

The Needs and Direction for Changes in Curriculum Standards for Islamic Education

Keperluan dan Hala Tuju Perubahan dalam Standard Kurikulum Pengajian Islam

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ABSTRACT

This study describes and analyzes the Islamic concept of education, curriculum of Islamic education, sources of Islamic education, functions and importance of Islamic educational curriculum and its overall role in the process of teaching and learning. The study then seeks to elucidate a theoretical conception of 'Islamic educational curriculum', which takes into consideration the Qur'anic approach and Prophetic Sunnah, alongside commonly held approaches to education in Muslim history. The paper concludes that the content and scope of the Glorious Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah are still very relevant in building the people to survive and sustain the globalizing era. Drawing on library research method and the study of existing literature, this study intends to aid in the rethinking, and perhaps in the redesigning of curriculum of Islamic education, by first analyzing the aim and objective of Islamic education which we wish for the students to learn. The curriculum standard and some suggested changes that should be included in Islamic studies instruction are explored. The study identify a number of next steps for teachers and administrators.

Keywords: Islamic education; curriculum of Islamic education; sources of Islamic education

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menganalisis konsep pendidikan Islam, kurikulum pendidikan Islam, sumber-sumber pendidikan Islam, fungsi dan kepentingan kurikulum pendidikan Islam dan peranannya secara menyeluruh dalam proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran. Selanjutnya, kajian ini menghuraikan konsep teoretikal 'kurikulum pendidikan Islam', yang mengambil kira pendekatan al-Qur'an dan al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah, termasuk amalan pendekatan pendidikan dalam sejarah Islam secara umum. Makalah ini menyimpulkan bahawa kandungan dan skop al-Qur'an al-Karim dan al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah adalah masih amat relevan dalam membina ummah untuk terus hidup dan bertahan dalam menghadapi era globalisasi. Berdasarkan kaedah kajian kepustakaan dan sorotan susastera yang sedia ada, kajian ini bertujuan untuk membantu dalam memikirkan semula dan kemungkinan untuk melakar semula kurikulum pendidikan Islam, pertamanya dengan meneliti tujuan dan objektif pendidikan Islam yang kita harapkan pelajar perlu mempelajarinya. Standard kurikulum dan beberapa cadangan perubahan yang sewajarnya dimasukkan dalam pembelajaran pengajian Islam turut diterokai. Kajian ini turut mengidentifikasikan beberapa langkah selanjutnya untuk dilaksanakan oleh kalangan pendidik dan para pentadbir.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan Islam; kurikulum pendidikan Islam; sumber pendidikan Islam

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most fundamental features in human development and the most important social institution in any society; without which one cannot fulfill the purpose of one's creation. Education has been a central concept in Islam since its inception. The first revelation of the Glorious Quran revealed to the Prophet SAW read thus: "Read: In the name of your Lord Who created" (surah al-'Alaq, verse 1).

In this regard, education becomes a religious duty for the Muslims. Therefore, education in Islam is to impart the Islamic principles, beliefs, values, norms, and understandings from adults to

the new generation. Unfortunately, as a result of the pervasive influence of secular materialism and its value system on Muslim communities, the previous messages and revelations have been changed and distorted over time. As such, in order to ensure the quality of Islamic education in this global era, there is a need to revise and update existing Islamic educational curricula to respond to profound and multifaceted changes occurring in the world today, which are widely recognized. Fortunately, a sense of improvement is in the air today and learned Muslims are struggling to find solutions to problems and challenges facing the Muslim community, including a re-examination of both *how* and *what* we teach Muslim children about Islam.

To ensure the quality of Islamic education, to outline a trend and goals for ensuing changes, and to help promote curriculum reform, this paper is therefore looking into curriculum standards for Islamic education. To this end, the study examines the issue under the following sub-headings: Concept of curriculum, concept and nature of Islamic education, education as a religious duty, sources of Islamic education, and prospects for improvement and change.

