EDUCATING MUSLIMS:  
AN ALTERNATIVE EXPOSITION ON  
THE FOUNDATIONS OF CURRICULUM  

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Abstract: The term ‘Islamic education (IE)’ does not just refer to ‘Religious Education (RE)’ by itself at the expense of intellectual, psycho-social, natural and physical sciences. If by RE we mean to make someone faithful, then other areas indicated above are related to the personification of faith in character, behavior and actions, both at individual, family, social and civilizational levels. The above areas stand to represent five distinct foundations of the curricula of IE, and thereby they imply heavily on IE intents, contents, pedagogy, etc. This paper aims to share and discuss preliminarily the conclusion made after a meticulous review of enormous literature on Islamic education and its various traditional, integrated, and holistic models. Disturbed by area-study on the foundations of curriculum from the Western perspective, and after thorough review and in-depth analysis of various literatures, the researcher concluded that Islam as faith, knowledge and values, and as these three relate to man and to his psycho-social and civilizational destiny and missions, exerts great influence upon IE. Corresponding to the architectonically-unified structures of Islamic worldview, they are the five foundations of curriculum in Islam. The first part of this paper briefly re-conceptualizes these five foundations of the Curricula of Islamic Education. Secondly, it briefly explores their implication to the curricula of educating Muslims at the conceptual levels, in terms of its foundation and principles, and thirdly to the practical process of educating Muslim in terms its contents and structures at vertical and horizontal levels and corresponding to the destiny and mission of man. The paper concludes that such serious thoughts on re-conceiving IE would help to revive the Muslim education system, and thereby to cultivate the scientific temper among Muslims.

Keywords: Philosophy of Muslim Education, Curriculum Design, Curriculum Framework, Foundations of Curriculum, Integration of Knowledge

INTRODUCTION

The term ‘Islamic education (IE)’ does not just refer to ‘Religious Education (RE)’ by itself at the expense of intellectual, psycho-social, natural and physical sciences. The term ‘IE’ indicate to the process of ‘educating’ or nurturing the mind, body and soul, i.e., the psychic, physical and spiritual dimensions and faculties of man. In Islam, education is considered as ‘a purposeful activity’ directed at the development of the totality of human life, that no spiritual, cognitive, affective and psychomotor potentials of man should be left behind from being matured in a progressive and balanced manner (Al-Attas, 1979; Ashraf, 1985). That is to say that Islam is not just a belief system by itself; rather it is a way life. This is why, in the IE system, since the very early age, children are instructed on the fundamental of religion or are given Islamic Religious education so that they are ingrained in faith. Faith in turn is to be realized in their character, behavior and actions, at individual, family, societal and civilisational levels. In turn, this inevitably demands that the bases of the education and thereby curriculum be founded on the genuine but definitively certain principles of faith and the divine Shari’ah. The curriculum that Islam envisages for, hence, should be all-comprehensive and integrative, encompassing the contemporary needs, the past issues and future concerns of man. This article elaborates on the conception of Islam as ‘faith and way of life’ and on what that would imply to the curricula of educating Muslims, in terms of its
foundations and principles. Secondly, it briefly explores the implications of these conceptual deliberations on the foundations of the curricula to the process of educating Muslims, in terms of the contents and structures at vertical and horizontal levels and corresponding to the destiny and mission of man. The paper concludes that such serious thoughts on re-conceiving IE would help to revive the Muslim education system, and thereby to cultivate the scientific temper among Muslims.

FAITH-BASED THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF CURRICULUM

Although the IE system is established for hundreds of years, no historical review would suffice to truly understand ‘the Islamic’ about educating Muslims, unless Islam is seen as ‘the revealed way of life.’ The word ‘revealed’ means to say that Islamic faith system is transcendental, and the Islamic conception of reality and truth encompasses both the Absolute, invisible, transcendent realms as well as the revealed, visible, created and physical realms. These include Islamic metaphysical and ontological vision of truth and reality related to Divine Reality (the Absolute ghayb, the Nature of Allah, etc); related man (Resurrection, Prophethood, man’s inner spiritual self, primordial conviction, servitude, vice-regency, etc); and related to the created reality (such as Heaven, the Hell, day of resurrection, etc). No source other than the Revealed one would be able to present it, because such knowledge that pertains to the Absolute realms is not accessible to man. In turn, this means that the faith-related facts, principles and criteria, which is the subject matter of Revealed Sciences are the most certain (haqq); and thereby the crux of the conceptual foundations of Islamic education. These permanent constituents of Islamic education regulate the variables that change according to the change of time, place and the needs of people. That results in Muslims need to shape their worldview regarding any other fields of sciences, ‘the system of his government, and policy and the directives of his art, literature, expression and educational skills or expertise’ around the permanent faith principles (Madhkour, 1991). These fundamentals act as ‘ulūm al-maqās id wa al-ghāyāt (the science of guidance on aims and objectives) of education, (IbnKhalid, the Muqaddimah, p. 513 as cited in Madhkour, 1997, p. 389).

