

ISLAMIC EDUCATION: AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SOCIETY

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Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to provide details on Islamic education and its levels. In this study the researcher used many terms that indicate Islam, and provided guidelines to different levels of education. This is a theoretical article. It explained history of Islamic education and its aims, sources of knowledge and role of Islamic ideology at various educational levels. This enhances understanding of important conceptual differences of Islam and other religions.

Key Words: Level of education, Islamic education, source of knowledge and Islamic ideology.

The term 'Islamic Education' could mean a number of things: it can refer to the religious education in which a person studies religious knowledge, starting with the Qur'ân and matters of worship like purification, prayer, Zakâh, fasting and Hajj. He may also learn other matters like the etiquettes of eating and drinking, Islamic dress, family relations, business transactions, criminal law, and inheritance. All of this knowledge is drawn from the Qur'ân and Sunnah and from the writings of Islamic scholars. This is called the Islamic studies. The term 'Islamic Education' can have a broader meaning, embracing knowledge in general in a framework where the teacher, the student, the school, and the syllabus all comply with Islamic values and teachings.

In this environment, the student learns whatever he needs to learn of reading mathematics and the various sciences. The syllabus will include a generous amount of coursework devoted to Islamic studies. Moreover, the syllabus would not include any texts that contradict with Islamic beliefs and teachings. For example, in studying Biology, it should not be said that nature is the Creator of life. Likewise, in talking about eating behavior, it will not be said that the left hand is preferred to the right. It should not be taught that relationships between the opposite sexes are permissible before marriage. These are merely some initial thoughts.

Islam has, from its inception, placed a high premium on education and has enjoyed a long and rich intellectual tradition. Knowledge (*'ilm*) occupies a significant position within Islam as is evidenced by more than 800 references to it in Islam's holy book, the Quraan. The importance of

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education is repeatedly emphasized in the Quraan with frequent injunctions, such as "Allah will exalt those of you who believe and those who have knowledge "Allah will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge, in high degrees."(58:11), "O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge" (20:114), and "As God has taught him, so let him write" (2:282) for the Islamic community to strive for education and learning. Islamic education is uniquely different from other types of educational theory and practice largely because of the all-encompassing influence of the Quraan. The Quraan serves as a comprehensive blueprint for both the individual and society and as the primary source of knowledge. The advent of the Quraan in the seventh century was quite revolutionary for the predominantly illiterate Arabian society. Arab society had enjoyed a rich oral tradition, but the Quraan was considered the word of God and needed to be organically interacted with by means of reading and reciting its words. Hence, reading and writing for the purpose of accessing the full blessings of the Quraan was an aspiration for most Muslims. Thus, education in Islam unequivocally derived its origins from a symbiotic relationship with religious instruction.

History of Islamic Education

Islamic education began with the Pious and the learned Muslims (*mu'allim* or *mudarris*), dedicated to making the teachings of the Quraan more accessible to the Islamic community. They taught the faithful what came to be known as the *kuttāb* (plural, *katātīb*). The *kuttāb* could be located in a variety of venues: mosques, private homes, shops, tents, or even out in the open. Historians are uncertain as to when the *katātīb* were first established, but with the widespread desire of the faithful to study the Quraan, *katātīb* could be found in virtually every part of the Islamic empire by the middle of the eighth century. The *kuttāb* served a vital social function as the only vehicle for formal public instruction for primary-age children and continued so until Western models of education were introduced in the modern period. Even at present, it has exhibited remarkable durability and continues to be an important means of religious instruction in many Islamic countries.

The curriculum of the *kuttāb* was primarily directed to young male children, beginning as early as age four, and was centered on Quranic studies and on religious obligations such as rituals, ablutions, fasting, and prayer. The focus during the early history of Islam on the education of youth reflected the belief that raising children with correct principles was a holy obligation for parents and society. As Abdul Tibawi wrote in 1972, the mind of the child was believed to be "like a white clean paper, once anything is written on it, right or wrong, it will be difficult to erase it or superimpose new writing upon it" (p. 38). The approach to teaching children was strict, and the conditions in which young students learned could be quite harsh. Corporal punishment was often used to correct laziness or imprecision. Memorization of the Quraan was central to the

curriculum of the *kuttāb*, but little or no attempt was made to analyze and discuss the meaning of the text. Once students had memorized the greater part of the Quraan, they could advance to higher stages of education, with increased complexity of instruction. Western analysts of the *kuttāb* system usually criticize two areas of its pedagogy: the limited range of subjects taught and the exclusive reliance on memorization. The contemporary *kuttāb* system still emphasizes memorization and recitation as important means of learning. The value placed on memorization during students' early religious training directly influences their approaches to learning when they enter formal education offered by the modern state. A common frustration of modern educators in the Islamic world is that while their students can memorize copious volumes of notes and textbook pages, they often lack competence in critical analysis and independent thinking.