CONCEPT OF CURRICULUM

Education may be seen as a vehicle for the transmission of societal values and norms so that individuals may become accepted members of the society and find their suitable role. In light of this, education is an important tool for nation building, national development and cultural transmission. Curriculum on the other hand, is the conveyer of educational goals and objectives. Curriculum is also considered as the complete organization of ideas and activities produced by an educational institution to meet the needs of students and to achieve the aims and objectives of education. Therefore, curriculum is a plan of learning activities. In this regard, several authors refer to curriculum as the construction of knowledge and experience systematically developed in the school, to help the learner to increase their knowledge and experiences (Marry 2003; Wojtczak 2003; Coles 2010; David 1997).

Kelly (2009) defines curriculum as the totality of student experiences that occur in the educational process. According to Miel (1996), curriculum is a locus and transmitter of values, and is also a contract with students, and a statement of intentions regarding what knowledge is to be offered to prepare students for the labour market and society. In this regard, curriculum is of great importance in a school setting. Again, some scholars perceive curriculum from its element which are namely purpose (goals and objectives), teaching and learning strategies, and evaluation processes. Authors, like Dillon (2009), include the following elements; namely instructional aids, instructional activities; and time management. These are important elements of curriculum which have to be considered when planning, designing, implementing and evaluating curriculum. Thus, the nature of these elements and the pattern of organization in which they are brought together as a unified curriculum constitute the curriculum design.

CONCEPT AND NATURE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Education from an Islamic perspective is of fundamental significance to all life of human beings for complete submission to the will of Allah the Almighty. Its fundamentals are based on *Iman* and its principles refer to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Thus Islamic education is mainly to develop man for seeking virtue in accordance with the religion of Islam which holds no conflict with man's worldly life. Nevertheless, the Islamic educational system transcends mere knowledge transmission but also cultivates the spiritual side of man and his dispositions/morals (*Akhlaq* i.e. character and the nature). In this regard, Ashraf (1985) asserted that education in Islam consists of purposeful activities directed to the full development of the individual physically, morally, emotionally and spiritually.

Al-Attas (1980) views Islamic education as recognition and acknowledgement, progressively instilled into man, of the proper places of things in the order of creation, such that it leads to the recognition and acknowledgement of the proper place of God in the order of being and existence. Therefore, Islamic education is the effective acquisition of spiritual and intellectual knowledge for the pleasure of Allah SWT and to execute the divinely bestowed role of vicegerent on earth. Furthermore, Islamic education begins with the spiritual aspect, which forms the link with belief in Allah SWT.

Mohammad (1980) defines Islamic education as a process of self-discipline, which ensures spiritual and intellectual growth of the individual. By implication, Islamic education is the process of learning both revealed and acquired knowledge. Revealed knowledge is that which directly learned from the Qur'an as interpreted by the Prophet Muhammad in his Sunnah. This is while, acquired knowledge is that which is obtained from different resources which are external from other fellow beings on earth and may be hired or purchase. Its core objective is to produce and develop God fearing individuals who recognize their role as Allah's SWT vicegerent on earth, and carry out their role whole heartedly.

Al-Attas refers to Islamic education as *ta'dib*, which involves action to discipline the mind and soul; and the acquisition of good qualities and attributes of both mind and soul. He recommended that the correct term which denotes Islamic education be *ta'dib*, which means the instilling and inculcation of *Adab* in man. Furthermore, he interprets *Adab* as

the discipline of body, mind and soul, which endows man to recognize and acknowledge his perfect place in the human order in relation to his self, his intellect and his spirit. This order is given hierarchically in degrees (*darajat*) of excellence based on the Qur'anic basis of intelligence, knowledge and virtue (*ihsan*). In this respect, Islamic education is divinely revealed and thus guides mankind to the path of virtue and piety. As a result, Islamic education is the basis for every sphere of knowledge where the teacher, student, school, and syllabus all comply with Islamic values and teachings.

Nasr (1987: 123) stated that, "Islamic education is concerned not only with the instruction and training of the mind and the transmission of knowledge (*ta'lim*) but also with the education of the whole being of men and women (*tarbiyah*)"; "the teacher was not only *mu'allim*, 'a transmitter of knowledge', but also a *murabbi*, 'a trainer of souls and personalities". Islamic education is the process of shaping character within the Islamic worldview, which requires Muslim parents to expose their children to all knowledge as a means of understanding the parameters set in the Qur'an for a constructive relationship with their creator Allah SWT and other human beings and nature. Islamic education is also the acquisition of knowledge for the pleasure of Allah the Almighty, which individual may use for their life and the benefit of other human being.