The most important foundation of Islamic education, and thereby its curriculum is founded on the genuine but definitively certain faith-related facts, principles and criteria. Together, various elements of faith build up a conceptual and theoretical framework. They ‘form a cognitive or Gnostic category’ that various choices of and decision about values, knowledge and skills are to be included in the education, and by extension in the curriculum which is based on the science of faith. Faith gives the direction, the guidance, the scope and the limits to the process of education. As pointed out by al-Faruqi (1982), it is:

“the first principle of logic, knowledge, metaphysics, ethics and aesthetics. It acts within the believer as a light which illuminates everything. To al-Ghazali, īmān is a vision which puts all other data and facts into perspective. It is the grounding for a rational interpretation of the universe” (p. 12).

As far as a Muslim is concerned, his vision, spirit, idealism, and personality so much depend on the Islamic belief system (Osman, 1991; Ahmad, 1998; Daud, 1989; Açıkgenç, 1996).

If the core is jeopardized or corrupted, or if the core is grafted from alien worldviews, there is no guarantee that those educated in the system do not become false leaders. In short,
the faith-based theological foundations are the base of practically all the sciences and disciplines taught in the Islamic education system whether it be theology, jurisprudence, natural sciences, mathematics, engineering or even philosophy. Before going into details on these, the following part briefly note on what is conventionally known, in the field of curriculum studies, as the foundations of curriculum. Thereby, the paper aims to provide a brief comparative perspective on the foundations of curriculum.

**PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS VERSUS THE FAITH-BASED THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE CURRICULUM**

In the field of curriculum studies, there is an agreement about three foundations - philosophical, psychological, and sociological (with historical connotations). They exert great influence on curriculum. Among these fields, Ralph W. Tyler (1948) “seems to place more importance on philosophy than on other criteria for developing educational purposes” (Ornestein and Hunkings, 2013, p. 30). Generally, philosophy involves an inquiry into the nature and meaning of life. Thus, one’s perceptions on why to live influence one's view of education and learning.

It is not possible to have an education system without some kind of philosophy or ‘responsible thought’ concerning reality, knowledge, and value. Responsible thoughts on these three area assist to us to decide who are we, why we are created? And who is behind all that is happening around? That is, they are ‘necessary’ constituents of a philosophy of education (Butler, 1968). The philosophy involves an inquiry into the nature and meaning of reality, life, human beings, and social values. They are ‘very fundamental’ when formulating ‘the aims of education and the function of educational institutions in a society’ (Butler, 1968, p. 486). It is this regard, therefore, that faith or belief system of Islam becomes the central theme to the process of educating Muslims.

In this belief system, faith in Almighty Allah is the single essential characteristic and the central integrating core. Other elements of faith such as faith in the Prophethood, the Divine Books, angels, the Final Day; and the decree of Allah are indelibly related to the belief in Allah. Together, they provide a perspective on man’s existence, his duties and on how to carry them out accordingly’ (Osman, 1991, p. 7). For a Muslim, they help him to decide about his existence, its purpose, and who is behind all that is happening around him?

The strong faith in the One God, according to Osman (1991) “is essentially intellectual and spiritual in nature....” (p. 231). It is through His Beautiful Names and Qualities that Allah “reveals Himself to mankind” (Nasr, 1999, p. 24). Both intellectually and spiritually, understanding the Infinite Almighty Allah, His Names and Attributes nurtures a unique worldview of the Reality and the Universe in man, which in turn governs all his endeavours on earth. Intellectually, man need to exert his rational power while trying to understand the meaning of the Divine names and the signs of Allah on the earth through social, human and natural sciences. Such a deep comprehension would provide spiritual insights on the inner meanings and purposes of the creations and their destiny. This justifies why, in early Islamic history, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) enormously emphasized on consolidation of Islamic faith in the minds of new believers, thereby elaborating the meaning of life (Açıkgencoğlu, 1996). The birth of a strong united empire out of weak warring tribes would not have been possible had the Arabs failed to embrace Islam and adhere to its educational message (Açıkgencoğlu, 1996; Hamadi, 2005).
In other words, all the elements of faith, as integrated as one unity determine the essential philosophy of educating Muslim. Together, they constitute the mainframe of Islamic conception of Reality and the foundational structure of Islamic worldview. In short, while designing and developing curricula for educating Muslim, these philosophical rather theological stands should be taken up as the key structure or foundation of curriculum. They need to be understood properly. The comprehension of the elements of faith and their actualization in actions, not just at the individual level, but at the social and civilisational levels as well are tied to other two key structures of Islamic worldview, and thereby the foundations of the curriculum.

