

THE PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION IN ISLAM

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1. Introduction

The revelation of the first surah of the Holy Quran delivered by Malaikat Jibril A.S. to the Prophet S.A.W. is concerning education. The significance, variety and benefit of education were mentioned directly and indirectly in many surahs. The readers of the Qur'an are frequently requested to use their senses to learn, study and understand truly the meanings. They need to generate dynamically their mind, sight, aural, oral capabilities and deed in order to acquire the gist. These were practiced and manifested during the life of the beloved Prophet S.A.W., the Companions and early generation of Muslim scholars during the glorious era of Islamic Civilization. This is to show that Islam is very meticulous in this vital aspect of the development, progress and accomplishment of human being in the present world and hereafter.

In fact, the revelation of Surah Al-Alaq could be considered as a declaration against illiteracy and encouragement to people, especially Muslims to seek knowledge as it is the fundamental element of education. The surah were:

Read! In the name of your Lord, who created man, out of a mere clot of congealed blood. Read: And your Lord is Most Generous. He who taught the use of the pen. Taught man that which he knew not. (Al-Alaq:1-5)

The above surah was a proved that the importance and value of education in Islam has been clearly highlighted and emphasized from the very beginning of the history of Islam. Principally, Islamic education proceeds from the Qur'an revealed to the Prophet was also utilized for the guidance of Muslims in fulfilling the responsibilities as Vicegerent of Allah. It is clear that education in Islam has its own supremacy in designing the followers to conform the duty of submission to Allah. Thus, the following section discusses the definition of education, mainly based on the Islamic perspectives.

2. Definition of Education in Islam

The meaning of education in its totality in the context of Islam is fundamentally in the combination of the terms *Tarbiyyah*, *Ta'lim* and *Ta'dib*. Literally, *Tarbiyyah* means 'educate', *Ta'lim* means 'knowledgeable' and *Ta'dib* derived from the word 'adaba' means 'moral'. These terms comprehensively are concerning the multilateral relationship of human and their society; human and environment; society and environment; and in relation to the Allah. These cross-sectional relation are all together represent the scope of education in Islam of both 'formal' and 'non-formal'.

Islamic education aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of human comprises of intellect, physical, emotion, spirit and soul. These entire components need training in such a way that faith is infused into the whole of one’s personality and creates an emotional attachment to Islam and enables one to follow the Qur’an and Sunnah. Consequently, this personality can governed 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 mould a person to become *Khalifatullah* to whom Allah has promised the authority of the universe.

This is a great possibility that the Qur’an and the Prophet S.A.W. mention repeatedly the paramount importance of education and the supremacy. It is stated in the Qur’an, “Allah will exalt those who believe among you, and those who have knowledge, to high ranks. Allah is informed of what he ye do.”(Al- Mujadalah:11). In this verse Allah grants high ranks to those who obtain knowledge and if a human being wants to rise, he should attain knowledge. Intuitively, the Prophet S.A.W has clearly told that those who walk in path seeking knowledge, Allah will thereby make easy to them the path of paradise (Hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah). It had been proved in history that the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. were truthful, honest, sincere, generous, brave, willing to sacrifice their lives for Allah’s cause, *jihad fisabilillah*. They love Allah and His Messenger much more than they love their ownelves.

These were the actualization of the philosophy Islamic education truly derived from the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. It is the policy of education that could successfully promulgate virtuous person who can promote righteousness and whose deeds are consistently in line with the Islamic teachings. Hence, undoubtedly, the glorious achievements of the prophetic generations were essentially guided by the truly principles of Islamic education as discussed in the following section.

3. The Principles of Islamic Education

First: The faith in the **Oneness of Allah** and Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. is very substantial in education. This is the foundation of pillars of Iman. Its importance is clearly stated in the Qur’an, “And he to whom wisdom is granted receiveth indeed a benefit overflowing” (Al-Baqarah:269). Belief in the oneness of Allah, the prophethood of Muhammad S.A.W., and the Final Day of Reckoning is central to Islam. Therefore, a person who is skeptical about these doctrines ceases to be a Muslim. In relation to this, Ashraf (1994: 36-37) admitted that firmness on the study of Qur’an is the base of Islamic education. The word of God, properly studied, can be relied upon to strengthen the foundation of faith, and once this has happened, the learner can proceed to explore the world without fear of losing their spiritual bearings. In fact, this is in line with the Hadith of the Prophet that one should know Allah in the earliest stage of learning.