During the golden age of the Islamic empire (usually defined as a period between the tenth and thirteenth centuries), when western Europe was intellectually backward and stagnant, Islamic scholarship flourished with an impressive openness to the rational sciences, art, and even literature. It was during this period that the Islamic world made most of its contributions to the scientific and artistic world. Ironically, Islamic scholars preserved much of the knowledge of the Greeks that had been prohibited by the Christian world. Other outstanding contributions were made in the areas of Chemistry, Botany, Physics, Mineralogy, Mathematics, and Astronomy, as many Muslim thinkers regarded scientific truths as tools for accessing religious truth.

Gradually the open and vigorous spirit of enquiry and individual judgment (*ijtihād*) that characterized the golden age gave way to a more insular, unquestioning acceptance (*taqlīd*) of the traditional corpus of authoritative knowledge. By the thirteenth century, according to Aziz Talbani, the '*ulama*' (religious scholars) had become "self-appointed interpreters and guardians of religious knowledge... learning was confined to the transmission of traditions and dogma, and [was] hostile to research and scientific inquiry" (p. 70). The mentality of *taqlīd* reigned supreme in all matters, and religious scholars condemned all other forms of inquiry and research. Exemplifying the *taqlīd* mentality, Burhān al-Din al-Zarnūji wrote during the thirteenth century, "Stick to ancient things while avoiding new things" (p.28) and "Beware of becoming engrossed in those disputes which come about after one has cut loose from the ancient authorities" (p.58). Much of what was written after the thirteenth century lacked originality, and it consisted mostly of commentaries on existing canonical works without adding any substantive new ideas. The lethal combination of *taqlīd* and foreign invasion beginning in the thirteenth century served to dim Islam's pre-eminence in both the artistic and scientific worlds.

Despite its glorious legacy of earlier periods, the Islamic world seemed unable to respond either culturally or educationally to the onslaught of Western advancement by the eighteenth century. One of the most damaging aspects of European colonialism was the deterioration of indigenous cultural norms through secularism. With its veneration of human reason over divine revelation and its insistence on separation of religion and state, secularism is anathema to Islam, in which all aspects of life, spiritual or temporal, are interrelated as a harmonious whole. At the same time, Western institutions of education, with their pronounced secular/religious dichotomy, were infused into Islamic countries in order to produce functionaries to feed the bureaucratic and administrative needs of the state. The early modernizers did not fully realize the extent to which secularized education fundamentally conflicted with Islamic thought and traditional lifestyle. Religious education was to remain a separate and personal responsibility, having no place in public education. If Muslim students desired religious training, they could supplement their existing education with moral instruction in traditional religious schools—the *kuttāb*. As a consequence, the two differing education systems evolved independently with little or no official interface.

Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education

The Arabic language has three terms for education, representing the various dimensions of the educational process as perceived by Islam. The most widely used word for education in a formal sense is *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.

Education in the context of Islam is regarded as a process that involves the complete person, including the rational, spiritual, and social dimensions. As noted by Syed Muhammad al-Naquib al-Attas in 1979, the comprehensive and integrated approach to education in Islam is directed toward the "balanced growth of the total personality...through training Man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses...such that faith is infused into the whole of his personality" (p. 158). In Islamic educational theory, knowledge is gained in order to actualize and perfect all dimensions of the human being. From an Islamic perspective the highest and most useful model of perfection is the prophet Muhammad, and the goal of Islamic education is that people be able to live as he lived. Syed Hussain Nasr wrote in 1984 that while education does prepare humankind for happiness in this life, "its ultimate

goal is the abode of permanence and all education points to the permanent world of eternity" (p. 7). To ascertain truth by reason alone is restrictive, according to Islam, because spiritual and temporal reality is two sides of the same sphere. Many Muslim educationists argue that favoring reason at the expense of spirituality interferes with balanced growth. Exclusive training of the intellect, for example, is inadequate in developing and refining elements of love, kindness, compassion, and selflessness, which have an altogether spiritual ambiance and can be engaged only by processes of spiritual training.

