GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION: HOW IT IS RELEVANT TO SOCIETY OF GLOBALIZING WORLD

Ibrahim A. Shogar
Department of Computational and Theoretical Sciences, Kulliyyah of Science, International Islamic University Malaysia.
shogar@iium.edu.my
Shogar2000@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The major aim of this paper is to highlight the general characteristics of Islamic philosophy of education. The basic assumption of the paper is that the Islamic philosophy of education is relevant to the needs of globalizing society, due to certain factors. For that purpose, the four basic educational questions on the recipient, the content, objectives, and the method are discussed. The major problem of Islamic education, according to the paper, is that there is lack of awareness on basic characteristics of Islamic educational philosophy; therefore, it was hard for Muslim intellectuals to deal properly with results of educational problems such as religious extremism and secularism in the Muslim communities; let alone to attract the attention of global community to the advantages of Islamic education system as an effect method to produce a balanced personality. For example, the steering committee of the First World Conference on Muslim Education, which held in Makkah in 1977, emphasizes that:

It is strongly felt that it is necessary for the Muslims to have a truly Islamic education. And education can be truly Islamic only if Muslim scholars can produce Islamic concepts for all branches of human knowledge and Muslim countries disseminate these concepts among Muslim intellectuals and students by getting their mind purified of all non-Islamic ideas and by making them more and more conscious of the significance and utility of these concepts through research projects, textbooks and teacher training programmes (Proceedings of Makkah Conference, p 10)1.

More than four decades have passed since this statement was, but our students of the higher learning, especially in science and technology, are still depending only on textbooks which produced by others. So, the important question is what is the problem? This paper has attempted to answer this basic question.

Keywords: Islamic education; philosophy; dispositions; discriminative mind; globalization; balanced personality.

1 The Conference Book of the First World Conference on Muslim Education, King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah and Macca al-Mucarramah. P 10
1.0 INTRODUCTION

The contemporary global crises, especially in the Muslim world, have shifted the attention once again to the question of education and initiated many studies on the topic. The principles underlying the educational systems in these societies in turn cannot be fully understood without understanding the educational philosophy which is the major source of education policies. One of the major problems of education in the post-colonial Muslim world, however, was lack of awareness and clear view on educational philosophy. There was no a unified theoretical vision which guides education policies and the practical part of Islamic education in various countries of the Muslim world. The practical education steps, such as objectives, administration, and curriculum development, should be based on general guidelines drawn by the theoretical part. This principle, i.e. consideration of theoretical part in practice, is essential not only in education but in all Islamic systems. The holy Qur’an, therefore, builds faith (aqidah) before practical duties. Without clear view on educational philosophy, our reformation plans on education will be short-termed and less capable of obtaining the desired objectives.

The question of reformation in Islamic thought, in fact, has been aiming at transformation of the traditional approaches of teaching and learning to meet requirements of modernity and challenges of the changeable world. Imam al-Ghazali (d. 1111 ca) had addressed this question early in his “Resurrection of Religious Sciences”, when the Islamic thought was experiencing the problem of backwardness in scientific thinking and intellectual ‘stagnation’. The reformation question came into focus again in the opening of the nineteenth century, when the entire Muslim world rediscovered its backwardness through confrontation with colonial powers. Lack of technology to confront the enemy shifted the attention to problems in patterns of thinking and finally to the education systems. The reformation task was handled by Muslim modernists of colonial era such al-Kwakibi, al-Afaghani, Muhammad Igbal, Muhammad Abdu, and others; and passed through to the post-colonial and contemporary Muslim reformists.

The continuous process of reformation efforts has been essential to update education systems to suite new conditions of society. New questions and new challenges on education systems are posted every era. One of the most important reformation efforts in the history of Islamic education was the First World Conference on Muslim Education, which held in Makkah in 1977. The three major objectives of the conference were:

a. Islamic concept of education: definition, aims and objectives;

b. Means of realizing these concepts in practice;

c. Mutual cooperation and understanding to realize education objectives.

In fact, as noted by many contemporary Muslim scholars, there is no discussion on the matter of educational philosophy, except views of early Muslim philosophers, such as al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. See, for example, Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1994). Traditional Islam in the Modern World (Kegan Paul International- London and New York) (Chapters 8 &9).