Second: Knowledge in Islam consists of ‘Revealed Knowledge’ and ‘Unrevealed Knowledge’ or ‘Acquired Knowledge’. Primarily, the sources of ‘Revealed Knowledge’ in Islamic education comprised of; first, the Qur’an, and, second, the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. As addition, the third source is the *Shariah* or the path of

duty outlined by the Quran and elaborated by the Sunnah; and, finally, *ilm al-ladunniy and hikmah* that is spiritual knowledge and wisdom which can be obtained through the long continued practices of piety and righteousness.

The Unrevealed Knowledge or also known as acquired knowledge comprises of knowledge of sciences which might be obtained through experience, experiments, observation and research. The combination of the above mentioned knowledge has formulated the principles of Islamic education that generated the glorious era of Islamic Civilization. It was proven that their success was mainly due to the concern of taking the **Qur’an and the Sunnah** as the most comprehensive sources of knowledge and education.

Third: The Prophet S.A.W. clearly stated that education is a **religious obligatory** as inferred in the Surah Al-Alaq. The first surah, Read!. Followed by second surah that we must read in the name of the Creator. Read might means learn, study, investigate, explore, interpret and act. The Prophet said, “Who so goes forth in search of knowledge, engages themselves in the Cause of Allah until they return homes” (Hadith narrated by Anas). Another Hadith, “When a man dies, his works also stop except three: acts of charity, which are continued, knowledge by which (all) profit and righteous issue which prays for him.” (narrated by Abu Hurairah in Muslim, Abu Daud, Tarmidzi and Nasaei). This in line with the aim of the creation of man and Jinns is to serve Allah. Maududi (1989:107) stresses that lack of responsibility in performing religious obligations would encourage negligence in all other official responsibilities. The reason is that Islam does not want the followers to be ignorant, pessimistic and victimised by the enemy, especially the disbelievers.

This is clear that Islamic education, instruction and teaching are **acts of worship** to Allah if performed within the rules of Islam and intended to gain Allah’s Love. Prof. Mohd Kamal (1988:127) said that the ultimate aim of education is as preparation for the safety in the world and hereafter.

Fourth: The Prophet highlighted that education in Islam is a **life-time** process, from the cradle to the grave. The Rector of International Islamic University Malaysia, Prof. Mohd. Kamal (1989) admitted that this is a process of preparing an individual to actualize his role as vicegerent (Khalifah) of Allah on earth and thereby to contribute fully to the reconstruction and development of his society in order to achieve well-being in this world and well-being in the hereafter (*hasanah fi’-d-dunya and hasanah fi’l-akhirah*). (Al-Baqarah:201; Al-A’raf:156; An-Nahl:122).

It is clear that a Muslim should not eliminate their effort to study at certain level of education. It is very unfortunate if a Muslim student stop studying, especially in the formal education only until Form Three or Form Five. These are very low achievement with very low earning. They should at least achieve the average or moderate level of education that is the Bachelor Degree or equivalent qualification. There should not limit the involvement in the informal education such as attending usrah, halaqah, kulliyah at the mosque and educational discussion.

Fifth: One of the most important elements of human body is the mind. The mind power and rationale is the basis of human nature which animals don't possessed. A person who doesn't utilized wisely the mind might be worst than reared animals (Al-An'am). It is the mind which initiated reason. Consequently, reason is a **significant source for knowledge** concerning the universe as well as humans themselves. Socio-psychologist categorized the mind power of reasoning into several levels. The lowest to the upmost is imitation, understand, application, analysis and synthesis.

It is proved that with the use of mind for reasoning, people managed to change and improved their lifestyle, basic infrastructure, living, communication and development. Even the huge animal such as elephant, wild animal like tiger and fierce lion were defeated and tamed by the mind of human. In fact, this is one of the *hikmah* that Allah selected human being as the Khalifatul-Ardh. Possibly, there would be no development if the world administered by the Malaikat since they don't need all this and busy with their formal ibadah. The world would be destroyed and tarnished if were given to the animals which cannot develop. Human being is the appropriate choice since they have the instinct of destroying and fitrah of developing. There is no wonder that people such as Neil Armstrong could landed on the moon as it is one of the elements of the universe created by The Mighty Allah.

Sixth: All members of the Islamic society should have equal educational opportunities, especially between gender, races and socio-economic status.

