

Educated information is power.

The aim of Islamic schooling is to reconnect pious and worldly experiences, and to blend them into a harmonious relationship. Harmony can be achieved by examining and testing modern and traditional knowledge in order to discover how both can be applied theoretically and practically. The use of knowledge should realize its primary focus, that of portraying an Islamic vision of society. The moral value of schooling rests with the development of a comprehensive view of the world (its sacred and profane realities), and commitment to expertise shaped in a context of faith and piety. Failure to overcome alien influences has in the past subverted traditions of faith and piety, and contributed to a duality of Kufr and Iman. Ultimately the subversion of authentic Muslim values has led to distortions of character and intellect.

Schooling & the Quranic Framework

If the Islamization of Knowledge amounts to a new vision of schooling, the Quran could be viewed as a curricular framework for schooling experiences. The contents of a curriculum can be general or specific, and broad or prescriptive. Thus the Quran is not dissimilar to a curriculum. It contains a plan that places an individual in relationship to the divine. It is even used by faithful Muslims as source of legal, scientific, and moral knowledge. By analogy, the Quran is specific and prescriptive, and it includes strategies for living a pious life.

It is dangerous to think that the moral and the academic are disconnected and unrelated to one another. In most schools the academic so commands center stage that the moral can get lost in the shadows. Academic purposes have moral import; moral standards guide even the most clearly academic activities. Student-teacher relationships are utterly moral; they are also a critical piece in the puzzle of effective instruction. Classrooms are value-laden environments for learning.

When we discuss lofty aims of education in teacher preparation programs we talk about citizenship, lifelong learning, and quality of life. Yet somewhere the constant barrage of “go to school, get good grades, get a good job” always creeps into the picture. What does the persistence of this phraseology indicate about the underlying assumptions that school leaders, teachers, parents and students believe when it comes to the ominous question of “why do I need to know this?” Are our school systems generating a culture that is antithetical to **quality** learning.

Zahra Al Zeera, a modern female scholar in

Islam also contributes to this discussion in improving modern Muslim education. Among her suggestions is the recognition of intuitive knowledge alongside reason and rationality. She argues that spirituality and intuition are parallel and one leads to another. The recognition and nurturing of intuition may help to increase the spiritual growth of students in schools in ways that logic, reason, and quantitative efforts cannot.

Along these lines she makes another important contribution in the recommendation of transformative research methods for student inquiry. This methodology has two concerns: the discovery of knowledge within a holistic Islamic context (how that knowledge is interrelated with its context and its Creator) and secondly the connection of the students themselves to their souls and their own inner transformation from gaining knowledge and connecting with what is sacred. Such transformative learning promotes dialectical thinking, reflection and meditation, and conversation and dialogue. **Most educational institutions diminish human beings to the mind only, and ignore the soul.** By so doing, they create unbalanced human beings that have advanced intellectual abilities, yet spiritually are poor and weak.

If we do not have “moral academics” then we can become like that “great” society whose bookstores and libraries have that runaway bestseller “Dummies” series. So they didn’t teach all the right things at school so what do we have...It started, with DOS for Dummies. It went on to Word for Dummies, Windows for Dummies, etc. The series no longer confines itself to obvious technical fields like the Windows OS. With the help of the Dummies books, we can become “functional” in many aspects of our lives. Stroll through a bookstore, you will find these guides: Dating for Dummies. Then there is Sex for Dummies (how come our parents didn’t need this). There is also A Guide to Pregnancy for Idiots (this is a different series, but the intent is the same). After pregnancy, of course, there may be a few extra pounds to shed. That is when you can use Weight Loss for Dummies. You’ll want to make sure to have a look at Parenting for Dummies. The pressures of life mean you’ll need Stress Management for Dummies. Should life take a toll on your marriage, there’s Rekindling Romance for Dummies (not making that up!) If that doesn’t work, there’s Divorce for Dummies. Should you start questioning this entire enterprise, there’s Philosophy for Dummies. The list goes on...but you get the point...Islam for Dummies? So when Islamic school’s closed you should have been “made” into the complete human. You won’t be spotted in the “Dummies” aisle. God said: “Verily we shall send down to you a weighty word.” Dummies need not apply.

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Education

Discover the many layers of God’s Intelligence

The educational process has been the subject of much comment by academics & writers. Their observations range from praise to cynicism, **mostly the latter.** Education is an easy target for criticism because its stated aims are often so nobly ambitious that they have little chance of being realized. It should give us pause that so many people who have made their mark in the world of ideas, who have been acknowledged leaders & innovators, have held formal education & educational institutions in low regard. The Islamization of Knowledge refers to a needed **re-integration**, at both theoretical & practical levels, of contemporary knowledge & Islamic thinking; that is, an Islamic conception of the universe. Islamic schooling would result in empowering the intellect by overcoming contemporary conflicts between divine & natural laws. Students should use the intellect to interact with the world in a virtuous way. As such, **intellect should incorporate the transaction between divine and natural realities in order to inject meaning & value into schooling.** Islamic students are to be encouraged to interpret and reinterpret scientific phenomena because of their moral obligation to correct ignorance, and thereby to discover the many layers of Allah’s intelligence.

Muhammad (p) the last Messenger of God's constant prayer: "God! Grant me knowledge of the ultimate knowledge of things!" The goal of all educational curricula, including Islamic, is to plant the seeds of a true religious & spiritual awakening.

