# Islamic Philosophy of Education

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## Abstract

*In this article, I intend to present and analysis the concept of Islamic education of philosophy. Islamic perspective for human being and life constitute in harmony and conciliation between sense, mind and religious faith as fundamental epistemological origins, while thinking and considering are instruments to research in these origins. So, Islamic education encourages critical thinking as a research method for development of knowledge and science, but science in itself has a functional role to make human life better, this science constitutes on ethical dimension. Therefore, thinking is considered a duty in the Islamic view, because thinking is a tool for progress life that conditioned in achieving values in the realty.*

## *Introduction*

The philosophy of Islamic education is looking at the principles and concepts underlying education in Islam, it is analyzing and criticizing, deconstructing and disintegrating of the existing educational infrastructure and strives to produce new concepts continuously or displays what should be the concepts. In this sense it is philosophy that beyond what is existing constantly toward absolute values, and is working in the space of Islamic knowledge and who is humane and moral essence. The Islamic Education is seeking to achieve the distinct role of the human being which is reform and construction of human life. This Islamic concept of life based on the fundamental concepts as individual, society and the world, and education works to find a balanced relationship and equitable between the parties to this equation which are based on a relationship characterized by a mutual and integration, so one party cannot survive without the other parties.

This relationship is based on ethical authority, who is the religion or the Holy Quran which represents the source of Islamic education that derive their universal values from it, so the task of education to link every human activity or behavior with ideal  moral value. Therefore, Islamic education is interested in all activities of  the individual at the physical, mental, psychological, spiritual, and try to find a balance between these forces that comprise the human being. For example education on independent thinking and creativity takes a great interest in Islamic culture; we find that the Koran, as well as many Muslim scholars, Ibn al-Haytham and al Ghazali stress the importance of critical thinking and independent.

On the other hand, we find some scholars claim that the Islamic education did not encourage independent thinking, for example, some modern researchers deduce from Muslim Scholars objections, that they against independent thought. For example, Halstead argues that the Islamic philosophy and education is not promoting critical thinking such as He writes:"Independence of thought and personal autonomy do not enter into the Muslim thinking about education, which is more concerned with the progressive initiation of pupils into the received truths of the faith. (J.M Halstead. 519, 2004).

In this article, I endeavors to explain and analysis the role of philosophy of Education in the Islamic Culture.   I suppose that Islamic philosophy and education encourage critical thinking and personal independence, by relying on the Islamic history of philosophy and science which mentions the importance criticism of the Islamic scholars to the scientific and philosophical theories, and their creative contributions in scientific methodology and sciences in general.

**Education and Philosophy in Islam**

The Quran considers the main Reference in the epistemological and ontological levels in Islam. The Quranic Discourse consists from two types. The first treats with faith issues in detail, because the natural of these issues is constant and not changeable.

But the other type deals with life issues as, social, politics, economy, education and others, these issues is treated in general. Because its changeable nature, as well as to be valid and useful to the changes of the human life.

Unlike the previous explanation, Halstead argues that the social and moral dimension of education in Islam is therefore eventually a matter of coming to understand and learning to fellow the divine law, which contains not only universal moral principles, but also detailed instruction relating to every aspect of human life. The *shari'a* integrates political, social and economic life as well as individual life into a single religious a world view. In Islam, therefore, there is no question of individuals being encouraged through education to work out for themselves their own religious faith or to subject it to detached rational investigation at a fundamental level (J.M Halstead. 524  2004).

The Quran present life issues as Values, but the Muslim human being is responsible for implementation these Values in his life. It means that implementation is not uniform and constant for every place and time. It is depends in the ability of Muslims for progress and Creativity. For example in political issue, the Quran mentions two verses that describing the type of regime in general: "who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation" (42: 38); "It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allah".( 3: 159).

The two verses present the regime issue in general as values, but process and details as well as instruments and aims are depending on Muslims ability to accomplish the values of Consultation in the reality.

So, we should not expect that life issues in Islam are constant, but changing from one intellectual Muslim to another one, because it depends on the experience and point view of the intellectual, and his ability to create the theoretical and practical Epistemology, as well as to develop instruments through the Values Light.

Therefore, the role of Muslims in this world is to apply the ideal values in reality. But these Values are infinite and absolute; these values stand in opposite to reality that limited. That means there is no constant form for Islamic Education or Philosophy. It must be in dynamic action in hope to arrive to Values which requires query and creativity.