Many practical education proposals have been made on this topic by many contemporary Muslim scholars. The most prominent works on this matter in English are such as works of Ismail al-Faruqi, M. Naquib al-Attas, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Fazlur Raman, and others. According to Fazlur Rahman, the five prominent Muslim modernists who worked in the latter half of the nineteenth century to formulate and expound the positive attitude of Islam toward science and investigation of nature, were: Sayyid Ahmed Khan and Sayyid Amir `Ali of India, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Namik Kemal of Turkey, and Shaykh Muhammad `Abuh. Study more on this: Fazlur Rahman (1984), Islam and Modernity (the University of Chicago Press) pp 49-50.

Conference Book of the First World Conference on Muslim Education. P 10

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This conference was every important event which addressed many theoretical and practical questions on Islamic education, but unfortunately there was no clear discussion on the matter of educational philosophy from Islamic perspective. Definition, aims and objectives of education are insufficient to provide a clear view on Islamic philosophy of education. Many activities, such as seminars, conference and workshops, were conducted since then to realize outcomes of Makkah Conference. However, new challenges on education systems are emerging due to the globalization and free movement of ideas and values. Therefore, formation of a clear view on Islamic philosophy of education, that is the theoretical reference inferred from the Qur’an and Sunnah, is essential to deal with all cases and to develop education policies that relevant to address the modern educational questions.

2.0 NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Education, throughout human history, has been the most strategic plan for development and nation building. It is the only means to secure better future for human society. Education is not only a matter of transmission of knowledge but, rather, it is a process through which the human society can survive by transmission of its ideals, values and achievements to the successive generations. The contemporary progress in science and technology, however, introducing human community to modernity and globalization, has created great challenges to the social dimension of education in its traditional sense. Free movement of ideas and cultural elements through modern communication technologies, and free access to information systems and transmission of information and pictures across the globe are creating a situation of total chaos in education systems. These elements disturb the process of transmission of values and ideals from the senior generations to the junior; and, thus, they span the gap between generations, in term of their values and cultural settings.

Of course, not all elements of globalization are negative, but there are many challenges to education systems, especially in the Muslim societies. More than fifty decades have passed since the autonomy from colonial powers, but the Muslim world is still confronted by many internal and external challenges. The more serious among these, however, are the internal challenges which are mainly results of educational policies and conflicting approaches between the traditional and modernity. The problem of nation building and society development has been the main challenge of the nation-state countries that formed in the post colonial era of the Muslim world. Political and economical instability has been the major feature of majority of these nation-state countries. Even the recent political unrest in some of these countries, which known as ‘Arab Spring’, is seemingly heading towards internal conflicts; rather than being an element of unity and nation building. All these factors are clearly against stability and the much needed process of development. In addition, the problem of religious extremism is once again emerging; it is a global phenomenon, but its symptoms are obviously seen in many of Muslim communities. This will emphasize the misunderstanding of Islam among other nations and may make more difficult to deal with the problem of Islamophobia.

The central question posed by such a critical situation needs answer from education policies, based on the fact that our acts and behaviors are caused by our thoughts. In other words, the way we think is reflected by situation of our societies which in turn can be traced back to education in its broadest sense. Hence, the principle factors underlying the current problems in the Muslim world may not be fully understood without understanding the Islamic
educational philosophy and examining its methods of application in the modern Muslim societies.

3.0 EDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY

In order to understand the concept of ‘philosophy of education’, it is necessary to understand first meanings of its two components: ‘philosophy’ and ‘education’. These two concepts are generally used for how human approaches the world and interprets its events. For example, education is concerned with how human acquires ‘knowledge’, but philosophy is concerned with what is ‘knowledge’ and why we acquire knowledge. In other words, education is concerned with means, while philosophy is concerned with ends with regard to objectives of life. Thus, education is considered as an effective means to achieve the final goals of philosophy. The two concepts are closely related to each other in term of their final objective, which is a meaningful life.