KNOWLEDGE-BASED INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF CURRICULUM

Knowledge is secondary to the faith. But knowledge is man’s paramount attribute responsible for the effective comprehension of the foundational principles of faith, as well as its articulation in the establishment of the just order in his self, his being and existence…” (al-Attas, 1979, p. 29).

To elaborate the above statement further, firstly, in order to articulate faith in his personal and collective life, man requires the support of a dedicated will power, which, in turn, should be supported by the enlightened rational power. The rational power is nourished through the process of acquiring ‘right’ comprehension of the principles of truth and reaching at correct knowledge of things in the physical universe.

Secondly, for the Islamic conception of knowledge is integrative and holistic, the intellectual foundation of Islamic curriculum is about having a correct Islamic vision about the educational process, i.e., about the wisdom and purpose of acquiring the knowledge. Ultimately, it is about being equipped with a balanced knowledge and enlightened rational power. ‘Knowledge really affects thought, behaviour and civilizing effectiveness or (in the case of lack of knowledge,) ineffectiveness’ (Abul-Aynain, 1992, p. 76). In different words, what this means is that education should facilitate a deep understanding of the Divine signs in the Revealed, Human and Natural sources of knowledge. It also implies that Islam does not approve compartmentalization of education into religious and otherwise.

Thirdly, Knowledge is so integral to the healthy faith as well as the virtuous actions that therefore, the educational process should be eclectic, in utilizing ‘all possible avenues to attain knowledge’ as well as various means of reflective, contemplative, and imagery methods of knowledge acquisition and the nurturing and maturing of the spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, emotive and other potentials within each student. However, Islam does not approve of the independent status of any faculty other than the Divine Revelation.

The Value-based Moral Foundations of the Curriculum

Simply value-based foundations, as al-Attas (1979) describes, functions as criteria and means of deployments and enacting of the faith principles, which is the goals of human life; and consequently the goal of education. That is, the pursuit of knowledge about Absolute truths, and about the human, physical and natural sciences is useless devoid of any creative and constructive purpose and unless they are put into practice. The Absolute truths and facts should be seen as points of reference and as values having implications on “man’s relationship with God, humanity and the universe” (Ashraf, 1985, p. 25). That is, values are
appreciated not as norms, but rather for their ‘formativeness’. They import certain meanings to this relationship. The Attributes of Almighty Allah, for example, are not regarded as just some metaphysical theories, but for their creative influence on ‘forming’ and nurturing the character and attitudes of man.

The value-based foundations, thus, provide an all-inclusive goal for education. Various values are required for protection and preservation of religion, life, intellect, progeny, wealth and honour. Therefore, they should be imparted according to their place in the hierarchy. They should implanted through various teaching/learning experiences, so that learners comprehend them well and apply them in their practical, theoretical and intellectual endeavours as researchers and practitioners, at personal as well as collective levels. When they are reflected in education and its contents and methods, the educated would be equipped with inner peace or tranquility, discipline, and wisdom.

**The Man-related Psychical-Social Foundations of the Curriculum**

Beside these three key foundations, there are two more foundations related to man (psychological and sociological) and the physical universe (civilisational). The psychological and sociological foundations are composed of Islamic viewpoint on man, various spiritual and physical components in him, the nature and ultimate purpose of human existence on the earth. They are subservient to the first three foundations and they examine various psychical, social, political, economical principles related to the utilization of individual and collective potentials for the well-being of the individual, family and the humanity at large.