Furthermore, many attempts have been made to expound Islam and education. However, there are divergent opinions among scholar regarding the concept of Islamic education and views on Islam and education. The proponents of the Islamic approach to education differ amongst themselves on different issues; some proposing common inter-faith religious framework on education (The Islamic Academy 1990; Conway 2001), while others recommend the dominance of the Islamic concept over other religions' approaches (Mukadam 1997).

In Islam, faith is the essential feature of human life; believing in Allah, the Angels, the Books, the prophets and the Day of Resurrection and Destiny is the core aspect of Muslim life. One of the signs of their faith in Allah is their willingness to obey all rules and regulations of the Islamic religion as prescribed to them, such as praying at the five stipulated times a day, giving Zakat, fasting during the month of Ramadan, making pilgrimage (hajj), and observing the good manners which lift the soul up to the highest ranks of the human position relation to Allah. Ball and Haque (2003: 315) claim

that "Islam is tantamount to accepting a way of life spiritually, politically, and socially, about how to behave in family and public life". Hence, the perfect education is the one which increases the ability of a person according to his capacity. In all, the Islamic philosophy of education believes in the unity of knowledge and developing a balanced personality. The Islamic sources of education are the Glorious Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah.

Islam is a religion that prescribes a way of life which goes beyond the very act of worship. It also relies upon the respect of good deeds which is based on the concept of *'Ibadah* (worship). Individual Muslims should possess virtue of character as seen in justice, goodness, familial respect, trust and the fulfillment of promises, in addition to the restraining of the hand and tongue from harming others and many other moralities in every aspect of life. As such, developing intellectually, spiritually and being a good human being has become a cardinal concern of Muslim parents, teachers and Islamic institutions.

However, to present core Islamic education to Muslims, Islamic/Muslim education must have something in common which is essentially the 'principle of universality' which implies the same source being the Glorious Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah. Islam is the purpose of Muslim life and knowledge has to be subject to religion for it to be wholesome and complete (al-Attas 1979). If education is broadly concerned with the development of good personality, then Islamic education is concerned with making man more aware of his nature as a human being and his role as vicegerent of Allah SWT on earth, on the basis of *Iman*, (faith), *'Aqidah* (belief) and *Tawhid* (unity of God) while being guided by the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, the Sunnah and *Sharia* (Islamic law).

The Qur'anic injunctions and Prophetic Sunnah request mankind to search for knowledge, with any development or improvement in the individual requiring it to be in line with the prescribed moral value in these two sources of Islam, i.e. the Qur'an and Sunnah, in order to allow peace to reign in this world and to acquire the desired reward in the hereafter. Besides this, Islam demands Muslims to acquire knowledge in all fields for the benefit of building up the capacity of the Muslim *Ummah*. This may be attested to by one of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, "Search for knowledge, even though it is as far as China".

EDUCATION AS A RELIGIOUS DUTY

Education in Islam is seen as an act of *ibadah* (worship) where Muslims shared common values established on the two authentic sources for numerous fields of knowledge that is the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Thus, Islamic education aimed at preparing an individual to actualize his role as a vicegerent (Khalifah) of Allah SWT on earth thereby positively contributes to the improvement and development of his society in order to acquire success in this life and hereafter.

In Islam, great emphasis is placed on education. Thus, seeking knowledge is an obligatory role associated with religious duty for Muslims. Because of the significance of knowledge, Allah SWT command the Prophet Muhammad SAW to seek more of it in the Glorious Qur'an which says: "And pray: O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge (Surah Taha, verse 114)".

This commandment was not made for the prophet alone, but also for his entire adherent. Thus, it is a fundamental role of the Muslims to learn an Islamic teaching that includes the articles of faith, *Salat*, *Zakat*, Fasting, *Hajj*, and to have knowledge of the Divine Law. Muslims are intensely recommended by Allah SWT and His Messenger to seek knowledge. An instance of such a recommendation is found in where Allah SWT says in Surah al-Tawbah, verse 122:

And the believers should not all go out to fight. Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they (*who are left behind*) may gain sound knowledge in religion, and that they may warn their folk when they return to them, so that they may beware.