3.1 The two dimensions of education

Terms such as religious education, moral education, and scientific education are used for certain objectives to be obtained through educational process. For example, the term ‘religious education’ is used for process through which dispositions toward religious behaviour can be created and encouraged. In our investigation on term ‘education’, however, we can observe that education in its various forms, i.e. formal and informal, is conceived with consideration to two parts: the instructor and the recipient; or the ‘source’ and the ‘recipient’. These two parties represent two different forms of objectives in education process: the personal and the public or the individual and society. With consideration to the first part (individual), we can conceive ‘education’ as a process of ‘transmission of knowledge’; but based on the objectives of second part (society) we conceive it as a process of ‘transmission of values’. Terms used for these two parts in Islamic educational tradition are: ‘Ta’lim’ and ‘Ta’dib’ respectively. Sometimes the term ‘Tariyyah’ is used to stand for both. According to the modern studies, the first type is called the child-centered or person-centered education, which primarily stresses on needs and capacities of the recipient; while the second is known as society-centered, whereby education is conceived primarily as a vehicle to produce good citizens for community purposes.

In fact, there are no major differences between the two conceptions of education, they are indispensably connected to each other; but the first one is more concerned with the individual

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5 In this context, we differentiate between education objectives and goals of human life; because some philosophers believe that ends of education must be practical. For example, John Dewy holds that “In reality, ends that are incapable of realization are ends only in name. Ends must be framed in the light of available means. It may even be asserted that ends are only means brought to full interaction and integration. The other side of this truth is that means are fractional parts of ends. Study more about means and ends of education: John Dewey (1929), The Sources of a Science of Education (Horace Liveright, New York) pp 59-60


7 Knowledge and values are the two methods of how human understand the world.

persons of community, while other is related to the collective body of society. A child learns almost from every source of knowledge, but he/she gets his values mainly from the community (family, school, etc).

With consideration to the personal part, education can be defined as a process of nurturing the fundamental human dispositions: the psychic (emotional), intellectual, and spiritual, for better understanding of the world\(^9\). From Islamic perspective\(^10\), the process of learning, which is a continuous process across human life, encompasses the entire component of being: seen and unseen: the universe (nature), man (human phenomenon), and the Ultimate Being (the Absolute). Education in this sense is, simply, a process of awakening the enthusiasm on human powers and inspiring them for learning (Dewey 1929, p 10)\(^11\). Through this process, the society develops the desired qualities of individual persons who will be qualified with the integrated formula of knowledge and values to produce the right action. The major objective of education, in this sense, is to equip the new generations by necessary means of dealing with things in proper manner and to be aware of their mission in life and their role in the world. Lacking educated individuals, the society would not be able to achieve its goals for development and better live.

Education, from social perspective is conceived, not just as a matter of knowledge transmission, but more importantly as a process through which human society transmits its ideals, experience, and goals to the successive generations. Through education, a society preserves its identity and perpetuates its life throughout the pages of history; not in term of physical aspects but in term of values and culture. According to the holy Qur’an, as individual peoples die, also societies or nations (Ummah) can die due to certain factors. Therefore, a society survives through a process of transmission of certain aspects similar to that of biological life. Living creatures will continue to exist as far as they are able to transform their surrounding environment into energy. They cease to exist when they lost this advantage of being. But what makes a society continue existing? Philosophers of education answer this question as follows:

Society exists through a process of transmission quite (similar) as much as biological life. This transmission occurs by means of communication of habits of doing, thinking, and feeling from the older to the younger. Without this communication of ideals, hopes, expectations, standards, opinions, from those members of society who are passing out of the group’s life to those who are coming into it, social life could not survive. (John Dewey 2001, p7).

Education, in this sense, is considered as a major means of connection between generations through transmission of values and ideals of outgoing members of society to incoming members, i.e. new generations. Without social considerations, the new generations will be cut loose from their original cultural values. Therefore, education in social sense is the process by which social groups maintain their continuous existence (Dewey 2001, p 330)\(^12\).

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9 You may compare this definition to that of John Dewey who used both terms ‘forming’ and ‘nurturing’ for definition of education. John Dewey (2001), *Democracy and Education* (The Pennsylvania State University) P 335.

10 The term ‘Islamic perspective’ and other similar terms such as ‘Islamic philosophy’ and ‘Islamic education’ are used in this paper for concepts and ideas drawn from the original sources of Islam, which are the holy Qur’an and Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH); all views expressed in this context are, therefore, based upon our conception of these two sources; thus, they might not be free from human errors and should not be out of critical review.