This foundation, therefore, firstly, corresponds to the concept of man as servant and vicegerent of Allah. At personal or individual level, the scope of education is decided on its contribution to the meeting of the spiritual, intellectual and psychic needs of man. That is, as servant of Allah man is free from any types of servitude to human-made systems. At interpersonal or societal level, the scope of education is determined by the Islamic concept of vicegerency where man is dynamically involved in bringing welfare to humanity at large. The realization of these roles essentially depends on comprehensive educational processes, which train the emotional, intellectual, sensual and physical faculties simultaneously (Ashraf, 1985). The human exemplification of this is historically preserved in the life, activities and sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which, can be emulated as the perfect model that the educational institutions can project as their end product (al-Attas, 1979; Ashraf, 1985).

Secondly, with regard to the nourishment of various internal and physical faculties of man in addition to addressing various human needs. This foundation demands that the education system incorporated in all these elements is varied in such a way as to cater for the development of a balanced growth in the constantly changing physical abilities of man, the supernatural cognitive and rational potential of his intellect and his innate urge for spiritual attainment defined by various transcendental components of spirit and heart.

In line with the above, thirdly, the establishment of this foundation also demands that a moderate, middle-path be followed with regard to integration of various rationalist or empiricist methods, tools and disciplines. This foundation insists on the integration between the cognitive, the sensitive as well as the spiritual imagination of the human soul and accordingly approves creative and innovative thinking, thus providing ‘all the necessary safeguards against such kinds of deviations (Osman, 1991).
The Physical World-related Civilizational Foundations of the Curriculum

Lastly, man’s needs for material development and progress are denoted in the present study using the concept of world or civilisational structure. Man lives in the physical world and among other members of the society where the principle related to the first three foundations are materialized. In order to facilitate this process, Almighty Allah has provided the physical and natural resources for man; for his consumption as well as their effective utilization for the overall welfare of humanity.

Besides, this what the foundation demands is that education provides “an engaging positive vision of the Islamic perspective of progress, development, and reform, i.e., to relate them with promoting human welfare, establishing justice in the society, defense of family and homeland, efforts to meet the needs of the deprived and many others. That is, this foundation means to stress the wisdom behind striving for material advancement. It is all about struggling for creating an attachment to morality and awakening the moral consciousness among the people. Lastly, this foundation also implies that various sciences related to the partial and micro-minute physical and material beings in the world are placed within the whole or macrocosmic conception which is the Islamic vision of truth and reality. Therefore, it is necessary that such endeavour is not isolated from the holistic Islamic Worldview. In short, the entire cosmos was made subservient to man, and man was bestowed with the ability to perceive and comprehend scientific truths existing in the world, not just to exploit them, but rather to mould the forces of the world around him for the realization of the ‘spiritual democracy.’

To conclude the conceptual bases of Islamic education are theo-centric in essence, but realistic and practical as well. They correlate the metaphysical with the physical and the Divine with the human. They envision an ‘active efficacious and dynamic human portrait’ and prescribe a meaningful destiny for human existence at the individual and collective level (Hamadi, 2005). The unitary principle of tawhīd is the key to all these foundations, which, in turn, stitches them into one architectonic unified vision. Tawhid and by extension the faith-related theological foundations, thus, they act as the constant safeguards against disintegration and collapse of the education system, for it puts forth certain decisive and permanent facts, values and norms, which, in turn, regulate the variables that change according to the change of time and place and the needs of people, but facilitate development and progress. The order, hierarchy and their inter-links between these five foundations are portrayed in figure 1.1. However, merely examining the foundation areas as such is insufficient. “Curricularists need to show the relationship of the foundation areas and curriculum” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998, p. 14). They need to be reflected in the curriculum principles and methods of their applications. This is why, the next section explores how these foundations relate to the Islamic educations’ fields of exposition.
**ISLAMIC EDUCATIONS' FIELDS OF EXPOSITION**

Corresponding to the five foundations of Islamic education explored above, the fields of exposition of the Islamic education is the compendium of Revealed, Intermediary Human and Physical and Natural Sciences. As explained earlier, Islam approves all the possible avenues of knowledge, but does not grant them their own independence outside the holistic realm of Islamic Worldview. No one specific branch or sub-branch should be conceived with relationship to the others and to the whole. They are inter-related and unified within the architectonic unified world-view of Islam. An indelible link can be established not only among their contents, but also in their ultimate purport. Education, thereby, is a scientific activity of exploring into this inter-relatedness, analyzing their meaning and synthesizing practical solutions out of it.