The Prophet S.A.W. clearly stated that education is a religious obligatory of every individual Muslim, male and female. This means that Islam provides equal opportunity and responsibility in education for all the followers regardless of gender because it is an *ibadah*. Maududi stated that the importance of women's education needs to be emphasized. It is as important as men's education. He believes that a community cannot progress unless it provides the best education to women, who constitutes a vital segment of communal life. In certain situation, military training is a requirement to women. However, in normal condition, the education principles and system for women's education has to be designed in accordance with the teachings of Islam. The primary responsibility of a woman is to look after her home and family, as well as to bring up worthy children. Hence, the educational programs for women should therefore equip them to discharge these responsibilities efficiently such as a study of child development and appropriate Islamic parenting education.

There should be equal opportunity of education in all level to the members of a community or among races in a state or country. Discrimination might create prejudice, pessimism and friction. However, there should be fair distribution of opportunity, means that assistant still need to be given to the unfortunate or 'historically discriminated' so that they are at the same level of achievement. It is unfair to organize a running competition between the fifteen-year healthy boy with the five-year old healthy kid. In this case, the use of strict meritocracy policy is not fair and might resulted in an unhealthy circumstances. This mean that the implementation of the principle of education should be more liberal and flexible. This may resulted in a more harmony situation. In

fact, the right of Muslim and non-Muslim are very clearly stated in the Qur'an and Hadith. As vicegerent of the earth, we should manage the responsibilities wisely, cheerfully and productively.

Seventh: Islamic education has a holistic Islamic foundation and perspective. All Muslim philosophers of education believed that the key of all knowledge is the Sacred and Divine. In Surah Al-Alaq shows that knowledge has to be acquired in the name of Allah and for the sake of Him. Human being has limitation because not all of Allah's attributes can be absorbed by human being. In fact, lost of the sense of sacred led to the division in human's life. This is one of the factors that modern man is suffering from alienation unless returned to the sense of sacred.

The holistic Islamic education aspect is the seeking of fundamental knowledge that is obligatory to be acquired and practiced by individual Muslim, known as Fardhu Ain. Knowledge that is grouped in this classification are the Six Pillars of Rukun Iman and Five Pillars of Rukun Islam. The Rukun Iman consists of believe in Allah, believe in Malaikats, believe in Rasul Allah, believe in the Day of Qiamah, and, believe in Qadha and Qadar. The Rukun Islam comprises of the declaration of Shahadah, Obligatory prayer of five times a day, fasting in the month of Ramadhan, pay Zakat and perform Haj. Thus, all the knowledge concerning the both Rukuns are compulsory or *fardh* to be known and practiced by individual Muslim.

Eight: The principle of education in Islam promote the combination of knowledge of science and faith in Allah. There is very close link and, in fact, might compliment each other. This is clearly stated in the Al-Quran:

“Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alteration of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding. 191: Those who remember Allah (always, and in prayers) standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth, (saying): “Our Lord! You have not created (all) this without purpose, glory to You! (Exalted are You above all that they associate with You as partners). Give us salvation from the torment of the Fire” (Al-Imran: 190-191)

The above verses clearly highlight the intuitive link between the scientific creation of Allah and the Faith in Allah. There is no separation between Islam and science. It does not contrary or against each other at all.

The general characteristics of Islamic education, however, is that is neither purely religious, as was the case with the Israelites, nor purely secular, as was the case with the Roman, but both at the same time. Many verses are to be found in the Qur'an and in the Sunnah which indicate that education aims at the realization of happiness in this and next world, and according to a tradition of the Prophet, ‘the best among you are not those who

neglect this world for the other, or the other world for this. He is the one who works for both together Saliba and Tomah (1957:69)

Another verses of the Qur’an stated that Allah did create you (Adam) from dust, then from *Nutfah* (male and female discharge semen drops i.e. Adam’s offspring), then He made you pairs (male and female). And no female conceives or gives birth but with his Knowledge. And no aged man is granted a length or life nor is a part cut off from his life (or another man’s life), but is in a Book (*Al-Lauh Al-Mahfuz*) Surely, that is easy for Allah. (Fatir: ayat 11)

Since religious and secular learning represent two diametrically opposed concepts of life, it is difficult for students to synthesize them into unified pattern. Unable to reconcile the two divergent philosophies of life students are exposed to the dangers of religious skepticism which ultimately leads them towards heresy. As long as students are exposed to secular education, the inclusion of religious education is as an exercise in futility.

Ninth: Islamic education aims at dealing with the whole individuals personality comprised of cognitively, spiritually, psychologically, physically, and socially. This is manifested in the Philosophy of Education, Malaysia.