12 This might be the main reason why the holy Qur’anic makes a clear distinction between life of a society and life of individuals.
Based on above two meanings, i.e. personal and social, education can be conceived, using Dewey’s words, retrospectively or prospectively; that is to say, it may be treated as process of accommodating the future to the past, or as utilization of the past as a resource in developing future. The former finds its standards and patterns in what has gone before. In this case, the earlier presentations constitute the material to which the later is to be assimilated (Dewey 2001, p 84). Education, as foundation of knowledge and values, has been the major source of inspiration and strategic project for human progress. This crucial role of education in its traditional sense, however, is challenged by the contemporary elements of globalization which presumably spans the gulf between generations and increases the gap between them in terms of their values.

3.2. Philosophy

There are many questions which cannot be answered by direct appeal to observation and experiment, such as meaning of ‘knowledge’ and purpose of being. This type of topics constitutes the subject matter of philosophical investigation. Philosophy, as a discipline, deals with the fundamental human questions about being and human experience. It generally concerned with how human understands the world and interprets the life. Philosophy meanly aims at attaining the truth; therefore, it literally defined as ‘love of wisdom’. This definition, as thought by classical philosophers, is based on the fact that since learning means coming to know, it involves moving from ignorance to wisdom, from privation to fullness, from defect to perfection, from non-being to being. The central idea of philosophy, however, is based upon reflective thinking, reasoning, and justification. All concepts of philosophy implicitly show that philosophy as a branch of learning is based on reflection and reasoning. This is the common point between the various schools of philosophy (Alparslan 1994, p 160). Philosophy deals with questions of both seen and unseen worlds; or science and metaphysics. The subject-matter of philosophy, therefore, encompasses all human experience and all fields of knowledge. It critically examines methods of all sciences, identifies their objectives, their classifications, and explains their basic concepts. The four classical branches of philosophy are:

1. Ontology: concerned with nature of being both seen and unseen worlds (physical and metaphysical). It based on speculative reasoning to understand the whole being.

2. Logic: is theory of correct reasoning, and it provides the method of investigation to uncover the truth based on rules of rationality.

3. Epistemology: means theory of knowledge, which investigates possibility of human knowledge, its sources, methods of obtaining, and final objectives.

4. Axiology: is theory of values, which investigate the major classifications of values, their meanings, sources, and objectives, which includes moral values and ethical norms, aesthetic values (music and arts), and others values such economical and physical values.

Philosophy approaches education in a way which is different from all other fields of human experience. Philosophy uses all other fields as subject matter, or field of study, but it uses education as tool to achieve its goals. Education is basic means to materialize the final objectives of philosophy, or it is the dynamic part of philosophy. Philosophy is theory and education is practice. Looking from the other dimension, education uses philosophy as method to systemize human all activities in both social and natural phenomena. For this

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13 Dewey, J. (2001), P 84
14 Ibid, P 338
especial relationship, some philosophers defined philosophy as “the general theory of education” (Dewey 2001, pp 336, 339). These points are elucidated by John Dewey as following:

Philosophy was stated to be a form of thinking, which, like all thinking, finds its origin in what is uncertain in the subject matter of experience, which aims to locate the nature of the perplexity and to frame hypotheses for its clearing up to be tested in action. Philosophic thinking has for its differentia the fact that the uncertainties with which it deals are found in widespread social conditions and aims, consisting in a conflict of organized interests and institutional claims. Since the only way of bringing about a harmonious readjustment of the opposed tendencies is through a modification of emotional and intellectual disposition, philosophy is at once an explicit formulation of the various interests of life and a propounding of points of view and methods through which a better balance of interests may be effected (produced). Since education is the process through which the needed transformation may be accomplished and not remain a mere hypothesis as to what is desirable, we reach a justification of the statement that philosophy is the theory of education as a deliberately conducted in practice (Dewey 2001, 339-340).