The place of each category of the Revealed, Intermediary Human and Physical and Natural science and the place of science that falls under each category is, therefore, determined by their degree of contribution to the perfection of man’s knowledge of God, and to ‘the perfection of the soul to the point of being God-like, either directly or indirectly’ (Osman, 1998, p. 115). Practically, this denotes to the prior-most place of the Revealed Sciences in determining the parameters and criteria of foundational principles in various disciplines under intermediary human sciences, and physical and natural science.

**The Revealed Sciences**

The Revealed Sciences, fundamentally, make the knowledge of the reality outside the sensual and physical world understandable or intelligible to man, that man be able to make meaning out of them. What is beyond the sensual and physical world is not limited to only the existence of God, immortality and revelation. On the contrary, such abstract problems as what is knowledge, what is the being, what is freedom and what is the truth, what are the destiny and role of man, what are the major ethical values, and so on, are all well-defined subject-matters included under the spectrum of the Revealed sciences (Acikgenc, 1996). That is, the spectrum of Revealed Knowledge is so wide and comprehensive that they include specific directions for intermediary human sciences as well as the physical and natural sciences. With regard to education, the problem such as how a Muslim educationist should
regard the education as such, what are its aims and goals, and what should one study or teach, and so on are all problems that fall within the area of Revelation.

What all this shows is that, the Revealed Sciences have a well-defined knowledge content and an accumulated body of knowledge related to (1) the metaphysical domains of faith principles and (2) the Divine guidance, the Sharī‘ah. The first is known as the Revealed theology. According to Açıkgencoğlu (1996), “no science other than kalām (revealed theology)” is able to present it, because such knowledge pertains to the Absolute realms (p. 59). The second presents certain principles which are meant to be a guide to man in every aspects of life, i.e., Sharī‘ah (the Divine code of law). That is, Revealed knowledge is not just the accumulative body of dry knowledge in the form of concepts, facts, rules and regulations. If such were the case, Islam would have already been buried and forgotten beyond centuries. In reality, they are ‘formative’ rather than being ‘normative’; formative in the sense they ‘formed’ the course of the human history, provided them the directions and constantly inspired them to further investigate the physical, natural and intellectual spheres of knowledge, essentially directing them towards decisive aims and goals. That is how the revealed sciences brought about the glorious civilization. They were an integral part of the Muslim spiritual traditions, intellectual culture and civilization. It is the investigation into why they stopped doing so which, in fact, demands the necessity of the revival of the whole of the Revealed Sciences, and thereby, their bearing on other sciences.

The nature and characteristic of the contents of the Revealed Sciences and the logical relationships that exist among them are distinct from the nature and characteristic of contents of the intellectual and empirical sciences (Osman, 2009). They are derived from the authentic sources of the Holy Qur’an and the Prophetic Sunnah; they have an organized body of knowledge, which is systematized with certain methods. Rather, these peculiar methods are used to derive and to examine these knowledge contents (Açıkgencoğlu, 1991; Osman, 2009). The authentic sources are depended upon as being the ultimate sources for derivation of rules, regulation, criteria and parameters, which control this meaning-making process. These are just a few among many reasons why the Revealed sciences have always been held to be the highest form of knowledge as well as the ultimate goal of all intellectual pursuits in Muslim classification of knowledge composed over the centuries.

The Intermediary Human Sciences

Revealed knowledge is perfect in all its forms and allows no modification or change. It has the status of absolute truth. However, this knowledge is essentially aimed to guide man’s beliefs. Hence they need to be understood and their implications to man need to be elaborated. This is where the scope of Revealed sciences further expands to include the intermediary human sciences. “Speculative theology is the first human science that uses rational procedure in the acquisition of knowledge, and thus provides a passageway from the realm of the transcendent to the realm of the visible” (Açıkgencoğlu, 1996, p. 60). However, the human reason or intellect can only interpret that knowledge, within certain limits set by Almighty Allah in the Qur’an and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). When man further interprets them using his physical and rational faculties, it is called ‘the philosophical or rational’ in essence. For example, speculative theology is about the intellection on Islamic vision of truths regarding the metaphysical reality, but within the frame of the Divine Revelation. Therefore, the truth of such expositions are dependent on ‘limitedness’ and ‘subjectivity’ of human reason, and thereby relative. The same is true about fiqh (the
jurisprudence), akhlāq (ethics and morals), tasawwuf (mysticism). Jurisprudence, for example, deals regarding obligatory rituals, inter-personal ethics and morals, related family matters, business and political affairs and so forth, therefore, are inevitably decided upon the revealed divine injunctions. Therefore, intellectual knowledge is of tentative truth and always to be judged in the light of the former (Muslihudin, n.d. pp. 44-45).

