses in graded stages so that this interrelationship is maintained.

Fifth, the development of personality is seen in the context on man's relationship with God, man and nature. Therefore the organization of disciplines and arrangement of subjects are planned with reference to man as an individual, man as a social being, man as a being who has to live in harmony with nature.

According to Imam Al-Ghazali, there are four natures of man include, beastly, animal, devilish, and, angelic. Anger is the sign of beastly nature. Domination of appetites can be attributed to animal nature. The devilish nature is exhibited in deceit, fraud and conspiracy. The angelic nature is discernible in the desire for service, worship of God and doing well to all. These four natures are centered in soul. If man follows the animal nature, he behaves like a pig or dog. If he follows the devil he becomes deceitful and fraudulent. If he controls the above evils he is endowed with divine qualities such as wisdom, knowledge and faith.

What type of experiences have been learnt by the human beings, determines the place of human beings in this world. This is true to the Islamic society as it is true to non-Islamic society. Islam occupies a distinguished place in the world of religions. It intends to prepare that type of man which can be distinguished from other societies on account of all aspects of life. The assumptions of Islam also differ from other religions. Islam considers a child as innocent when he or she is born. Christianity does not agree with this assumption and contribute to the theory of original sin. Islam does not deny that man may fall prey to evils but it does not find its origin in the birth of child. It is considered in Islam as his stray from true path due to worldly temptations.

God has mentioned man as His best creation in the universe. He has endowed man with intelligence and knowledge. These are special favors to man from Almighty God which have not been given to other creations. It is natural that one who is given more powers and authority should be held more answerable and responsible also. So Islamic theology makes man responsible for his each and every act, action and activity, howsoever important and unimportant it may be. This status of man in Islam puts heavy responsibility on Islamic society. It is natural that Islam should have a system of education which is different from western system of education. Islamic educational system prepares man to assume the responsibilities of the highest creation of God and His vicegerent. Naturally that education should develop the qualities of high character

and should prepare man to occupy the seat of high rank. It should consider all capable of rising to the highest level and piety and character provided their parents and their society provides them right type of education. This concept of man can provide the real basis for aims and objectives of Islamic education.

Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education: Theories from Muslim Intellectuals

Al-Ghazali

According to Imam Al-Ghazali the ultimate aim of education was the development of character including the promotion of moral and ethical qualities such as obedience, humility, simplicity and the good attitudes such as complete surrender to the will of God, reliance on God, and thankfulness to Him alone. Education should make a child aware of the laws of Islam through the study of Quran and Hadith. Education should habituate the child to perform prayers regularly, and to observe fast and follow other mandatory laws of Islam. Thus, education should make the child firm in religious beliefs otherwise he will be led astray.

He also believed that the aim of education is to cultivate man so that he abides by the teachings of religion, and is hence assured of salvation and happiness in the eternal life hereafter. Other worldly goals such as the pursuit of wealth, social standing or power, and even the love of knowledge are illusory since they relate to the temporary world.

Ibn Khaldun

The aim of education by Ibn Khaldun is to make Muslims firm believers in God through the study of the Quran and religious sciences. Knowledge of God and faith in Islamic laws will make Muslims know the reality which in turn will lead to good action and possession of good character. Thus the knowledge of Islamic sciences and leading his life according to the tenets of Islam will help him to be a good Muslim and a good member of society.

Ibn Sina

Ibn Sina sees the aims of education as the overall growth of the individual: physical, mental, and moral; followed by the preparation of this by individual to live in a

society through a chosen trade according to his aptitudes. So Ibn Sina education does not neglect physical development and everything implied by it; physical exercises, food and drink, sleep and cleanliness. It does not aim exclusively at the intellectual development and the amassing of knowledge; likewise Ibn Sina does not devote his attention to the moral aspect alone, but aims at the formation of a personality complete in body, mind and character. He does not restrict the task of education to creating the complete citizen, but rather sees that education must also prepare him for a profession whereby he can contribute to the social structure, because society in Ibn Sina's view is built entirely on 'cooperation' on the specialization of each individual in a craft or profession and on the mutual exchange of services between its individuals.