It is obvious from the above statement that philosophy plays in important role in systemization of all human activities, especially inquiry in social and natural phenomena. We may conclude that major aim of philosophy is, like religion, to create consistency in our thoughts about world and being, and to reconcile our conflicting interests and actions. This includes all area of human knowledge which is the subject-matter of education

4.0 PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

By now, we may assume that meaning of ‘philosophy of education’ has become obviously clear. This assumption is based on the above two conceptions of term ‘education’, i.e. individual and collective objectives of society, and the central idea of term ‘philosophy’ which based on reflection, reasoning and justification in investigating the ‘truth’. Philosophy of education, according to Dewey, has a double task: first, criticizing the existing aims of education with respect to the existing state of science, pointing out values which have become obsolete (out dated) with the command of new resources, showing what values are merely sentimental because there are no means for their realization. The other task of philosophy of education is to interpret the results of specialized science in their bearing on future social endeavor. The major aim of philosophy of education, according to the above two tasks, is serve society through identification and updating the final objectives of education. John Dewey, attracted by his pragmatic approach to philosophy of education, holds that:

‘Philosophy of education’ is not an external application of ready-made ideas to a system of practice having a radically different origin and purpose; it is only an explicit formulation of the problems of the formation of right mental and moral habitudes in respect to the difficulties of contemporary social life. (Dewey 2001, pp 338-339).

In fact, we can approach ‘philosophy of education’ from various dimensions, but for purposes of this paper we will approach it through the basic components of educational process. The foundation of science of education is actually centered on four basic pillars, which are (1) the recipient, (2) education objectives (3) the content, and (4) the method of communication. These components comprise the basic subject matter of educational philosophy. To set up education objectives / policies, we must have clear view on all these points. We need to

16 Study detailed presentation of these components, Syed Muhammad Naqib al-Attas (1978). *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education* (Jeddah: King Abdul Aziz University), p 1.
identify carefully the desired dispositions of the recipient that to be formed and nurtured. We also need to know the content of knowledge (curriculum) that necessary to produce such dispositions. Finally, we need to develop an effective method of communication to inculcate the desired dispositions for desired goals of education. The term ‘philosophy of education’ is, therefore, used for standards based on which the basic educational questions are answered. The principal task of educational philosophy, in this sense, is to investigate the necessary conditions for attaining educational goals.

Nations are different in their educational policies based on manner they deal with the above four basic components of education, especially the content and educational objectives. And this constitutes the general principles of educational philosophy. There are many factors involving in formulating the basic structure of these components, such as worldview, cultural values, the urgent needs of society, etc. Based on this, we may give brief description on basic characteristics of Islamic philosophy of education to explain how it is different from other philosophies, and to justify how it should be relevant to the needs of globalizing society of toady.

5.0 CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Based on the above definition of ‘philosophy of education’, we understand Islamic philosophy of education as standards based on which we answer the basic questions of education, namely: (1) what traits of mind and character are essential for transformation and development of Islamic society at both personal and collective levels? (2) What content (area of knowledge / curriculum) is necessary to produce such personal characteristics, i.e. formation of right mental and moral habits? And finally, (3) what is the most appropriate and effective method (administrative and instructive) to inculcate such subject of knowledge to produce the desired dispositions?

Achieving the societal goals of education mainly depends on the manner that we answer the first two questions. The Islamic philosophy of education depends on both reason and Divine revelation to deal with the above questions. Actually, these are the basic educational questions which form the subject matter and guidelines for every philosophy of education. However, answers of various communities to these questions are usually not the same. In other words, philosophers put different answers to the education question. The basic question is, therefore, what are the standards which guide Islamic educational thought to answer above questions? Answer of this central question needs analytical study on personal dispositions that required by Islam on one hand and the necessary content of knowledge to produce such dispositions on the other. Any survey on Qur’anic verses reveals that Islam aims at producing a balanced personality (insan saleh) and balanced nation (ummatan wasata). How to produce such personality and nation need a continuous investigation on other two components of science of education, i.e. the content and the method, taking in consideration that the content must be related to the principles of Divine revelation because man needs to understand both physical and metaphysical worlds. Generally speaking, discriminative mind, effective thinking, and relevant judgment are the major characteristics of a balanced personality.

These standards can be purely rational or can be derived from revealed knowledge as the case in Islamic philosophy of education.
5.1. Discriminative mind (Hikmah)

The most important objective of education in the era of free movement of ideas and cultural element is to build a mature and discriminative mind that capable of making the right choice for meaningful life. Discriminative mind or wisdom (hikmah) is a result of right mental and moral habits, which called “balance” by philosophers. Creating a balanced personality has been essential for development of human society throughout the history, and it is a basic need of materialized community of the contemporary world. The major objective of modern education systems should be, therefore, how to achieve this historic and noble goal. Actually, this is the major question of the Islamic philosophy of education. A careful study of Qur’anic verses and Sayings of the Prophet (PBUH) on this matter reveals that the final objective of Islamic education system is to create a balanced personality and balanced society as well.