Also, Halstead claims that "from liberal perspective, the notion of free will in Islam is thus unsophisticated one, involving simply the choice to accept or reject the complete package of beliefs, and contrasts sharply with the liberal notion of personal autonomy". (J.M Halstead. 524, 2004).

Islam connects free choice with responsibility, which means that each person is responsible for his choice. In the beginning, one's innocence is absolute: an indwelling from life's first breath inevitably moves one to begin searching. Becoming aware of this state immediately makes one a responsible and in fact a free being. (Tariq Ramadan, *18* 2004)

The Qur'anic interest in guaranteeing people's freedom is clear and frank as can be seen from its emphasis on the principle of thought and religion, as we read in His words:

"THERE SHALL BE no coercion in matters of faith. Distinct has now become the right way from [the way of] error: hence, he who rejects the powers of evil and believes in God has indeed taken hold of a support most unfailing, which shall never give way: for God is all-hearing, all-knowing". **(2: 256)**

This verse is considered a general principle in Islam, giving human beings the option to choose their religious faith according to their free will. There is no coercion to conform to a specific belief. If non-Muslims or skeptical Muslims do not accept our reasoning we are not obligated to impose our version of truth on them, using force and terror in the name of religion itself. When a person sees a benefit in a religion, such as well-being and spiritual peace, he or she will not let go of it. Change comes when people are convinced, not when they are forced. (Mohsen Kadivar,  44 2005)

The logical thinking in Islam bases on harmony and integration, there is no separation between religion and politics and science, or between mind and sense, soul and body. It is right that these topics are not the same thing, every topic consider as independent unit, but there is integration between these units. We can describe the relation between these units that every unit completes and perfects the other.

On contrast the western thought rely on the dualism and dialectic thinking, as well as the separation between religion and accepts of life as, politics and science. The human being become not just a central of the world, but he replaces the God role, while the mind replaces the religion that considers the reference that states what is wrong and true, good or bad.

We can say that the Islamic religion is constituted the ethical reference in the human life. Because Human being in Islam is a vicegerent of God (Khalifatullah) on the earth, and his role in this world to reconstruction the earth, thus the progress of life is a deposit that human being pledged to undertake. Everything is subservient to man and works for him, this is what is meant by the "appointing of a representive" mentioned in the Quran: "I am appointing of a representive on the earth". (Quran 2: 30) (Ibn Khaldun 416   1958)

So the responsibility of human being for reconstruction the earth created from his commitment to carry the deposit. That means that human being have to invest his effort as possible as for this goal. As result from this concept for life, the thinking becomes a duty for every Muslim in order to improve the human life.

Therefore we talk about two different spaces of thinking, but not contradict spaces. They are similar in certain aspects for example, Islam recognizes the importance of the mind as an important instrument for research and inquiry, but it is not the absolute and unique tool for revealing the complete truth. While mind in the Western thinking is not just an instrument, but it is also the reference. So it is a thought that constrict in the limits of the mind.

Islamic thinking is open to the three worlds: faith, mind and reality, so it is a communicated thinking in its nature. Therefore, we have to understand the Islamic philosophy and Education in the contest of Islam, and his thinking logic. In IQBAL View, Knowledge is obtained through experience. All experience is real, the whole of our experience include perception, reason and intuition. Normally we acquire knowledge through sense-perception and reason, but besides these two faculties there is a third faculty of intuition or religious experience. (Manzoor. 264 1984).

**Critical thinking**

The Quran talks about the importance of thinking largely, that mentions hundreds times the terms such as: Consider (*Yaaqilun*), understand (*yafqahun*), learn wisdom (*yataffakarun*), see (*yanzurun*), foresight (*yubserun*), meditate (*yaatabirun*), speculate (*yatadabbarun*), ponder (*yaamalun*). In other instances it is used phrases such as: *uli al albbab*, *uli al absaar*, or *uli nahii* in order to draw the attention to the functions of the mind.

The Quran expresses the meaning of mind forty nine times by the verb forms that derive from him as: *Yaaqilun*, *Taaqilun* (Consider), but *A'ql* (mind) as a Name form is not mentioned in the Quran, because the verb reflects dynamic activity, but the name implies constant thing.

The Quranic discourse is not emphases only the rational way, but also the empirical method Says: "Travel through the earth and see how Allah did originate creation…" It is obvious address for human beings to inquire their reality by transition from the particular to universal in order to deduct the conclusion.