The Prophet repeatedly stated the significance of education and knowledge seeking for Muslims. He has been reported to have said: "To acquire knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and woman". This is an indication that seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every individual Muslim. Hence, the above Qur'anic verse and prophetic Sunnah lays the foundation of Islamic Education. Therefore, it is strictly required of every individual Muslim to hold a sound Knowledge of Islamic religion that can enable them to carry out their role as *Khalifah Allah fi al-ard* (Allah's servant and vicegerent on earth).

Likewise, in the following hadith the Prophet says: "The scholars are heirs of the Prophets. The Prophets do not leave behind an inheritance of gold and silver; they leave behind the inheritance of knowledge. Whoever acquired knowledge,

acquired a lot of wealth". Thus, Islam attached a great importance to knowledge acquisition. This is because it is only through the acquisition of knowledge that man is able to understand his purpose in this life and know the best way to carry out his religious duty.

Islam lays a high emphasis on the knowledge of the Glorious Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet SAW. The pursuit of knowledge of these Islamic sources became a duty for every individual Muslim. With this presumption, seeking knowledge became a religious obligation on Muslims in order that they educate themselves. The Prophet says: "Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim" (Ibn Majah 2015, 1: no. 224). The Prophet Muhammad SAW says in another tradition: "Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make ease for him a path to Paradise" (Ibn Majah 2015, 1: no. 223).

This indicates that in Islam education is important because it enables man to discover the truth, nurture the attitudes and develop the skills necessary to contribute to the development of their community. With this presumption, seeking knowledge became a religious obligation for the Muslims, therefore compulsory for them to accomplish. The Quran says in Surah al-Mujadalah, verse 11: "God will exalt those of you who believe and those who have knowledge to high degrees".

Allah SWT has created man to bring the highest form of civilization on earth. This total commitment to bring the highest civilization on earth cannot attain without proper education. Bringing the ultimate civilization in this worldly life based on the ideals Islamic worldview is the highest goal of Islamic education. With such instruction, the Prophet says: "Seek knowledge, even unto China"; "Whoever goes out in search of knowledge is on the path of God until they return". With these assumptions, the Prophet SAW encouraged its adherents to seek all kinds of knowledge from wherever it is.

When we talk of knowledge from an Islamic point of view, it goes beyond knowledge or mere academic knowledge. Indeed, Islam encourages Muslims to seek knowledge not just of Islamic studies, but in all fields of education and in all its forms. Al-Ghazali classifies knowledge into four divisions, namely; theoretical and practical sciences, consisting of *huduri* (presential) and *husuli* (intellectual), *ilm al-shari'ah* (religious) and *ilm al-'aqliyyah* (intellectual), *fard 'ayn* (obligatory on individual) and *fard kifayah* (obligatory on community). His aim of education is to build a God-conscious and societal-conscious personality.

Ibn Khaldūn on his part classifies knowledge into revealed or transmitted sciences (*al-‘ulum al-naqliyyah*) and acquired sciences (*al-‘ulum al-‘aqliyyah*).

This paper refers to knowledge as a tool that which requires that we fulfill our first objective in life, which is to faithfully serve Allah SWT. Muslim schools should cater for all aspects of life; ranging from the spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, psychological, to the linguistic, both individually and collectively and should further motivate all these aspects towards an emotional as well as a rational attachment and sense of belonging to Islam. The Makkah Conference agreed that “The aim of Muslim education is the creation of the ‘good and righteous man’ who worships Allah SWT in the truest sense of the term, and builds the structure of his earthly life according to the *Shari‘ah* and employs it to serve his faith” (Recommendation of Conference on Muslim Education 1977: 29).

Thus a larger description of Islamic education was formed at the First World Conference on Muslim Education where the participants were of the view that:

Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of man’s spirit, intellect, his rational self, feelings and bodily senses. Education should cater therefore for the growth of man in all its aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively and motivate all aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection. The ultimate aim of Muslim education lies in the realization of complete submission to Allah on the level of the individual, the community and the humanity at large (Ashraf 1985: 4).