Unlike the material objects, creating a balance in a human and social phenomenon always depends on various factors. In fact, this might be the major problem that has been associated with the contemporary Islamic education systems. This assumption can be established on two bases: firstly, the idea of balanced personality and balanced nation that emphasized by the original sources of Islam has not given its due consideration in education systems, and has been neglected in many cases\(^\text{18}\). The second factor is that, actually, the centre of the ‘balance’ itself is unstable over the time; it is changeable based on changing circumstances of the community; therefore, it needs a continuous review.

For these two points, the modern Muslim education should investigate more on how to create a balanced personality and balanced society. What do we mean by ‘balanced personally’, what are the characteristics and the necessary means to develop such personally? To create balanced personality, of course we must consider all major aspect of humanity in education process: intellectual, physical, spiritual, and emotional. The necessary content of knowledge which satisfies all these aspect cannot be found in science alone or in religious teaching alone, but by both. In other words, the experimental and experiential knowledge must work together for right mental and moral habits (knowledge and values). Relevant data to develop an answer for question balanced personality from Islamic perspective can be found in views of early Muslim theologians and philosophers\(^\text{19}\); but current situation in Muslim world, with regard to science and technology, suggests focus on intellectual characters of discriminative mind. To provide some guidelines for this, we refer to the Report of Harvard Committee on general education, which has identified traits of mind that should be fostered by education for modern society as following:

1. Ability to think effectively;
2. Ability to communicate effectively;
3. Ability to make relevant judgements to discriminate among values.

These intellectual traits are not separable in practice and are not to be developed in isolation\(^\text{20}\).


\(^{19}\) These views are summarized by Seyyed Hossein Nasr “Traditional Islam in the Modern world”, chapter 8 & 9.

5.1.1. Effective thinking

The Report explains effective thinking as following: By effective thinking we mean, in the first place, logical thinking: the ability to draw sound conclusions from premises. Logical thinking is the capacity to extract universal truths from particular cases and, in turn, to infer particulars from general laws. Yet by logical thinking we do not mean the equipment of the specialist or what a student would learn by taking a course in formal logic. We are concerned with the student who is going to be a worker, or a businessman, or a professional man, and who does not necessarily look forward to a career in scholarship or in pure science; as a plain citizen he will practice his logical skills in practical situations: in choosing a career, in deciding whom to vote for, or what house to buy, or even in choosing a wife.\textsuperscript{21}

5.1.2. Communicative mind

The ability to express yourself obviously and transmit your views and ideas efficiently, through all means of communication so that can be understood by others clearly without confusing. Conversely, it also means the ability to listen to others to understand their views, without confusing. This characteristic is actually inseparable from effective thinking, because to speak clearly one must have clear ideas. You cannot say something unless you have something to say; but in order to express your ideas properly you also need some skill in communication.\textsuperscript{22}

5.1.3. Relevant judgement

Making a relevant judgment means to make a right choice among the flying ideas and values of the globalizing world. Of course this is definitely not an easy task, but Islamic philosophy of education can play an important role in this situation because its major aim is to develop a balanced personality. Relevant judgement is every important, because it influence our way of life. It involves the ability to bring the whole range of ideas upon the area of experience to make the right choice which leads to meaningful life. Recognizing the balance in all human aspects might be a reasonable standard for choice. The essential thing is that relevant judgment thinkers are constantly aware of the ultimate objectives; they never let means to obscure and hide the ends, and be persistent in directing their attentions from the symbols to the things they symbolize.\textsuperscript{23}