At applied and practical level, then, the Intermediary sciences investigate the implications of the Revealed sciences on man, his family and the society. They establish certain spiritual, moral and ethical codes for men and their interpersonal dealings and transactions. Thus, these sciences stand in between the transcendent and physical sciences. Hence, whenever possible while investigating such subjects, methods of both transcendent and physical sciences –namely, (a) the reflective thinking methods taking the Islamic sources as their ground, (b) the experimental observational methods, and (c) rational procedures-should be utilized. Those with deep-knowledge of the Islamic sources, and enlightened with the spiritual discernment and intellectual capacity, may prove or disapprove of certain past expositions at personal level. At the communal level, nevertheless, it is the duty of the religious scientists or 'ulamā to derive specific scientific schemes, rules and regulations to be followed while doing such exercises. Although, the intermediary human science cannot be like the method of those sciences investigating the physical realm, nor like that of other conceptual sciences, an organic relation exists between these multiple methodologies, for ultimately they are unified coherently under the vision of tawhid (Osman, 1991). In short, the knowledge content and methods of inquiry of Intermediary Human Sciences, which include all the social and human sciences, are distinct from that of the first, i.e., each has its own proper methods and contents.

The Physical and Natural Sciences

The Physical sciences, thus, are in the last category, which include sciences such as physics, astronomy, biology and abstract sciences such as mathematics and logics, whose subject matter is nature (Açikgenç, 1996). They investigate the physical reality, not the spiritual or metaphysical reality. The method of studying the physical sciences is based on the ‘twin fundamental principles of observation and experimentation’ (Açikgenç, 1996, p. 105). The Holy Qur’an repeatedly encourages man to reflect upon the Visible World, in order to acquire its knowledge’, not as independent intellectual exercise, but in the name of his Lord, because all the laws of nature are placed into it, in such an intelligible manner that they also point to the Absolute Realm. That is, as per Islamic Worldview, the physical sciences should necessarily be considered as creations of Allah, the Ultimate Creator. In other words, God’s Creation is also God’s revelation (Osman, 1991). The objective of studying them, therefore, should not be divorced from the main objective of society, namely the maintenance of the welfare within the ethical fabric of Islam. “The Qur’an talks about the Visible Universe and discusses its marvel for the sole purpose of teaching its main objective, which is guidance in the knowledge of Absolute Realm.... But the [purpose] itself can be discovered and conceived only through the guidance of Revelation” (Osman, 1991, p. 56).

To put it briefly, the content of Islamic education, should be a compendium of sciences in the Revealed, Intermediary Human Sciences as well as Physical and Natural categories, but designed within the Revealed faith-centred framework. The developments and discoveries outside the Revealed-faith framework, for certain, have their own contributions; and Islamic education could benefit from them, but after ‘purging’ the impurities and sieving
them in the mould of Islamic Worldview. It is in this respect, that the Revealed faith-related principles, themes and values play the harmonizing and integrating role, giving the intellectual endeavour a purpose. Consequently, the curriculum of the ‘Islamic religious higher education institutions, necessarily should not be confined in the ‘pure religious studies’, rather to be extended to cover the humanities, social sciences as well as physical and natural sciences. An educational programme set to support exclusively, the Revealed sciences, will be different in content, design and organization from one that serves a more comprehensive concept of faith’ (Hamadi, 2005). Figure 1.2 summarizes these points, rather denotes to the ‘unitary consistency of the Islamic worldview’, and by extension, the unitary and holistic nature of Islamic education.

Figure 1.2: Islamic Education’s Fields of Enquiry

**ISLAMIC EDUCATION’S PEDAGOGICAL FOCUS**

No aspect of man’s life will escape the consideration of the Islamic education, be it his social, physical needs or spiritual needs. Fulfilment of all these needs is inherent to man’s most particular attribute, that of morality. That is the reason why, instead of ignoring these needs and desires, Islam organizes them in a proper context. Dīn (religion), nafs (the human life) and ‘aql (human intellect) are key values, which according to the Sharī‘ah, need to be protected and preserved from, not just physical harm, but from drugs which cause the mental illnesses. With regard to the Islamic education, this implies that the contents of the curriculum should be essentially related to the human plane, considering, man’s spiritual need for guidance regarding ultimate truths and the need to reach for God. Also, the curriculum should cover Man’s intellectual needs so that he makes meaning of his existence as well as his desire to acquire knowledge; his physical needs for food, activity, and sex; and man’s social needs for affection, ‘belonging’, and status within a social group (Rosnani, 1996) (See figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3: The Islamic Education’s Pedagogical Focus