Education in Islam is two fold: acquiring intellectual knowledge (through the application of reason and logic) and developing spiritual knowledge (derived from divine revelation and spiritual experience). According to the worldview of Islam, provision in education must be made equally for both. Acquiring knowledge in Islam is not intended as an end but as a means to stimulate a more elevated moral and spiritual consciousness, leading to faith and righteous action.

Islamic Education Importance and Its Sources

Islamic education is important to act like a complete Muslim. There are many sources which could be used for getting education in Islam. Muslims must have proper information about Islam in order to act on its teachings in an effective manner. There are many sources these days which could be used in order to get education about Islam. This education will clear many points about Islam and the users would be able to compare Islam with many other religions.

There are many religions which are followed by different people in different parts of the world. Islamic education is important for spreading Islam in an effective manner. After getting education in Islam it could be compared with other religions for making a good decision. There are many types of facilities in Islam which are helpful for the followers. Those who are following Islam are able to get benefits in every aspect of life. The main focus of Islam is that the owner of everything is Allah and there is no one in the world equal to Him.

All the people are made by Allah and the system of the world is managed by Him. Muhammad peace be upon him is last messenger of Allah and there would be no more messengers till the destruction of the world. Through Islamic education, anyone could lead a successful life. Islam teaches the followers to say prayers five times a day in fixed times. There are options to say prayers which are not said in proper time. In fact, Muslims have time to say prayers till their death as there is no relief from saying prayers.

Prayers have many types of benefits for Muslims. This is a form of exercise which is good for the health of the body. Specific words are said at specific moments in prayers in order to complete them. Through these words, the Muslims can communicate with Allah in an effective manner. It means prayers have benefits for Muslims in this world and also in the world hereafter. Islamic education could be obtained from many sources for free. There are many websites which are showing free information about Islam but it is important to make sure that the information is correct.

Islam is a perfect religion which is offering many types of benefits for the followers. Due to many types of benefits of Islam, many people are willing to follow it for their life. Zakat is an important aspect in Islam. Through Zakat, poor people in the Muslim countries are given financial assistance. Those people who have financial resources which are in excess of their regular needs are required to pay a set amount as Zakat on a regular basis. This Zakat amount is to be submitted to the government departments for distribution to the needy people.

Islamic education is good for spreading awareness about Zakat system for helping the needy. Deductions of Zakat are made from earnings and payments of many people by government departments. Those people who have financial resources in excess of their needs must pay Zakat which is set as per teachings of Islam.

This analysis of concept of Islamic education will itself reveal what is lacking in other systems and where they stand in comparison with this consummate and most comprehensive system of education. This should be so as it is to provide for the most harmonious development of body, mind and soul. An individual is not only able to achieve what is best in the present life but also what is most beneficial for his soul when it leaves the body. The concept of learning must provide security not only here but also in the hereafter. In self-expression, it will not merely lay emphasis on knowledge for the soul it will not rest content merely with perception but will also call for intuition—a higher form of intellect. It is more concerned with attitude and understanding than with mere teaching. It exalts people not only in motives but also judges them by their actions. The modern science of education has seen some glimpses of the truth. We must adopt it as our own but we must also include in it that which is missing in the modern concept of education.

Self-Development and Discipline

The Islamic way of life is not merely concerned with the present but also constantly keeps in view the future and everlasting existence for the soul in the life to come. It is as sure of the existence of the world hereafter as it is certain of the world in which we are presenting life. This long- range

view of life necessarily implies through analysis of what is good for the individual at all stages of his development. Islam does not merely provide complete guidance but also challenges the intellect, individual and collective to refute these principles if it can. After clearly given this guidance, both in theory and practice, it makes it obligatory to achieve what is useful at every stage of man's life. He is bound to learn. He is called upon to struggle in order to mould his environment to suit the conditions of the development of his self, instead of molding himself to suit the environmental conditions. It is the purpose of education to bring the realities of life in harmony with the ideal of every stage of development. It must not only provide for the necessary knowledge but also "know how," to impart it and when to impart it. It takes into account all healthy patterns of development and encourages the development of all the potentialities that contribute to his self-expression in the right direction. It must be clearly laid down that we have not only to understand the meaning of self-expression and discipline as practised in the traditional schools in Muslims countries, but we have to apply also the results of the scientific researches in education and relative fields to achieve the best results.