This spirit of thought had characterized the Islamic Culture and influenced on the Islamic thinking ways that produced a distinguished character of personal autonomy. This thinking way appears clearly in the Islamic tradition in Religion Science, Philosophy, and Science.

In Religion, *Ijtihad* is an essential principle for Islamic *fiqh*, it is an extreme struggle in the research of truth about some mutter, human or otherwise. This term used to signify struggle which involves extreme hard labor. Thus, interpretation is the process of finding out the legal doctrines and rules of Islamic law by employing Intellectual effort. (Maulana Taqi Amini. 1 2009)  And has had the meaning of a free and independent effort of the *mujtahidun,* undertaken for the purpose of advancement and expansion of the Islamic sciences.

This development was not possible except through freedom of scholarly research, free expression of different views and clash between views of the *mujtahidun,* scholars and thinkers.

*Ijtihad* is about freedom of thought, rational thinking and the quest for truth through an epistemology covering science, rationalism, human experience, critical thinking and so on. *Ijtihad* as the spirit of inquiry and desire for all forms of knowledge, not just religious and juristic, that spirit of inquiry that was so spectacularly demonstrated by classical Islamic civilization at its peak.

On contrary, Hallstead  argues that "The goals of education are laid down by revealed religion and therefore have an objective quality; they do not vary according to individual opinion or experience". (J.M Hallstead. 519  2004). However the Modern Islamic Scholar Turabi argues that Individual *Ijtihad*  is thus permitted, and even encouraged, so long as it provides a diversity of constrictive proposals finally contributing to an informed communal decision. (Turabi Hasan 46 1980).

As result of the scholars thought Freedom, we witness the plurality of the Islamic Schools and diverse opinions in the same issue, as well as, the Muslims contribute to the Values meaning such as Difference and acceptation the other.

In Philosophy, Critical thinking distinguished the Philosophical writing. Muslim philosophers were engaged with the creek philosophy critically, we noticed this approach through the philosophical debates between Muslim scholars, such as the famous debate between Al-ghazali and Ibn rushd.

Al-gazali rejected the imitation way to acquire knowledge without criticism; He tries to purify the epistemological heritage acquired by imitation of the parents and teachers of errors and ignorance. He does not attempt to nullify or negate it, but to examine and try it by using instruments of correct thinking, where correct knowledge is accepted. He defines the role of doubt by saying, "doubts are the things that lead to right; he who does not doubt had not looked, and he who does not look did not see, and he who does not see remains all his life in blindness and ignorance" (Al-Ghazali, *222* 1995).

Al-Ghazali does not feel satisfied with defining the role of doubt as a method that leads to truth, but also warns against the negative results that result from non-use of this method, and these results mean staying in blindness and ignorance. (al-Ghazali, 75 1983). He argues that there is no religious merit in blindly following tradition. He opposed to what he says is *taqlid* in our ordinary thought, There is only a point in following tradition if one understands why one is doing it. In just way as no merit in following tradition unthinking, al-Ghazali argues that there is nothing to be said for accepting the rules of language without question. (Oliver Leaman. 109 2009).
So there is no subjected issue in life or religion is out of rethinking, it is a cross borders approach that aspires to extend thinking and language limits, because language cannot surround the meaning.

In his  recommendation  for his disciples says, "avoid belonging to the doctrines, and do not be as a blind that imitate a leader to guide him for the right way, and there are thousands such as your leader call for you that he mislead you on the straight path, and you'll learn eventually his injustice. There is no salvation but only in independence." (Al-Ghazali, *Mizan al-'Amal.*  1995, P. 222)

Such a clear call to search for the truth is autonomous and independent, and not to follow a specific doctrine as the truth and has provided to his followers. But al-Ghazali emphasizes here the importance of the correct method of thinking and panting methods receive and transport.

Ibn Khaldun talks about the Educational Dimension in the political and social society. He warns from Severe punishment in the course of instruction does harm to the student, especially to little children, It makes them feel oppressed and causes them to lie and be insincere, they lose the quality that goes with social and political organization and makes people human, namely, (the desire to) protect and defend themselves and their homes, and they become dependent on others. Their soul become too indolent to (attempt to) acquire the virtues and good character qualities. Thus they fall short of their potentialities and do not reach the limit of their humanity. (Ibn Khaldun.305 1958)

The Islamic research is not used just a rational way, but also the empirical method. Once a general principle is derived through the inductive method with certainty, no diverging particular can refute or falsify it.