That is, the total education experience that the Islamic educational settings provide, should encompass the spiritual, moral, intellectual, practical, social and ethical ends and concerns of man. It is not an atomistic process of just fostering certain intellectual or physical
skills such as analytical skills, effective communication, practical intelligence, ethical judgment, social responsibility or physical expertise (Liberal Education, 2002). Beside these, education of Muslims should target the nourishment of their spiritual faculties as well. Therefore, a variety of inter-related factors which correspond to the individual man, his society, the family, his social and peer groups, the school, the role allocated to him and a myriad other factors that either overtly or subtly shape and influence what should be taken into account within that education while devising pedagogical plans (Sultan, 1992). In other words, pedagogical focus of Islamic education should aim at nourishing the spiritual, moral, intellectual, psychical, imaginative, scientific, linguistic, physical and social aspects, needs and priorities both individually and collectively, so that he is motivated towards goodness and attainment of perfection in every sense.

This mandates that various fundamental principles, essential concepts, themes, skills and values related to the three main categories of knowledge, i.e., (a) the Revealed Sciences, (b) the intermediary Human Sciences and (c) the Physical and Natural sciences be arranged corresponding to the spiritual, psychic and physical constituents of man. This is represented in Table 1.4. The columns in the utmost left in Table 1.4, align with various human faculties such as the spirit (spiritus), soul (anima, psyche) and body (corpus) (Osman, 1998). They denote to the vertical dimensions that need to be taken into account while planning, designing, implementing and evaluating the education of Muslims. The columns at the top, as explained earlier, align with various sources and contents of knowledge needed to correctly establish the balance of the relationship between man and his Creator (Revealed Sciences), between man and other individuals (Intermediary Human Sciences), man and the physical universe (Physical and Natural Sciences). The places of each category aligning with the top columns- rather the places of sciences that fall under them, are determined by their “degree of contribution to the perfection of the ultimate to his knowledge of God and the perfection of the soul to the point of being God-like, that he undertakes his role perfectly” (Osman, 1998, p. 115).

Practically, the above point denotes the implication of Revealed Sciences while investigating the parameters and criteria of foundational principles in various disciplines under intermediary Human Sciences, as well as the Physical and Natural Science. That is why, the Revealed sciences have always been held to be the highest form of knowledge as well as the ultimate goal of all intellectual pursuits in Muslim classification of knowledge composed over the centuries (Osman, 1991). This justifies why the recitation of Holy Qur’an has been and continues to be integral to Islamic education at the earlier stages. At the later stages, the Holy Qur’an should be taught, not just for the merits of messages included in it, but for its inherent theoretical, applied and practical worth and implications.
Table 1.4
Islamic Sciences

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Islamic Sciences</th>
<th>Revealed Sciences</th>
<th>Intermediary Human Science</th>
<th>Physical &amp; Natural Sciences</th>
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| **Spiritual/Moral** | ● Principles of **Imān** (faith)  
● Obligatory Rituals (pillars of Islam) | **Tasawwuf** (spiritual ethics and morals) | Environmental Sciences and Etiquettes |
| **Intellectual/Psychic** | ● Speculative or **hikmah** (philosophical) Theology, Jurisprudence, Ethics and Morals, **Tasawwuf**  
● Principles of jurisprudence, sciences of the Qur’ān, etc. | ● Psychology  
● Philosophical inquiry (logics and Reasoning)  
● Methodical Sciences in relation to Humanities | ● Mathematics  
● Scientific Research Methods |
| **Physical/Social** | Intrinsic or Absolute values comprised in **Sharī’ah** (Divine Commandments) | ● **akhlāq** (shared values and morals) related to the Personal and Interpersonal relations  
● **mu’āmalāt** (practical aspects of Divine Commandments in such as Economics, History, Political sciences, etc; commonly known as Social Sciences) | Pure Sciences such as Physics, biology, astronomy, etc. |

Source: Adapted from A. Açikgenç (1996), *Islamic Science: Towards a definition*, p.61

Inevitably, thus, the foundational principles of religious, intellectual, philosophical, human and physical sciences should be derived from the Divine sources. This point is very pertinent, because Islam approves the rational-observational-experimental-scientific methods, provided that they are sieved through the prism of the Revelation.