The Islamic system does not merely accept a longer view of life, but it also has a broader and higher view of life. While making full allowances for the proper development of body, mind and soul, it gives a purpose to life that illuminates its whole being- as the central concept, the mainspring, and the main purpose of education. It is the Islamic concept of one God. This must be the goal and ideal of the individual and the society. The concept of Allah, as the central purpose, requires the individual to develop in him the godly qualities, to manifest them in his actions and, during his stay in the world not to get lost in temporal affairs. As a social order the concept of "Tauheed" means, in the words of Iqbal: equality, solidarity and freedom. Thus the concept of Allah provides a spiritual basis for educating the whole life of the individual and the society, an insight which is not something foreign to the world of matter, but it permeates through and through. This concept of Allah should be represented so beautifully and attractively to the child, so reasonably to the young and so alluringly and intelligently to the adults that they all realize it as their goal and work for it willingly and lovingly. Education is to provide guidance to the individual in terms of what he is, at a given time and then equip him to march forward with confidence.

Knowledge of Security

Besides accepting the elementary principles of learning for a sense of security and the usefulness of learning at various stages of life, Islam gives a higher meaning to knowledge and enjoins upon all Muslims to pray for it, e.g., 'O God, grant me more knowledge'

Let us see more closely this concept of knowledge which education based on Islam is to provide. Islam wants man to be careful to the pitfalls in this life that may harm his future. For this purpose, God has revealed to man certain principles in actual life. This knowledge was given to mankind at various stages of its development through revelations; and since only partial knowledge was given to mankind, it was not to reason but to accept. This is why, we find the religion in many systems of education becomes only a source of inspiration and is not normally expected to deal with various problems connected with our lives.

All the same, Islam ushered in the age of inductive logic and rational thinking. It is the only religion which challenges the intellect and asks man to think and ponder over the message and signs of God. It explicitly maintains that man will not find any contradiction in His Signs, i.e., a contradiction in the knowledge achieved by science and the knowledge given to him by revelation. And if certain knowledge is not confirmed by certain practical experience, it must be worked out in some way better suited to the realization of the type to realize the truth, and he would never have been able to reach where he is, and still he was unable to know where he stood; God in His extreme Mercy completed His revelation and gave to mankind all the knowledge that was essential for humanity in the form of His Last Book—Holy Qur'an. This embodiment of knowledge, and the last word in the constitutional code of human life was revealed in the personality of the last Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W). Man was asked to accept the truth and apply its results for the benefit of humanity. With the Qur'an and the last Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W) Knowledge through Revelation was completed. But Knowledge through Realization and application is a continuous process. Scientists, physicians, anthropologists and numerous other thinkers are realizing every day in their experience glimpses of the truth that are contained in that ocean of knowledge, the Qur'an. The more we realize this fact and work on these lines, the more useful we become to ourselves and to the society.

Scientific Approach

In fact, with the birth of Islam, the true urge for scientific knowledge arose. Man was not merely to realize the truth of all that is hidden from his eyes but to observe, study and analyse all the materials of knowledge that lay scattered around him. He was to learn from cradle to grave not merely for the betterment of this life, but for the good of the everlasting life that comes after death. As a means of achieving this knowledge by scientific experiences in the materialistic and spiritual realms, Islam does not merely recommend sense perception but also the realization of certain abstract truths in the Qalb (heart), i.e., an intuitive realization of many realities and truths that are revealed to one who constantly looks to gods for guidance. Instances are not wanting in this

connection. It has been the main source of knowledge of all the Prophet (A.S.); and many of their humble servants have had glimpses of that knowledge, the Truth, the Reality. How very incorrect it would be to say that knowledge (AL-ILM) in Islam means only the reading of the Qur'an and the saying of prayers and that it has nothing to do with scientific knowledge of the modern age. This notion about Islam is based on sheer and utter ignorance. Knowledge in Islam does not mean merely the ultimate source of all knowledge but also the knowledge of the self, of all that is around us. It means all learning and knowledge that is essential for every stage of development towards a healthy and happy living.