This is in line with the epistemology Shatibi had already delineated. Particulars are always probable, incapable of refuting a certain universal that was attested by a large number of supporting cases and contextual indications (*qara'in*). But when the inductive support is incomplete, the universal remains of course probable, and subject to falsification. (Hallaq. 193 1997)

Also, Ibn Taymiyya criticizes the Aristotelian logic, because it is consisted on metaphysical elements. He rejects the claim that the quiddity has a stable truth in other than its own existence- that the absolute facts of species (the 'quidditiess' of genera, species and the other universalities) exist in substances (prototypes). He holds instead that quiddity exists and is stable only in the intellect. What is implicit in the intellect can be broader than that which exists in substances (prototypes). (Ibn taymiyya, 84 Vol. 1, 1993)

Also, He rejects the idea of the existence of abstract quiddity in the extra-mental world, admitting only the existence of the essential substances. Since the quiddity follows the question: "What is it?," and the inquirer wishes to depict the object of the answer to the same question within himself, the answer must create the concept of the object in the self of the inquirer: this is 'mental stability', whether that uttered thing exists external to the intellect or not. The term, 'quiddity' then refers to what exists in the 'intellect' and 'existence' refers to what exists outside it. (Ibn taymiyya, 85 Vol. 1, 1993)   The question "What is it?" is originally a mental question and the answer to it depends on mental proofs that do not depend on sense and experience. Therefore, the discussion of "quiddities" takes place by purely mental tools, while the discussion of the extra-mental world should depend on experimental tools. This approach contradicts Aristotle's theory, which proposes the existence of quiddity in the existential world.

This separation between 'quiddity' and 'existence' is in itself the separation between 'metaphysics' and the 'real world,' (the physical world), and confirms Ibn taymiyya's attempts to establish the human knowledge on facts subject to experiment.

Ibn Taymiyya tries to prove that sciences do not need logical definition to be practiced, implying the development of human science has no connection with definition. The scientists can achieve knowledge of the required terms and concepts of knowledge without definition. "We do not find any of the highest scholars speaking of such definitions, neither the outstanding jurisprudents, nor the scientists of medicine, mathematics, nor the craftsmen- although each comprehend the vocabulary of their knowledge. ( Ibn taymiyya, 36 Vol. 1,  1993)

Ibn Taymiyya present an alternative methodology for acquisition knowledge that bases in empirical methods, he says , experience (*tajriba*)23 is realized through perception, common sense, and the examination of results, such as the constant connection between a certain result and a certain cause until the matter is viewed as a norm. This is especially so when a person knows the Relevancy (munasaba) and attaches the "appropriate thing" to the "cause and effect" together with Classification and Successive Elimination (*sabr wa-taqsim\**) (Ibn Taymiyyah, 107 1993).

In science, Muslim Scientists contribute to the Science development. They change the scientific thinking from deduction research to indication method. With no doubt that their methods of the empirical research consider the fundamental base of the modern science.

The transmission of Arab science to Christian Europe was effected by the Latin translators of the twelfth century and was especially strong in astronomy and astrology. (Jack Goodly. 61 2005)

\*The meaning of the term *Sabr* is examination; the examination of things. And  *Taqsim* means the location and determination of the attributes that caused the original case. The investigator determines the attributes that are found in the judgment, and from these attributes the appropriate cause can be determined. The investigator then examines the attributes according to the causal conditions. In accordance with this examination the investigator disconnects the attributes that are not appropriate as cause, and leaves those that are the probable cause.

We have to use examination and exclusion in order to negate or disconnect the alien elements from the experiment. Ibn Taymiyya bases experiment on Relevancy (*munasaba*) and Coextensiveness-cum-Coexclusiveness (*dawaran*). In his view, we need extension and exclusion because the result is juxtaposed with two attributes and the relationship to one of them is not more correct than to the other, or to both of them.[i]

That is to say, by extension and exclusion we can determine the attribute, which is the appropriate cause for judgment or result. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 107 1993).

**The aims of Islamic Education**

The Islamic Education represents the Islamic spirit in general, it aspires to construct the human being toward achievement of the human values, the role of education to link between reality and values, it means reconciliation between theory and practice, saying or word and doing.