Ibn Miskawaih

Ibn Miskawaih's theory and objectives of education was based on Aristotelian theory of education which stipulated intellectual, physical, and moral education aiming at producing good human beings from the social point of view and achieving eternal happiness and self realization. Like Plato and Aristotle, he believed that education is related to state craft. He therefore, visualized an education system which could fit the people to perform the duties entrusted to them by the state. Like Aristotle, he presented the view that physical education must precede the spiritual and intellectual education. To Ibn Miskawaih, the goal of life was to combine the human will with the Divine Will. The best preparation of it consisted in making the body an ally rather than an enemy of soul. True education must therefore, minister to the needs of the body no less than the aspirations of the soul. Thus asceticism was entirely unacceptable to him. The need of religious education is however apparent because of his professed aim of combining the human will and the Divine Will. The aim of religious education was not only to shield against irreligion but for building the conscience of the child.

Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education: Contemporary Perspectives

With this concept of man, Mohd Sharif Khan (1986:37-38) stated in his book that the aims and objectives of Islamic education may be as follows:

- To provide the teachings of Holy Quran as the first step of education.
- To provide experiences which are based on fundamentals of Islam as embodied in Holy Quran and Sunnah which cannot be changed.

- To provide experiences in the form of knowledge and skills. These experiences are likely to be changed in the light of changes in society
- To develop understanding that knowledge without the basis in faith and religion is in complete education
- To develop commitment towards the basic values which have been prescribed in religion and scripture.
- To develop the sense of accountability towards Almighty Creator so that man passes his life as a faithful servant.
- To develop piety and faith among the followers
- To develop such qualities of a good man which are universally accepted by the societies which have faith in religion.
- To encourage international brotherhood irrespective of differences in generations, occupations, and social class amongst the person who are knit together by a common religion and faith.
- To foster great consciousness of the Divine Presence in the universe
- To bring man nearer to an understanding of God and of the relation in which man stands to his creator
- To produce man who has faith as well as knowledge in spiritual development

These aims and objectives of Islamic education distinguish clearly from the modern system of education which is based on Western philosophy of life. It is not denied that both the systems of education want to produce good individuals but the modern system of wants to do so in the absence of a set of moral values which is obviously not possible.

This approach of Islamic education was endorsed in the First World Conference on Muslim Education held at Mecca in 1977 in the following words:

“Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of Man’s spirit, intellect, his rational self, feelings and bodily senses. Education should cater therefore for the growth of Man in all aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively and motivate all aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection. The ultimate aim of

Muslim education lies in the realization of complete submission to Allah on the level of the individual, the community and humanity at large.”

From this philosophy, we can connect it with the National Philosophy of Education in Malaysia which defined the aims of education as below:

“Education in Malaysia is an ongoing process towards further effort in developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner; so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal wellbeing as well as being able to contribute to the betterment of the society and the nation at large.”

From the two philosophies stated above, we can relate it with the JERISAH concept which aims to produce individuals who have a growth balanced personality including physical (Jasmani), emotional (Emosi), spiritual (Rohani), intellectual (Intelek), social (Sosial), the environment (Alam), and the humbleness towards Allah SWT (Hamba Allah). The two philosophies above lack the important aspect like social and the environment. This aspect is also important especially in the school situation. The teachers should inculcate the aspect of socialization in school and should introduce a good environment like respect the teachers, parents, and other fellow friends.

According to Ali Ashraf (1985:39,40) the aim of education according to the ummah in general, is to produce a good Muslim who is both cultured and expert; cultured in the sense that he knows how to use knowledge for his spiritual, intellectual, and material progress, and expert in the sense that he is a useful member of the community. The philosophy of general education which is the prevalent system of education in Muslim countries is incomplete as mentioned earlier because it leaves out one aspect of human personality, its spirit.

Knowledge therefore is not acquired just for the sake of knowledge, nor can it ever be acquired in that manner or for that purpose. Whatever one learns affects or influences or transforms one’s personality. Adam A.S the first man became khalifatullah

only after Allah had taught him the essence of everything. This means that his whole personality acquired the characteristics of one capable of becoming the vicegerent of God on the earth through that knowledge. Therefore, knowledge is not going to be nor can it ever be a mere intellectual possession. Man's emotions, morals and faith are condition on what he goes on knowing. His attitude to life changes without his even realizing that such a thing is happening. Therefore, knowledge of that which is essential must be given priority.