The concept of knowledge in Islam is to provide for all the securities in this life and also in the life to come. There may be a sense of security for the present life attached to the concept of learning in a Western way of thinking but the knowledge that provides for security here and also in the Hereafter is completely missing in the Western concept of education. It is only the education based on Islamic principles that provides for a complete sense of security at all stages of this long vision of life and, therefore, better equips an individual for dealing with problems of his daily life with wisdom, with firmness and with absolute morality.

Education in Humanities and Social Order

Talking of the social order, the Islamic concept of education does not merely strive for social consciousness or democracy as visualized by the present world, but also attempts to awaken in the youth a love for all that is best in the democratic principles while warning him of its defects. It sanctions many principles of democracy-the right of the individual, irrespective of his creed, caste or colour to free expression of opinion, free support, social justice free from interference and any threat from the mob or from any particular party. But it lays greater emphasis on the association of the mind with the principles of decency and justice and wants to see them playing a free part in the administration and in the lives of the individuals. And it should be exactly so, if the higher ideals of life are to be respected. Islamic democracy does not mean merely counting of votes. It is governed by an unalterable and definite code of morality. Laws can be made and modified according to the needs of the day, but the Islamic code can on no account be changed, amended or modified. For instance, if a law says that the Head of a State should be above all always, it cannot be valid even if passed by a majority of votes, for it cuts at the very roots of the principles of equality and justice as enunciated by Islam. Similarly, legislation is not allowed to interfere with the principles of our life on which the development of the fine elements of our soul is based. But it is likely to take place in any form of democracy where mere rising of the hands matters. Thus the institution of "shura" protects the Islamic democracy from degenerating into ordinary types of democracies and from falling a prey to many human

weaknesses. Democracy in education means that the latent powers of goodness bestowed to all individuals by Allah, the creator, should be so developed on the foundation of righteousness that the individual may himself seek satisfaction in the service of humanity at large and thus the ultimate faith and inherent goodness in his nature may not be suppressed.

The Only Cure

By observing these principles alone can we produce a nation capable of fulfilling the great promise for which Pakistan was achieved? We can then produce youth firm in faith, disciplined in action, united in love, and partaking of all the stock of knowledge which humanity has stored up striving earnestly for peace and security, for one and for all, here and in the hereafter. Our Lord' Give us Good in this world and good in the hereafter and defend us (protect us) from the torment of the fire. (AL-QU'RAN: 2:201)

The Significance and Role of Islamic Ideology at Various Educational Levels

The problem confronting educationist in Pakistan is not merely to proclaim Islam as the Central Purpose of Education, but to state clearly that implication of a system of education which is based on Islamic ideology and to show how it can be permeated in our educational system. It will mean, explaining briefly, what is meant by Islam and what is the basis of education which Islam presents.

What is Islam?

Islam is not to be confused with the word 'religion' in its narrow sense which means a set of dogmas, mythological beliefs, superstitions and certain ceremonial rituals, which divide life into secular and non-secular compartments. Islam came to do away with such discrimination. It came to present the whole of reality to man and to give him guidance in every walk of life. In Islam, every act becomes an Ibadat (prayer) if it is performed to fulfill the Will of God on earth (devotion to Allah) and to serve humanity accordingly. It is the mental background of the agent and the effect of the act that determine its value. This wider concept of religion was given to mankind centuries ago; it is growingly being realized by educationists and scientists today. It is Huxley, who in one of his lectures, namely, "The Process of Evolution," says "The word religion is often used restrictively to mean belief in God; but I am not going to use it in this sense. I certainly do not want to see man erected into a position of God as happened to many individual human beings in the past and is happening still today. I am using it in a broader sense to denote and overall relation between man and his destiny and one involving his deepest feelings including his sense of what is scared. "This approach shows only a glimpse of a new field of intellectual activity. Islam permits it in its completeness, when it asks us to bring all

the realities of this world in harmony with the ideal. Islam awakens in man the consciousness of oneness and gives a fuller concept of life. Islam is not only a belief. It is the cultivation of an eternal and fundamental relationship between the individual and the creator through action which postulates striving, labouring and also wailing. It does not ask man to work only for his immediate needs, but also for the ultimate good. It lays down certain fundamental values: the values that were conveyed by word and deed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) in whom Almighty Allah completed the revealed knowledge that was to be given to man. "This day I have perfected your religion to you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion, AL ISLAM." (Al-Maida, V:4)