In contrast to the pure rationalistic point of view about reality, man and universe; and in contrast to the *jāhilī* streak of individualism of ‘immanent’ arrogance and in contrast to total abstinence from worldly favours and withdrawal to inner-self, Islam pre-supposes a practical, realistic and comprehensive ideal for human beings (al-Attas, 1979). In short, the core components of the curriculum of Islamic education should, be composed sciences of various nature and characteristics, but integrated both vertically and horizontally, that they serve the balanced growth of every component in the tripartite constituents in man, i.e., the spirit (*spiritus*), soul (*anima, psyche*) and body (*corpus*). This is further explained while delineating the implication of these deliberations on the curriculum framework of Islamic education.
Through figure 1.4, the following part summarizes these deliberations. The figure denotes to interlinks between the conceptual bases (layer one), the fields of expositions (layer two), the pedagogical focus (layer three) and eventually on curriculum (layer four). The term ‘curriculum’ is used here in an all-inclusive sense; that is, these deliberations imply on every element involved in the process of planning, designing, organizing, implementing and evaluating the ‘veritable Islamic education system’ (Nasr, 1984, p.1). The first layer of the figure suggests to the theoretical and conceptual basis of Islamic education. Explicitly, what this implies is that the total academic and administrative environments of Islamic education institutions should be planned, designed, implemented and evaluated in such a manner, that they reverberate the priorities decided by Islam. That is, it should not be just a hodgepodge of various disciples from the Islamic and the Western heritage. With regard to this, the function of tertiary level Islamic Religious education institutions is to actively involve a community of scholars in exposition of these conceptual bases for their theoretical and applied implications.
They need to expose the absolute principles for their relevance, adaptability and adjustability to the social changes brought about by the modernity (Ashraf, 1985). The second and third layers respectively denote the fields and the means of their exposition. As such, these institutions should provide everything necessary to encourage learners to live by religion, use religious insights in the interpretation of their own experiences, developing self-consciousness and abilities (Tauhidi, 2001). Religious facts and principles should not be
allowed to lie as dormant facts; as having once been proved, never being evaluated again for their implications to the changing times. Besides being trained to have an ‘intellectual awareness’ about them, these scholars should be trained to see through them, make meaning out of them, and eventually expose their practical implications on individuals as well as on society. At present, it is incumbent upon the religious scientists and community of scholars to once again prove that a ‘veritable Islamic Educational System’ is not only possible, but also practicable.

The third layer, thus, denotes the practical ends and ethical concerns of the Islamic religious curriculum. That is, relating the contents of various disciplines to the human plane, focusing on the human integrity and welfare. The last layer denotes the curricular representation in the process of not only selecting intents, contents, teaching-learning experiences, organization of these experiences at various levels matching with students’ needs, but also in the total educational settings.

In summary, the figure shows how five key structures explained in chapter three could harmoniously represented in the process of education. Otherwise, what this means is that, merely explaining these principles, concepts, themes and key values is insufficient. The Muslim curriculum specialists along with Muslim theologians, educationists, subject-specialists and intellectuals must embark upon analyzing the underlying principles, themes, concepts and key value corresponding to the Islamic conceptions of faith, knowledge, virtue and their implication for man, his life and the civilization (Ashraf, 1985). They are integral to the educational process. They are present at every stage of it as procedural principle and expressive objectives, which should guide our practice throughout. In fact, by attempting to co-ordinate various principles, themes, concepts and values related to these five domains in a framework, the study aims to translate them into procedural principles which, in turn, would inform the above-mentioned group in the process of formulation, objective, organization of the contents, and selection of the teaching-learning experiences and the methods of evaluation.

CONCLUSION

Islam as a belief system, a way of knowledge, life and civilization presents a distinctive metaphysical, cosmological, epistemological, ethical and moral doctrinal principles about reality, knowledge and virtue; and consequently about man and his destiny. These are portrayed in the Islamic legal-moral code of the Šarī‘ahand the concept of al-dīn (religion) and unified by the concept of the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) into one comprehensive and holistic architectonic whole. Therefore, it is not surprising to claim that the very essence and spirit of Islamic education, its rationale, means and methods are fundamentally distinctive. The present study attempts to relate various deliberations made on the five essential structures of Islamic Worldview to the process of education, especially the curriculum, its foundations and principles. This needs to be taken into account in current discourses on Islamic education. In turn, such an understanding might provide a better understanding on how Muslims dealt with various intellectual and educational issues in the past and how we should face various demands of the modern times in the field of education.
References