Thus, through these aims, the Islamic education system attempts to ensure that the foremost purpose of knowledge is to strengthen main belief in Allah SWT and shape his higher noble character in order that it is useful in life. Additionally, such an atmosphere will enable every individual Muslim to surrender wholeheartedly to Allah’s commandments and maintain his dignity and superiority as Allah’s servant and vicegerent on earth, and further attain felicity and prosperity in the hereafter. As a result, Islamic schools should have a program of learning which aids students in developing their sense of spirituality so as to have a positive relationship with Allah SWT, the Creator.

Thus, Muslims place high emphasis on the knowledge of *al-Tawhid* (Oneness of Allah SWT) connected with faith and total submission to Him. Muslims believed that knowledge is a way of knowing Allah SWT and following His ordained path.

Consequently, education from an Islamic perspective is to cultivate in man an awareness of Allah SWT through the acquisition of knowledge. According to Sayyid Wahid Akhtar, the Islamic perspectives does not merely consist of simple information; but requires the believers to act upon their beliefs and work towards the accomplishment of the aims and objectives of Islamic education.

Furthermore, Muslims are expected to seek ultimate knowledge in all fields towards the search for truth and thereby appreciate and praise the Greatness of Allah SWT and thank him for His Mercifulness. The Qur’an says in Surah Al ‘Imran, verse 191, “Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]”.

Thus, Islamic education should teach learners to use their instinctual faculties for the obedience of Allah’s commandments and realize their obligatory duty as Allah’s vicegerent on earth. Therefore, we should provide Muslim youth with ultimate knowledge to reach Allah SWT in this world and the life after.

While every educational system is founded upon philosophical and social bases, the system currently in the Muslim world is influenced in overall by western philosophies, theories, style and ideologies; some of which give human life no meaning. As a result, Muslim youths have deviated from the right path and lost God consciousness and fear.

Muslim scholars contend that the experience of contemporary learned Muslims has resulted in an intellectual duality that contradicts an elemental obligation to find a balance between what is worldly and what is religious (Moaddel 2002 1986; Kasule 1996; al-Qaradawi 1987). For instance, Kasule (1996) claimed that the consequences of the duality of education and discipline are divided loyalties, confusion in the minds of students, and the intellectual schizophrenia of the educated Muslim. They further argued that modern science has introduced additional cultural distortions that separate educated Muslims from knowledge that is fundamentally Islamic in nature. In support of this claim, Khalil (1991) claimed that not all disciplines are able to gain from an Islamic approach that would bring secular and spiritual aspects of experience into harmony. Based on this, our society needs harmony between knowledge and belief and science and religion. Thus our present educational system is generally unable to offer humanity the ultimate goal of knowledge. Our theories sometimes may produce creative thinkers who do not adhere to the Islamic

higher values of life. Therefore, there is a crucial need to revisit Islamic sources of knowledge.

SOURCES OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Muslims believe that Islam emerges from two sources which are the Qur'an and the prophetic Sunnah. These two are the certain sources of knowledge that are frequently and repeatedly quoted regarding the sources of Islamic education. For Muslim, the Qur'an and the prophetic Sunnah are the fundamental sources of knowledge. Furthermore, the Prophet SAW himself told his followers before his death that I left you two things. The Qur'an and my Sunnah, and whosoever holds tight to them will never go astray. These two sources are therefore regarded as divinely ordained, revealed by Allah SWT, not to mention concrete and timeless for all situations.

THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an is the sacred scripture of Islam, and is believed by Muslims to be the final and complete edition of Divine Guidance. It was revealed in the Arabic language in intervals to Prophet Muhammad SAW through the Archangel *Jibril* over a period of 23 years, beginning in 610 CE and ending in 632 CE (Procedure for a Teacher, 2007). The Qur'an contains the fundamental directives, implicit information and instruction of Allah, its passages addresses topics such as God's power, the purpose of life, the nature of good and evil, and the Afterlife. The Qur'an is also a book which equips human beings with the spiritual and intellectual purpose with which to maintain their life. Its main subjects include *al-Tawhid* (oneness of God), the purpose of human life, faith and God-consciousness, as well as the hereafter and its significance.