Spirit of Inquiry

Thus while closing for good the source of knowledge through revelation, Islam opened to mankind another source of knowledge i.e., Knowledge through discovery and realization. Islam does not merely ask people to accept the revealed truth but also urges them to think and ponder over the message and the Sign of God. It explicitly mentions that they will not find any contradiction in His Signs i.e., contradiction in the knowledge achieved by science and the knowledge given to them by the revelation. It urges them to continue searching into every aspect of reality. The spirit of Islam is, therefore, the spirit of scientific research coupled with persistent urge for discovery. In the words of famous European orientalist "The spirit of Islam is so broad that it is practically boundless. With the exception of atheistic ideas alone, it has assimilated all the attainable ideas of surroundings of people and gives them its own peculiar direction of development." Islam, thus, is a growing and progressive concept of life both for the individual and for the society.

Islam as a System of Education

Islam as a system of education starts with a firm faith in One God Who is Omnipotent and man is His Vicegerent and visualizes the destiny of the whole mankind. It aims at developing an integrated personality in a harmonious and balanced way. It is concerned, therefore, with the development of body and mind as well as with the soul- the spark of divine light that gives dynamism to life and dynamism to play his part to achieve his destiny. It does away with dualism of the real and the ideal and wants that the ideal must be achieved through the reality of this life. In fact it emphasizes that man can achieve his destiny and he has to work hard to achieve this ideal. While it gives full freedom to the individual, it does make him conscious of the great obligation he has to society and to humanity at large. It, therefore, visualizes man in relation to his contribution to society.

As a system of education, Islam is not namely content with the development of the creative faculties of man during definite period of his life. It urges him to strive for a constant development of these faculties of every stage of his growth according to the demand of each stage of his life. On this constant endeavour, it would base the growth of one's individuality. Individuality, according to Islam, "is not a 'datum' but an achievement, the fruit of constant, strenuous effort and struggle both against the force of environment and against the disruptive tendencies within the man himself."*

Development of mind is an integral part of the Islamic way of life. The word 'IQRA' (read) sets this ideal; and the prayer, "God grant us more knowledge" is the motto of the Muslims. It was made obligatory for a man to develop his power of reasoning and concentration, habit of industry and innate sense of beauty in his work and above all, to seek knowledge of his own self, the knowledge of the universe and the knowledge of the Creator. How very unfortunate it would be to narrow down this concept of knowledge and strip it of all else scientific, technical, historical, and philosophical aspects. No doubt, Islam lays emphasis on the knowledge of the self and the knowledge of the 'Ultimate' which illumines the self, but it also insists on the knowledge of all that surrounds the self. It insists on man's harnessing all the natural resources and forces, which is possible only through a systematic study of various sciences and constant researches. Development of mind, therefore, includes the 'wider aspect of the knowledge of Islam. Over and above the development of mind and body, Islam insists on the development of spiritual and moral values. Man, if he has to fulfill his destiny and to prove his superiority over all the creatures, will have to develop in him those godly attributes that distinguish him from other creatures. It asks man to pray to God regularly and keep constantly the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W) as his ideal so that he may develop good manners; healthy outlook, sociable nature and the habits that may keep him in touch with the divine light in all its aspect. Industry and hardship, patience and perseverance, courage and tolerance, justice and fair play, truth and honesty, chosen the right path even when danger besets it and taking delight in the service of humanity, are some of the attributes that are to be developed. Let us briefly see how this ideology is to permeate our educational system at various stages.

Pre-School Age

Even if at the pre-school age, the child learns that "his freedom is limited by the right of others to an equal freedom. Happy is the child who learns these things under wise and understanding guidance." Education at this stage consists in creating such an environment for the child as is suitable for his proper development. It is in the lap of his mother that the emotions and feelings are proper in a certain direction. He learns it though play, which is the right use of the time in childhood.