In fact, Prof. Kamal Hasan (Mohd. Kamal 1988:129) quoted Muhammad Qutb who stated that the principle of Islamic education does not confine itself to that narrow limit of education for citizenship nor does it strive to prepare the virtuous citizen (*al-muwatin al-salih*). Muhammad Qutb emphasized that it endeavours to realize a greater and more comprehensive goal. That is the preparation of the virtuous man (*al-insan al-salih*). For, precisely this reason, Islamic education takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic and social, not with a view or reducing it in any way, but in order to elevate, regulate and perfect it in accordance with the true ideals of man’s nature.

Prof. Mohd. Kamal (1988) mentioned that the way of Islam is the nurturing of the total human being; it is a comprehensive nurturing (scheme) that does not leave out nor forgets anything that is a part of man his body, his intellect and his spirit, his material and spiritual life and every earthly activity of his. The concept and perspectives of the Islamic principle of education engulfed the whole of man’s being (in its purview) as he is, with the true nature (*fitrah*) that Allah created him with, without neglecting anything of this *fitrah* nor imposing anything extra on his *fitrah* that was not already there in its original constitution.

Tenth: Prof. Mohd. Kamal (1988:127) said that the aim of Islamic education is to propagate students with high *akhlak* and virtue, clean spirit, decisive, firm, accountable, intelligent, honest and sincere. The student should avoid themselves from bad things or *mazmumah*, and on the other hand, they love to practice good deeds or *mahmudah*. As comparison, *akhlak* is like a fruit to a tree. It might have

In fact, many advanced countries facing discipline problems among school students. Prof. Mohd. Kamal (1988) stated that lately, the American education particularly secondary education has come in for criticism from educators and laymen alike. This criticism has stemmed from the reports of decline in quality of learning among students, increase in cases of indiscipline, assault on teachers, widespread drug abuse among students and increase in teenage pregnancy. The most popular suggestion to improve the schools, chosen by 39 per cent of the national sample (and of forty-five per cent of parents) as reported in the findings of Gallup Poll, was to emphasize moral development. However, in America and most European countries assigned the task of moral development were left to home and church.

In fact, there is a need for the school to be consciously concerned about moral education. The teacher is constantly and unavoidably moralizing the children, about rules and values and about students' behavior toward each other. Since such moralizing is unavoidable, it seems logical that it be done in terms of consciously formulated goals of moral development based on principle of Islamic education.

A fundamental characteristics of the moral educated person (MEP) lies in the area of attitude to other people that include a concern for other people, feels impelled to help them when they are in need and inclined to explore or take unfair advantage of them for his own benefit. On the label of moral principles, he would maintain that other people needs and wishes should count and be considered alongside his own. Cognitively, he is aware of their wishes and feeling; emotionally he is inclined to meet them halfway.

With regard to moral education, Prof. Hassan Langgulung (Mohd kamal 1988:128-129) suggests that the specific of education is to love akhlak and religion. The steps are to introduce the pupils the aqeedah, basic of ibadah; raise consciousness the truth teaching and avoid khurafat; iman to Allah as the Creator, the universe, malaikat, kitabullah, six pillars of Iman; develop the interest of children in akhlak, religious knowledge, and honest performing ibadah; love the Al-Quran, read, respect, understand, and practice the teaching; optimistic, self-confident, taqwa, endurance, love, decisive, defend the religion and nation; educate the instinct, motivation, curiosity; and, avoid hasd, ego, nifak. In fact, the importance of moral education is emphasized by the International Islamic University Malaysia with the motto 'Garden of knowledge and virtue'.

Eleventh: The Qur'an highlighted various area of discipline and subject specialization as presented below:

Astronomy:

It is He Who made the sun a shining thing and the moon as a light and measured out for it stages that you might know the number of years and the reckoning. Allah did not create

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this but his truth He explains the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) in detail for people who have knowledge. (Yunus: ayat 5).

Veterinary:

And verily, in the cattle, there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, from between excretions and blood, pure milk; palatable to the drinkers. (An-Nahl: ayat 66)

Agronomy:

And in the earth are neighboring tracts and gardens of vines, and green crops (fields), and date palms, growing into two or three from a single stem root, or otherwise (one stem root for every palm), watered with the same water; yet some of them. We make more excellent than others to eat. Verily, in these things are ayat (proof, evidence, signs, lessons) for the people who understand. (Ar-Rad: ayat 4)

Geography:

And the earth! We have spread it out, and set thereon mountains standing firm, and have produced therein every kind of lovely growth (plants). An insight and a Reminder for every slave who turns to Allah in repentance (i.e. the one who believes in the Oneness of Allah and performs deeds of His obedience, and always begs His pardon). (Qaf: ayat 8-9)

Soul:

And they ask you (Oh Muhammad SAW) concerning the *Ruh* (the spirit/soul); Say: “The *Ruh* (the spirit/ soul) is one of the things, the knowledge which is only in my Lord. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little.”