Besides, man occupies a unique position in this world and everything is subjected to him. This means that, whatever exists serves a purpose. Bakker emphasized this fact by saying: "Man is surrounded by countless natural phenomena which each appear to have their own purpose and message." If the things that surround man have purpose, then man's existence cannot be dissociated from purposes. The Quran makes it clear that whatever actions man performs should be linked to Allah. As Allah had mentioned in the Quran: "Truly...my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are all for Allah, The Cherisher of the Worlds" (Al-An'am:162). This verse indicates that all aspects of human life have linked to his Creator. His whole life is linked to Allah. Started from the time when he was born. Then come to the period he spent at school, in the pre-school period, and after it. The ultimate aim for man is to live in this world as Khalifatullah and to gain Allah's love, mercy, and pleasure.

According to Al-Attas, he believed that the primary goal of education is to lead man to recognize and acknowledge his Creator. This acknowledgment is manifested in obedience and adherence to His commandments. In other words, the primary goal of Islamic education is to produce the good being, who, by developing all his/her potentials accordingly, ensures him or her to be the servant ('abd) and the vicegerent (khalifah) of Allah who has undertaken the amanah (trust) of maintaining prosperity on earth. To this effect education is designed to produce the God-fearing (taqwa) servant of Allah who is aware of his individual vertical relations with Allah (hablun min Allah) and his social horizontal relations with his fellow man (hablun min al-nas). Thus, in effect the primary goals of education include spiritual, moral, social, intellectual, and physical development with specific goals. There is no conflict between societal and individual aims because there is unity of purpose.

The greatest objective of education is to prepare the young generation for leadership. Islamic education is of course has the highest objective, and more than that

can hardly be imagined. The aim of Islamic education is character building. Growth and development of an Islamic personality should be the final goal of any Islamic School. Islamic values are the foundation of the Islamic personality. As Muslims our educational aim is to develop the personalities of our children to the end that they will be conscious of their responsibility to Allah (the Creator) and to fellow humans.

Contemporary Muslims scholars such as Professors Ismail Faruqi, Abu A'la Al-Maududi, Mohd Kamal Hassan, Hassan Langgulung, and, Sidek Baba state that the Islamic curriculum should aim at the following objectives: to develop goodness piety and fear of God in individuals so that social justice prevails; to develop tolerance, brotherhood, love, mercy, goodness and righteousness in the individuals so that a truly Islamic society may come into existence; to develop the habit of consulting each other in the individuals so that maximum benefit could be achieved from intellectual capacities; to develop the ability of self-expression and shouldering responsibility so that a representative and responsible society is built up; to provide opportunities to the individuals to live in an ideal, pure and happy life so they can come closer to Allah.

Mohamad Johdi (2009) synchronizes that Islamic education aims at the balanced growth of the total balanced-personality of human, acronym **JERISAH – Jasmani, Emosi, Rohani, Intelek, Sosialisasi, Alam, and Hamba Allah**. These entire components need proper education and training in such a way that faith is infused into the whole of one's personality and creates an emotional 'nafs al-mutmainnah' attach to Islam and enables one to follow the Qur'an and Sunnah appropriately. Consequently, this personality can govern by the Islamic system of values sincerely, willingly and ecstatically so that one may proceed to the realization of human status as Vicegerent of Allah. This mean that education has a great task in achieving this goal that is moulding a person to become *Khalifatullah* to whom Allah has promised the authority of the universe. This could be achieved through appropriate strategies, approaches and well-organized curriculum.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, we can conclude that education is vital and essentials for all human beings. It enables man to understand the eternal and the spiritual realities of life and basic realities of Science and Social Science. To be an educated person, man has to actualize and understand the aims and objectives of education. As we already know,

both system of education either Islamic or Western's aims of education is to produce and create a good mankind. It is an ongoing process. To achieve this, man should have a balanced growth in his personality which comprises of intellect, physical, emotion, spirit and soul. The important aspect which is lacked by the West is the spiritual and soul aspects. This aspect will make human beings aware their creation and existence in this world. Moreover, the virtues of education should create such feelings of awareness in man especially Muslims that they should be ready to sacrifice for the pleasure of Allah. We have to preserve what Allah has given us by doing the righteous deeds and forbid the evil. Self purification is very important. The more knowledge we have will make us closer to our Creator not against Him.

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