Furthermore, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib RA provides the most comprehensive definition of the Qur'an. According to him, the Qur'an is:

Allah's book. In it is news for what happened before you, and information about what comes after you, and judgement for what happens between you. It is the Criterion (between right and wrong) without jest. Whoever among the oppressive abandons it, Allah crushes him, and whoever seeks guidance from other than it, then Allah leaves him to stray. It is the firm rope of Allah, it is the wise remembrance, it is the straight path, and it is the one that the desires cannot distort, nor can the tongues twist it, nor can the scholars ever have enough of it, and it shall not become dull from reciting it much, and the amazement of it does not diminish. It is the one that when the Jinns hear it, they did not hesitate to say about it: "Verily, we have heard a wonderful Recitation (this Qur'an)! It guides to the Right Path,

and we have believed therein". Whoever speaks according to it then he has said the truth, and whoever acts according to it he is rewarded, and whoever judges by it he has judged justly, and whoever invites to it then he guides to the straight path (al-Tirmidhi 2015, no. 2906).

The admonitions of the Qur'an responded to the old Mecca and Medina rule, and introduced a new Muslim law. The early revelations composed the outline for the new way of life, while the later revelations, particularly, those of the Madinah period, described the specific ways by which man could live a successful life. These revelations required fundamental acts such as observing the five daily prayers, giving alms, fasting, and pilgrimage, all of which provided a regular framework for man's recollection of his purpose of his existence.

Besides this, the Qur'an tells us stories of the messengers before the noble Prophet SAW and of the original books of guidance and knowledge given to mankind through them. Choudhury (1993) noted that "the Qur'an enjoins human beings to set up a social order wherein justice, equality and fair play should prevail". The Prophet Muhammad SAW was sent as the final messenger to teach the Qur'an to mankind and to serve as a model teacher for all of them to learn from, until the last day. Accordingly, the Qur'an is the primary source of knowledge in Islam and all sources of Islamic law must be in accordance with the Qur'an, the most fundamental source of Islamic knowledge. Consequently, the Muslim believed it as the Book of God; recognize it, declare it, and submit to it. As such, when the Qur'an does not speak directly or in detail about a certain subject, the Muslims then turn to Prophetic Sunnah (Hadith) for its clarification.

THE SUNNAH (HADITH)

Sunnah is the living example or collection of traditions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW which include his sayings, deeds, and his silent approval of what was said or done in his presence by his companion. The Sunnah is the interpretation of the Qur'anic instructions. The Qur'anic injunction may be sometimes ambiguous; upon which the Sunnah makes it explicit by providing essential explanation and interpretation. Thus the Sunnah was applied by the Prophet Muhammad SAW to describe and analyze the application of the Qur'anic instructions.

The Sunnah is the secondary source of Islamic law after the Qur'an. It was regarding the saying and deeds of Prophet Muhammad SAW, apart from the transmission of revelations. It is recognized in

human history that the Prophet Muhammad SAW is the most successful man. According to the Qur'an, he was the best example for all mankind. He has shown us the way of achieving supreme success in this world. The Qur'an says in surah al-Ahzab, verse 21: "Certainly you have indeed in the messenger of Allah an excellent example for him who hopes in Allah and the final day, and who remember Allah much". Prophet Muhammad SAW was described in the *sirah* as quoted by Choudhury (1993: 194) that:

He is an ideal example for men to follow in their daily life and people who believe in God and hope for the Day of Judgment can find him a true ideal and excellent exemplar for them to follow.

As such, his life exists as a perfect guide and model for those who aspire to attain goodness. Thus, his life and eternal message provided mankind with inspiring sources in their quest for attaining perfection in moral, spiritual and social aspects of life (Gulen 2007). As a result, studying the life of the Prophet SAW can provide the individual with a number of important principles which were followed by the Prophet SAW and will be useful for Islamic education. It was reported in one of the Prophetic Sunnah that after the Battle of Badr, about 70 of the unbelievers were taken as prisoners of war. The majority of them were educated individuals. The Prophet SAW declared that he would release any of them who taught ten Muslims to read and write. This was the first school in the history of Islam in which teachers were prisoner of war. Thus, and in this manner education in Islam began.

It is generally believed that the Prophetic Sunnah gives Muslims an embodiment of the code of life. It provides guidance in all aspects of life. Muslims believed that the prophet's humble personality was the final and the last commandment sent by Allah SWT. Therefore, his conduct and character has been declared as a specimen to be followed and adopted by man to achieve nearness to Allah SWT and ultimate salvation.