Psychology:

By *Nafs* (Adam or a person or a soul), and Him Who perfected him in proportion; Then he showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him. Indeed the succeeds who purifies his ownself (i.e. obeys and performs all that Allah ordered, by following the truth Faith of Islamic Monotheism, and by doing righteous good deeds). And indeed he fails who corrupts his ownself (i.e. disobeys what Allah has ordered by rejecting the true Faith of Islamic Monotheism or by following polytheism, or by doing every kind of evil wicked deeds). (Ash-Shams, ayat 7-10)

Pure science:

The richness of Islamic education-curriculum may be determined by its practical and useful consequences. (Mohd. Kamal 1988:134) These include Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

History: An individual Muslim will survive if it is able to transfer its cultural heritage from generation to generation. Malaysian will cease to be Malaysian unless they

preserves their cultural identity which would include the history of Quranic philosophy as well as the purpose and method of studying history in general, so that students are rid of prejudices and can observe historical facts objectively, and understand the attributes of man which precipitated his rise and fall. They should gain an insight into the divine principles which shape the destiny of nations, so that they are able to evaluate the achievements of different of nations following the eternal doctrine of right and wrong. If they pursue their studies along these lines they would not be influenced by historical bias and they would be able to draw independent conclusions based on original documents and sources. (Maududi 1898: 69)

4. Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education

The aims and objectives of Islamic education, basically are: to provide the teachings of Holy Quran as 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 with clear understanding that 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; to develop the sense of accountability towards Almighty creator so that man; to encourage international brotherhood irrespective of differences in races; 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 develop piety and faith among the followers; to produce man who has faith as well as knowledge in spiritual development; and, to develop such qualities of a good man which are universally accepted by the societies which have faith in religion.

5. The Aim and Features of Curriculum in Islamic Education

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.

The curriculum of Islamic education should have the following main features: it develops and integrated personality; it prepares individual for every aspect of life; it should be a continuous and never ending process of education; it should meet the spiritual as well as material needs of the individual; it inculcates faith ion Islam in the minds and hearts of the individual; it develops morality based on Islamic faith; it raises spiritual level of the individual; it develops quest for acquiring knowledge to apply in day to day life; it develops student-teacher relationship in the service of God; it emphasizes the need of proper pre-service and in-service program of teacher-education for Islamic education; it develops necessary skills for exercising reasoning power and insight into life; it is

discourage blind invitation of the ideas and practices of fore-fathers, if they erroneous, misunderstood and twisted; it creates in minds and souls the foundations of permanent happiness; it ensures constant security through belief in God; it develops in the individual the habit of acquiring knowledge throughout his life; it encourages the individual to widen his scope of different branches of knowledge; it emphasizes the value and sincerity of the individual’s work in the way of Allah and humanity; it requires that the individual should have faith in Allah; it should develop love, righteousness and compassion in the individual toward others; it should acquaint the individual with truth in his attempt to realize the unity of being and the unity of living; it should encourage the belief, morals and scholarships of the individual in the light of his sincerity and dedication to work; it should encourage understanding rather than memorization; it should adopt content and methodology of Holy Qur’an; and, it should achieve the declaration of Holy Quran that is Muslims are the best generation that was raised unto mankind.

6. Conclusion

There are many verses of the Qur’an and Sunnah of the Prophet highlighted the position of learned person. The Prophet encouraged Muslims to be unrelenting in their search for useful knowledge and considered the learned person superior to a worshiper. Those of His bondman fear Allah who have knowledge of His greatness. Verily Allah is the Mighty, the Forgiving. A learned scholar in his commentary on Holy Qur’an writes that if a man will be fearless of Allah to the extent of his ignorance of attributes of Allah.

On the other a man who knows the attributes of Allah, he will be afraid of His disobedience. In this verse knowledge does not mean Philosophy, Science, History, Mathematics, etc., but the knowledge of attributes of Allah irrespective of a man the fact whether the man is literate or illiterate. Thus a man who is not afraid of Allah, he really does not possess knowledge even if he has attained apparent knowledge. It is clear that the principles of Islamic education capable to upgrade human position to the highest creation of Allah. Teachers are the principal architects of education. On them depends the training of students along Islamic lines and the generating of an Islamic spirit in them. Allah will raise up many degrees in stature those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge. You are the best ummah to propagate *ma’aruf* and prevent *munghkar*, that would acquire the Blessing of Allah in the world and hereafter.

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