5.2. Area of knowledge

The Islamic philosophy of education is based on Qur’anic classification of the world into two basic parts: seen and unseen. A human being needs to learn both visible and invisible worlds for purposes of meaningful life. One of these worlds is accessible through faculties of knowledge, while the other is understandable only by assistant of Divine revelation. Therefore, the area of knowledge (content / curriculum), from perspective of Islamic philosophy of education must includes both realms: seen and unseen or physics and metaphysics; the world that accessible by our sense perceptions and that which accessible only be aid of Revelation. Since the unseen world cannot be known in the same manner of seen world, it cannot be a subject matter of the natural or experimental sciences. Alparslan summarizes the idea of Islamic metaphysics, from educational perspective, as following:

What is this unseen world that cannot be known yet can be made intelligible (i.e. comprehensible by the mind) only via revelation? To find the Qur’anic answer, we need only

\textsuperscript{22} Conant, p 67.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, p 69.
the following explanation: “no one except God knows the unseen world in the heavens and on the earth; nor can they perceive when they shall be resurrected (27:65-66)”. The conclusion one can draw from such verses is that the unseen world includes such concepts as God, the Hereafter, and revelation. If so, then we already know that these concepts are subject to the study of metaphysics in philosophy. Since the Qur’an states that these cannot be known by the human mind, as the mind can only comprehend them after they are taught by the Qur’an, we can infer that the rationalist concept of philosophy, which claims that metaphysical subjects can be discovered and conceived by unaided reason and, more specifically, unaided by revelation, is unacceptable to the Qur’anic perspective. 

The area of learning, according to Harvard Committee Report, was classified into three basic disciplines based on their method of investigation: natural science, social studies, and the humanities. The study of the natural sciences aims at understanding the physical environment, so that we may have a suitable relation to it. The study of the social sciences is intended to produce an understanding of our social environment and of human institutions in general, so that we may develop a proper relation to society. Finally, the purpose of the humanities is to enable man to understand himself, that is to say, in his inner aspirations and ideals.

Actually, this classification is relevant to be adopted by Islamic philosophy of science, but based on the above classification of the world to seen and unseen realities to accommodate all human aspects in education process. The major aim of this classification is to create a balanced personality through introducing human being to the three major phenomena of the created world: the natural, human and social. Methods of investigating these phenomena are established on different degrees of certainty; therefore, they constitute the three principal areas of learning, beside revealed knowledge.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In concluding remarks, we emphasize that creating awareness on Islamic philosophy of education is an urgent matter in Muslim communities. One of strategic approaches to achieve this noble goal is that philosophy of science and philosophy of education must be taught in institutions of higher learning. Based on the above presentation, it is obviously clear that the Islamic philosophy of education satisfies the basic needs of modern society of globalizing world. The most import base for this claim is that the major aim of Islamic philosophy is to produce a balanced personality that required by materialistic society of the modern world. This important task can be achieved because Islamic education exposes students to both physical and metaphysical worlds. Understanding metaphysical world is related to the principles of revelation. Seyyed Hossein Nasr summaries the general characteristics of Islamic education as following:

- In Islam, knowledge was never divorced from the sacred and both the whole educational system and the sciences that it made possible breathed in a universe of sacred presence. Whatever known possesses a profound religious character, not only because the subject of every type of knowledge is created by God but most of all because the intelligence by which man knows is itself a Divine gift. Being related to holiness and hence wholeness, Islamic education has to be concerned with whole being of the man whom it sought to educate. It goal is not only the training of mind but that of the whole being of the person. That is why it

implied not only instruction or transmission of knowledge (ta’lim) but also training of the whole being of the student (tarbiyyah). The teacher is not only a transmitter of knowledge (mua’llim) but also a trainer of souls and personalities (murabbi). For this the term (mua’lim) itself it imbued with ethical connotation which in the modern education system have become nearly totally divorced from the question of teaching and transmission of knowledge, especially at higher levels of education. The Islamic education system never divorced the training of the mind from that of the soul and the whole being of the person. It never considered the transmission of knowledge or its possession to be legitimate without the possession of appropriate moral and spiritual qualities. In fact, possession of knowledge without these qualities is considered dangerous in Islamic educational philosophy.

The Islamic philosophy of education, therefore, enables man for two tasks: first, to answer the basic cosmic questions about being and life; this will lead to recognition and appreciation of Creator of the universe; second, Islamic education enables man to understand his own self and his role in the created world around him for two purposes: to learn how to deal with it properly and to increase his knowledge of the Creator. These two modes of learning constitute the foundations of knowledge and values and lead to a meaningful life.

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