Although the Qur'an provides the Muslim with principles of life, there are still several matters however where direction for practical living is obligatory, and which the Qur'an did not talk about. In such cases, the recognizable thing was to follow the Prophetic tradition. As such, the Sunnah of the prophet became a model for every Muslim to emulate. Hence, the Sunnah of the prophet has come to give a detailed account of the Qur'anic instruction. Besides this, the Sunnah of the Prophet provides humanity with religious instruction and examples covering the whole duty of man; it is the basis of that development

of law, theology and custom which is Islam. It was essential to receive guidance from the life history of the prophet.

CURRICULUM OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

The existence of an Islamic education curriculum is associated with the advent of Islam and its teaching. During early Islamic history, there was a specifically written curriculum for Islamic education. The basic curriculum was based on the aforementioned Islamic sources of education, namely the Glorious Qur'an and the prophetic Sunnah. Allah SWT says in Surah al-Nahl, ayat 36: "For We assuredly sent amongst every People a messenger, (*with the Command*), "Serve Allah, and eschew Evil". With respect to this Qur'anic verse the Prophet SAW stated in one of his traditions: "I was sent to perfect good character".

Consequently, the early Muslim scholars committed themselves to the teaching of the Qur'an and prophetic Sunnah. Memorization of the Glorious Qur'an was central to the curriculum as during then. During the golden era, Islamic scholarship flourished with an impressive openness to the rational sciences, art, and even literature.

Hence, for Muslims, education without awareness of Allah SWT is 'meaningless' (Mabud 1992:90). Consequently, in Islam all learning processes should be offered with the intention of developing *taqwa*, 'a highly developed and profound awareness of Allah' in the learners (Bhabha 1997:3).

These objectives of Islamic education as mentioned before can be only accomplished if their curriculum is derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. Unfortunately, and presently, many Muslim countries have followed Western systems of education, although they have allowed religious education to take place in either separate institutions or in addition to the secular curriculum. Islam however, does not permit such a separation in any aspect of life. Thus, the curriculum of Islamic education cannot be properly developed in this dual system of education. The Makkah Conference recommended that Islam is the basic source of knowledge:

Considering that a sound and healthy atmosphere based on the divine Sharī'ah, the good model and the righteous teacher, all constitute inseparable parts of the Islamic educational curriculum... The intensive study of Qur'an, its recitation, memorization and interpretation should be given extra care. Qur'anic sciences and Sunnah, in addition, should be graded to suit different years of study.

According to al-Afendi and Baloch (1980), the ingredients of Islamic education are: *Tawhid* (unity of

God), the Glorious Qur'an, the Hadith, Islamic history with a moral message in it and *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence and religious principle). Oloyede (1990) states that the designers of Muslim educational curriculum, the learners and other participants in the process of education should be aware of the basic religious duties. He also emphasized that the curriculum needs to address what constitutes the basic necessities of the learner, and further be designed in a way that the learner would be able to discharge the basic duties through the skill and knowledge acquired from the curriculum. The students should be provided with a basic curriculum that will not only enable them to discharge not their religious duties alone, but also perform other basic duties such as personal hygiene, the rudiments of law, as well as simple security and safety measures.

Presently speaking however, the Islamic educational system as an alternative system of education is generally based on an exam-oriented approach. Students are being taught only the skills which will help them to acquire a good grade and secure a good job. Possibly, these motives create a discrepancy between the intended Islamic educational curriculum and the Islamic or Muslims school enacted curriculum. As a sequel to the synthesis of the foregoing, there is an irrevocable need to review the Islamic education curriculum. These objectives of Islamic education, as mentioned before, may only be accomplished if their curriculum is derived from the Qur'an and Hadith.

PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND CHANGE

In order to understand the future prospects of Islamic education in the development of the students firm in faith and belief, and who act righteously and have an ideal personality, it becomes necessary to analyze the main factors which seem to forge the present situation of Islamic education.

First of all, the kind of education provided to Muslim children is secular in nature. This kind of education prepares students purely for this material world (Mababaya & Mababaya 2005). Generally, every educational system is founded upon a philosophical and social base, but the system currently in use in the Muslim world is influenced by Western philosophies, theories and ideologies, some of which give no meaning to human life.