In the annals of human history, we cannot find another spiritual man who laid such a deep emphasis on education as did Muhammad (p). As the Supreme Head of the first Islamic State, he decreed education as incumbent on all people, male or female. Talk of compulsory education is not an innovation of our modernists. Muhammad (p) had declared it compulsory almost immediately after the establishment of the City State of Madina. It was in the very second year of the establishment of the Madinistic Regime that his Law regarding Compulsory Education began to be implemented with all his vigour and force possible for a nascent state. And like a practical realist he also warns his people to save themselves from 'knowledge which is of no use'. In other words, he asked us to separate the kernel from the husk and to distinguish the substance from the shadow. Look at the breath of the vision of this great Revolutionary. He orders to take the good from everywhere one gets it and further counsels that knowledge is the lost of wealth of a believer and commands to acquire it whatever its source. So long as the Muslims kept up this breadth of vision they were the torchbearers of light & learning & were considered the norm to judge the various grades of cultures and civilizations of the world.

Education: The UN's Global Outlook states: Education; a means for achieving the interrelated goals of health, higher labour productivity, more rapid GDP growth & the broader goal of social integration, including participation in cultural & political affairs. However...Character building. Morality. Ethics. Nowhere to be found. The standard of living equals the quality of life.

Islamic education, primary goal: the building of character, the transformation and guidance of a person's inner and outer life. The Quran, for Muslims, is the ultimate source of knowledge and education. Its main purpose is to awaken in people the higher consciousness of their manifold relations with God and the universe. The Quran sees in the humble bee a recipient of Divine inspiration & constantly calls upon the reader to observe the perpetual change of the

winds, the alternation of day and night, the clouds, the starry heavens, and the planets swimming through infinite space. This is the Quranic perspective of education. This is where Islamic education begins.

It is where Secularism ends. This dangerous, mind-altering "educational" drug that infects all schools. It declares it immaterial whether or not God exists, for He has very little to do with the formulation of our epistemological, ethical, aesthetic, and signifying systems. There is surely no compulsion for people to accept the truth. **But it is certainly a blot upon the human intellect when people are not even interested in finding out what the truth is.** Islam teaches that God has given us the faculty of reason and therefore expects us to reason things out objectively and systematically for ourselves. To reflect and to question and to advance.

We are unique creatures, set apart by God as His deputy to govern over all the creatures in this world; set apart from all other animals by the faculty of reason. The Prophet (p) says: "God has not created anything better than reason or anything more perfect or more beautiful than reason." Together with this faculty to discriminate & discern, we are given the freedom to choose for ourselves a way of life worthy of our position as God's representative. Our existence in this world & the creation of the entire universe are not mere accidents or products of a fortuitous nature. This universe, every single atom of it, manifests and points us to the realization of a Loving/Merciful/Powerful Creator. Every single soul knows, knows for sure that it cannot create itself. Therefore it is our duty to know our Master. Sense-perception elaborated by understanding: knowledge. This is what true education is all about.

Is this "religious" education? No. Is this "philosophy?" No. Philosophy made and moulds the modern Western educational system: the spirit of "free" inquiry; with components – it suspects all authority. Its function is to trace the uncritical assumptions of human thought to their hiding places; in this pursuit it often ends in denial, or the frank admission of the incapacity of pure reason to reach the ultimate reality. The essence of religion is faith; and faith, like the bird, sees its trackless way unattended by intellect. The one, focused on the eternal, the other on the temporal, the present. Kant's Critique of Pure Reason reveals the limitations of human reason and reduces the whole work of the rationalists to a heap of ruins. A sure education to the "educators."

Use intellectual and pragmatic tests to judge the benefits of these two parallel systems. The first, as a critical evaluation, without any presuppositions or bias, generally with a view to discover short term and long term benefits.

The pragmatic test judges it by its fruit. The former is applied by the philosopher, the latter by the Prophet.

There is another dimension; the Western system neglects the pupils' identity formation, particularly the spiritual part. What it elevates is "national" education. Education based upon the state's demands rather than the pupil's individual needs. Building members of the nation-state, drilling the concept of national identity into them. Successful it is, in attaining the twin goals of profit and practical progress.

Islam aims at bringing up an Islamic personality, through the process of encouraging the student to obtain knowledge: the essentials of God, the universe, the community and the human being; the relationship between them.

Muslim states fail; adding Islamic lessons to the academic curriculum does not "Islamize" teaching. They fail to distinguish between Islamic education and Islamic teaching. So whatever system of education prevails in the contemporary Muslim world must be observed through a Muslim, rather than Islamic, frame. Much of what is only Muslim practice should not be depicted as Islamic, ideologically. These structures are to be viewed realistically, not idealistically.

Credits, grades & positions can **never** substitute character, God-consciousness and purposefulness in life. The real purpose of education is to enable a person/student to follow the Divine Guidance, by creating the real spirit of Islam. In automatic extension, in logical outcome of the purposeful education grow human respect and dignity.

Restructure our curriculum. NOW. Or we will continue to wail and cry of our current predicament. And continue to seek solace in "our glorious past." If there is any competition of wailing and crying the Muslims would be the first-prize winners. They have been now crying for centuries and God knows how many more centuries will pass before they wake up to the fact that crying may cause both sight and mental blindness. The students need to be properly led. It is sickening to hear the leaders of Islamic nations, organizations and communities articulately call for unity while they are in disarray. Can they come together, for once, and let Islamic thought be shaped into action. Let's show why Islam's wisdom walks with ease and never fades.

Prophet Muhammad (p)

God has **not** created anything better than **Reason**