“More and more widely it is being understood that the scientific study of the needs of the child must supplement the pointing of natural affection and the attraction of babyhood and aesthetic charm.”* Education at this stage should mostly concern itself with the development of this ‘aesthetic charm’ in a child. Islam does not merely agree with it but insists that this food of life and affection must be provided to the child by his parents. It goes further and urges that along with the provision for the development of body, an environment should also be created so that there may develop unconsciously a longing for certain habits, which are sure to play a very important role in his later life. It also, at this stage, wants man to give the child the concept of Allah as the Creator to such an extent as can be understood. It will indeed be a vague concept to begin with but it will awaken in him a desire to know the universe and to know more about God, His creation and the universe as he would advance in age. There is a growing realization in the modern educationists of the need of giving the child the concept of God at an early age. In “An Essay towards a Philosophy of Education,” Charlotte M. Mason writes: Of the three sorts of knowledge proper to a child- the knowledge of God, of man, of the universe- the knowledge of God ranks first in importance, is indispensable and most happy-making. Mothers are on the whole more successful in communicating this knowledge than teachers who know the children less well and have a narrower, poorer standard of measurement for their minds. Parents do not talk down to children, but we might gather from educational publications that the art of education regard of young children is to bring conceptions down to their ‘little’ minds. If we give up this foolish prejudice in favour of the grown up we shall be astonished at the range and depth of children’s minds; and shall perceive that their relation to God is one of these ‘first born affinities’ wish it is our part to help them to make good. A mother knows how to speak a child of God as she would of an absent father with all the evidences of his care and love about her and his children. The teacher of a class has not the same tender opportunities but if he takes pains to give a just measure of children’s minds it is surprising how much may be done.

Our elementary schools will do well to see that their teaching and activities are based on the proper understanding of the child, his needs and his cultural heritage. It will be only “then that the children can learn to forge for themselves an individuality which is both original and persistent. Any form of education which ignores this fundamental truth is freedom to superficiality- perhaps utter futility- because it will fail to gain a foothold in the depth of people’s psychology.”

Primary Stage

The main aim of primary education is to “aid children while they are children, to be healthy and, so far as possible, happy children- vigorous in body., and lively in mind- in order that later, as with

widening of experience, they grow towards maturity, the knowledge which life demands, may more easily be mastered and the necessary accomplishment more readily acquired.”

The object of primary education is, therefore, to equip the child with all kinds of skills that enable him to develop his personality in this direction, keeping in view restless and the active trends and emotional unrest of the age. The teaching of basic skills in one way or the other had been considered as the means of achieving this aim. Islam would agree with the objective of giving competence in skills us would ask the educationists to bring in their kin those skills also that are to play a very important role in the development of the complete personality and particularly in the development of soul. It will emphasize addition of the “R” of Righteousness to the three “R” so closely associated with the primary education. The introduction of this “R” through all media of education, including the teacher himself will go a long way to bring home to the child meaning and significance of Islam a working principle of life. Besides, they should also be given instructions regarding performing ablution (wazoo), offering the five time-a-day prayers, reading portion from the Holy Qur’an and such essentials that are related to the formation of good habits: e.g., neatness, cleanliness, honesty, purity, truth, sense of honour etc. In the primary schools, children reach a stage where they can be told in a more definite way.

The emphasis should still remain more on the physical development and the development of healthy attitude and pleasant manners. Environment here has to play a very important role, and much that will be learnt, will be learnt through the teacher. The emphasis on the teacher in a system of education which has this higher view of life has to become all the more prominent. It is the teacher who nurtures the personality of the child and by skilful handling and by precept and also by example brings out the best that is in the child’s personality. Another important role perhaps in this connection will be played by those who choose the syllabus, which give training in skills primarily, and provides matter for the child to develop as an individual creating in him an awareness of things around him.

Secondary Stage

Thus aims and objects of Secondary Education have been well formulated by the Commission of the Reorganization of Secondary Education appointed by the National Education Association (U.S.A.) generally known as the Seven Cardinal Principles (49: 10-11).

- 1-Health
- 2-Command of fundamental process
- 3-Worthy home-membership
- 4-Vocation

5-Citizenship

6-Worthy Use of Leisure

7-Ethical Character

This is a stage which prepares students either to enter into life and accept their responsibilities or take up a professional training or an academic career. It is a stage which does not merely develop the innate qualities of the boys and girls but also prepares them for shouldering the inevitable responsibilities of the future. It is here that the importance of building up of character is most emphasized and education as preparatory to life is stressed. Every opportunity at this important stage should be provided for developing body, mind and soul. An Islamic way of life would insist on a sensible use of all the technical skills worked out by the educationists for developing the latent qualities of head, heart and hand. It will also endorse the emphasis on the moral based on any 'ism.' Islam presents its own code of morality and behaviour and would like those who profess this religion to accept the code and translate it in their lives. It may be equally essential that in our secondary schools, all that may be termed as skills pertaining to Islam, must be completed in the form of Islamic studies which should include teaching of the Holy Qur'an. Hadith, (life of Prophet Muhammad) (صلى الله عليه وسلم). It should also aim that interpreting the wider and more comprehensive meaning of Islam in all aspects of a student's life.