Consequently, Muslim scholars noticed that the modern experience of educated Muslims has resulted in an intellectual duality which contradicts the fundamental obligation to find a balance between

what is worldly and what is religious (Ahmad 1999; al-Qaradawi 1987; Abdul Kabir 2008). They believe that this duality was a consequence of colonization of Muslim States which distanced educated Muslims from the core of Islamic knowledge. This in turn leads to the production of thinkers who do not adhere to Islamic higher values of life.

Thus, present Islamic educational systems are generally unable to offer humanity the ultimate knowledge that is Islamic in nature. Based on this, Muslim society is in need of harmony between knowledge and belief and science and religion. As a result of emulating the Western models, the system of education in most Muslim countries has not played a major role in developing righteous and ideal personality in individual Muslims.

However, this does not suggest a total or complete abolition of western philosophy or ideas from the educational system in the Muslim community, nor blindly following the Western ideas which have produced appalling results in the West itself. What it claims instead is the integration of a traditional Islamic curriculum into Western education. This is because, in today's modern era, one of the interim solutions to the contemporary crisis in Muslim education as claimed by (Raji 1996) is the integration of traditional Islamic curriculum with Western education. The significance of such a phenomenon is found in the transformation of the form, content, and intent of sciences, education, and arts into Islamic disciplines by integrating intellectual and cultural development within the Islamic principles. In other words, all that it takes is the integration of modern scientific knowledge into the Islamic philosophers as early Muslims did during the first few centuries of Islam.

Coupled with the above points is the fact that the education curricular offerings in most Muslim schools are not based on the authentic sources of knowledge in Islam, being the Qur'an and Hadith. This is one of the major challenges which hinder the accomplishment of the prime aims and objectives of Islamic education to bring man closer to his creator. Therefore, as suggested above, it must be ensured that the curriculum offered in Muslim schools is derived from the Qur'an and Ḥadīth and must be meaningful and relevant to students' lives. Thus, all knowledge providing Muslim children should derive from Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah as a source of Knowledge. Therefore, Muslims need to rely on the Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah as the ultimate sources of all knowledge and learn how to use their approach in educating Muslim children.

The reduction of Islamic education to religious education is also a vital issue which hinges upon the achievements of Islamic education to produce God fearing individuals who recognize their role as Allah's vicegerent on earth. This reduction of Islamic education to religious education has probably resulted in a partial inability to integrate modern scientific knowledge into the Islamic worldview.

At this juncture, the difference between religious education and Islamic education needs to be made clear. Religious education is the teaching of particular religious beliefs, doctrines, institutions, behaviors and individual roles as *Khalifah Allah fi al-Ard* through the school curriculum (Conway 2001). Islamic Education on the other hand, as stated before, is the process of learning both the revealed and acquired knowledge. It concerns not only religious instruction and faith. It embraces all the diverse aspects of the life of man and roots all of them in the Unity and Comprehensiveness of God (Jeremy 2003). Nasr (1987) explains that Islamic education is concerned with the education of the whole being of mankind. Al-Attas (1999) refers to Islamic education as *ta'dib*, a word connected to *adab*.

Despite the fact that many factors impose themselves against the effectiveness of the Islamic educational system, there is still great hope in the efficacy of Islamic education to help create the desired kinds of citizens in Muslim communities. Thus, the content and scope of the Glorious Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah are still very relevant in building young people to survive and sustain the globalizing era. This requires the exposure of Muslims' children to all knowledge as a means of understanding the Qur'anic injunctions and the prophetic Sunnah to achieve great success in this life and in the hereafter.

CONCLUSION

This paper has analyzed curriculum standards for Islamic education While also addressing the concept and nature of Islamic education, as well as its curriculum and sources. The paper identified in specific terms and examined the problems acting against Islamic educational curricula. The challenges identified and examined in the paper include the influence of western education over Islamic education, and the abandonment of the Islamic source of knowledge and reduction of Islamic education into religious education. The examination in this paper shows that numerous opportunities and significant

potential exist for Islamic education to be to produce and develop God fearing individuals who recognize their role as Allah's vicegerent on earth and carry out their role wholeheartedly.

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