Islamic Education aims to make Balance between three levels: sense, mind and ethics, and promoting them by various Educational methods. The ego's progress is a continuous dynamic movement which assimilates the different aspects and stages, without negating any, the perceptive and the intellectual, thought and emotions, ideas and deeds are all integrated into the final aim of the ego. (Manzoor. 282 1984) Also, we find the same approach in Al-ghazali writings, his system is so balanced that it is preoccupation with things divine and mystical experience leave room also for rational thinking, logical deduction and empirical observation. (A.L. Tibawi. 41 1972). It is duty of all educators to find ways and means by which these high values are practically achieved within the learning period of their students from their earliest age to the years of maturity. (Mahar Abdul Haq. 287 1990).
Islamic education believes in harmony between Body and soul**,** and did not invest in one side and neglect the other.  Body and soul are not separate things, while they continued, so Islam is not treated them as dialectic and dualism. Keeping soul and body is an Islamic Value; it means that every Muslim ought to keep them healthy, and to bring instruments and aims that achieve preserving value. Ibn Miskawaih 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. He presented the view that physical education must precede the spiritual and intellectual education. True education must therefore, minister to the needs of the body no less than the aspirations of the soul. (S.M. Ziauddin Alavi. 35 1988).

Islamic education emphasis the significance of the (purpose) goal of science or knowledge, because the function of science is to serve the human being. So scientific research must aim to bring benefit for humanity and to be connected with certain human Values, but science does not give benefit and may harm humanity and offensive the equality of life, it is an acceptable science.

In contrast to previous concept, Halstead perceive the functional aim of science in different way, he claims "Like money, knowledge is not to be accumulated for its own but must be put to used. And the appropriate use for knowledge from a Muslim perspective is to help people to knowledge Cod, to live in accordance with Islamic law and fulfill the purposes of God's creation. Knowledge which does not serve these proposes may be considered useless. all this implies a concept of knowledge that is very different from dominant western concepts. (J.M halstead. 520  2004).

On the other hand Abed Arhman insists the ethical dimensions of science, he criticize strongly the non functionality of science and named it as "game".

Ibn Miskawaih discusses knowledge in the background of his concept of soul, which can achieve the knowledge of ultimate reality and possesses rational knowledge. He considers knowledge as the basis of good character and says the root of all virtue is knowledge so in the acquisition of knowledge lies human perfection. (Ziauddin Alavi. 35 1988).

Also, Islamic Education does not separate between Humanism and citizenship. It indicates the humanism but not mentioned citizenship, because it including in largest circle. There no question that the Muslim being had to behave the same behavior everywhere. as well as education for reconciliation between Individual and community. Muhammad Iqbal, the goal of Education is "the creation of men", he balances the concern for individuality with an active and responsible social reformation. (Wan Mohd Nor 124 1998).

Islam recognizes the autonomy of individual and his needs, in the same time individual ought to communicate with others. This approach of balance begins in worship that there is individual worship and other in common. It is mutual relation for cooperation that the two sides be benefit. Ibn Khaldon shows why people need to cooperate each other. "A single human being cannot live by himself, and his existence can materialize only in association with his fellow men. (Alone) he would be unable to have a complete existence and lead a complete life.

By his very nature, he needs the cooperation of others to satisfy all his needs… God caused human beings to act in an orderly and well-arranged manner, as the result of their ability to think". (Ibn Khaldun. 417 1958)

Duty is the most important in the Islamic Education, because duty contributes to the commutation between individual and society. Also it empowers social solidarity, and social justice in the society. The prophet (pbuh) says: "You find the Muslims in their mutual love and compassion, like one body, should any organ of it fall ill, the rest of the body will share in the fever and sleeplessness that ensues". The duty doing is produced from the ethical values that it is existing into human being in born. So duty is not restricting the freedom of man, because it is coming from within the man, and not imposed from abroad. Therefore duty doing is inner motivation, that reconciled with religious guiding.

## *Conclusion*

Islamic philosophy of education aspires to Shape the human being based on matching between the three dimensions of sense, mind and religious faith, In the belief that Harmony between those dimensions may achieve the human values in reality.

This education believe that human life progress is a duty of every Muslim, progress achievement is done by activism of the three dimensions, namely epistemology production ought to rely on experimental and rational methods, while the ethical dimension  constitutes as a reference and authority to every human activity. Thus, Knowledge and science had a functional role which comes to achieve better life for humankind.

Therefore, Islamic Education aware to the importance of development thinking and personal autonomy in order to achieve ideal values. It is apply continues negation to the realty in aim to change and improve it toward a better human life.

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