A student of the school must realize that the game that he is playing, the food that he is eating which is strengthening his body and developing certain traits in him and the social academic, scientific and technical subjects that he is studying are all integral parts of the knowledge which has been made obligatory on all Muslims as long as the knowledge gained is not missed. He must realize that the way he is limiting his freedom in order to respect the freedom of others, the way he is dealing with his teachers, is also integral part of his responsibilities to God and those around him which in essence would make him conscious of his duties to himself, to his family, to his nation and to humanity.

In order to produce man of character, integrity and honesty, it is essential that teacher as a class should considered themselves as teachers of morality and ethics. Their character, more than their words, will go a long way in imparting those ideals which we all like to preserve and provide.

It must also be brought home to Muslim boys and girls that in order to bring about a fruitful harmony in the various faculties of the body emotion and soul it is imperative that they should have before them the life of our Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) as a guiding star. This is only possible when they have a deep love with him. The various aspects of his character which can be understood by the students at various stages should be known and demonstrated, e.g., cleanliness, love for

knowledge, sociability, hospitality, determination, perseverance, firmness in the hour of trial and humbleness, humanism, humanity while he is in power, etc. Its desirable that on suitable occasion meeting should be organised in schools to highlight some of the aspects of his noble characters and teachings, i.e., discipline, organisations, group consciousness, love and justice should be reflected in administration and teaching at the school. How far our boys and girls profit by the knowledge and experience of the secondary schools will be reflected in the achievements both in the schools and also in later life when tested by experience.

University Stage

While our schools will be concerned with producing cultured citizens and equipping them with characters based on Islamic values, the great tasks of re-orientation of Islamic thought and the rediscovery of the Islamic principles for the onward march, will have to be taken in the right earnest by our universities whose main concern is the widening of the frontiers of knowledge. "The task before the Muslim of today is, therefore, immense. He has to rethink over the whole system of Islam without completely breaking from the past. Perhaps the first Muslim who felt the urge of this new spirit in him was Hazrat Shah Waliullah of Delhi."* Where as the man who was fully aware of the importance of this task and who continued it in right earnest was Dr. Muhammad Iqbal. This, therefore, has got to be pursued energetically with a spirit of earnestness, enquiry and creative research. It is an undeniable fact that Islam provides for a complete code of conduct for Hussain, "the claim must rest on our ability to distinguish between beliefs, traditions, and institutions which are of abiding values from the age those that serve only temporal and must change to meet the changing condition."

It is the duties of our universities to give a serious thought to such problems and not to leave them to such ill equipped institution as are not capable of conducting very worthwhile research or offering and intelligent re-interpretation. It should be the task of the universities to conduct constant researches on the interpretation of the basic principles of Islam in the light of the demands and needs of the society and find ways and means of implementing them at various stages of our national life. Islamic principle such as absolute morality, social justice, freedom of conscience, love of truth and justice at all costs and under all circumstances, government by consent and by speculation, rights of individual and the society, helping the needy and the poor, to count only a few, are the universal principles of abiding value. What is required is to apply them intelligently and adequately to meet our present and future needs. The Muslims continued to do this for a few centuries in the beginning as a result they became the forerunners in all fields of human

activity. Unfortunately we have been inclined to rest on our past glory for the last few centuries and as result have fallen into a very discreditable state of existence. Our progress can again continue, if we reinterpret Islamic principles and learn to apply them to the changed circumstances. And this should be one of the main functions of our universities along with researches in new and unexplored spheres.

Conclusion

Today we are not suffering so much from the ignorance of the illiterate masses as from the ignorance of the intellectuals who lack faith and a sense of proper values. Academic or technical education alone can never cure these ills. It is the spirit of selfless service and social consciousness which give a person satisfaction; that a good work is done for a good cause. It should conclude by asking that, if by the application of scientific principles of regenerated education even a godless society can progress and become so powerful as to be a danger to the whole world, how very useful will this scientific technique be if used to develop character and kindle that spark of God's light that is inherent in man's nature, and what tremendous influence will it not produce for the regeneration of a healthy society!

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