

Revitalization of Islamic Education Epistemology

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Abstract: *Islamic education is faced with a very complex problem, on the one hand it must be able to transfer knowledge and on the other hand that is not less important is to transfer the value of Islamic teachings. Epistemological criticism of the concept of Islamic education actually lies in the conceptual-philosophical building of Islamic education that does not have a clear and functional concept in dealing with the development of science and technology.*

Islamic education experiences lethargy and does not have the power of vitality that is not capable of giving birth to the concept of science that is able to solve the problem of universal humanity because it is trapped in the confines of the dogma of theology and fiqh of medieval scholars.

Keywords: *Epistemology, Islamic Education, Revitalization*

Introduction

In the situation and condition of the nation which is being plagued by various crises, while the economic and political order - along with international culture - continues to force, then what is really needed is strong human resources, who are able to understand the entire dialectical process in the administration of the state and in the global system. Without pretending to deny the other dimensions of humanity, for the purpose of human strength education is usually the foundation. Practically then education has an increasingly heavy duty and role even though substantially this is the meaning of education as a process of human empowerment in facing anything. But not by itself then everything can run easily, because actually we ourselves are always in debate at the level of theory about education itself, let alone to the level of policy in the local-regional and national context and its implementation.

The mainstream of mainstream thinking is the current educational discourse that Islamic Education seems to be lagging behind the development of people's lives and far behind the development of science and technology.¹ This is in addition to Islamic Education compiled based on unclear and less functional concepts. To deal with the quality of such education, then in this era of industrialization and free trade, Islamic Education is required to offer concepts that are capable of meeting the needs of the times. For thinkers and education practitioners among Muslims to rise up and review various religious doctrines specifically related to the concept of Islamic Education.

Meanwhile, amidst the tremendous pace of change in people's lives, the scenario of the development of the future of Islamic Education seems to continue to change and be full of uncertainty, so what is certain is uncertainty itself. Scientific and culture interdependence, which has recently been a characteristic underlying the onset of change, has now become a globalization of information, even economic, political and socio-cultural. So that it is difficult to predict changes that will occur.

We realize that worldly life is a history of continuous change that cannot be stopped. Such conditions, Islamic Education is faced with a very complex problem, on the one hand it must be able to transfer knowledge and on the other hand that is not less important is to transfer the value² of Islamic teachings. Therefore, the drafting of the concept of Islamic Education correctly in the functional sense of humanitarian and social problems is an effort to better prepare the lives of Muslims and the people of the nation in the future.

This paper wants to present discourse on the meaning of Islamic education, which until now is still a matter of dynamic debate to find meeting points and discussion of experts in accordance with their respective capacities and competencies. The choice of this discourse, the authors do because it is almost impossible for us to force ourselves to the level of dictating policies and implementing them. Let alone in the national scope, institutional conflicts still occur

¹ Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Paradigma Intelektual Muslim: Pengantar Filsafat Pendidikan dan Dakwah*, (Yogyakarta: Sipress, 1994), hal.211.

² M. Rusli Karim, *Pendidikan Islam Sebagai Upaya Pembebasan Manusia*, dalam, *Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia Antara Cita dan Fakta*, Muslih Usa, ed., (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1991), hal. 27.

which are often irrational. Below this the author describes the nature of Islamic education and the Epistemology review of Islamic education.

The essence of Islamic Education

The terms education and Islam are basically two different things and have their own understanding. But what is meant in the discussion here is a unity that cannot be separated so that it has a complete understanding and concept.

Review of Etymology

A study of root words that shows the notion of Islamic education, experts still disagree. Even the First World Conference on Muslim Education organized by King Abdul Aziz University in 1977 has not succeeded in making a clear formulation of the definition of Islamic education. The results of the conference finally recommended the terms *ta'lim*, *tarbiyah*, and *ta'dib* as the root words referred to in the meaning of Islamic Education.

Etymologically, in Arabic the terms that point to the meaning of education have different meanings because of differences in the text and context of the sentence, even though in certain cases they have similar meanings.

1. *At-Ta'lim* means teaching

The word comes from the root word *'allama* which means teaching, as mentioned in Al-Qur'an Surat Al - Baqarah verse 31 as follows:³

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

"And Allah taught Adam the names of all the objects, then handed them to the Angels".

According to Abdul Fattah Jalal, said *al-Ta'lim* is the right term in terms of education. By quoting Surat al-Baqarah verses 30-34, verse 151 he affirms that *a-ta'lim* has a more universal meaning than *al-tarbiyah*. Furthermore, according to Jalal, he asserted that the word *al-tarbiyah* had a narrower understanding than *al-Ta'lim*. According

³ Q.S. Al Baqarah : 31

to him the word *al-tarbiyah* is only found in two places, namely in Surat al-Isra 'verse 24 and Surat al-Syu'ara verse 18.⁴

2. *At-Ta'dib* means Special Education

This word comes from the root word *addaba* which means educating, as used in the Prophet's hadith which means the following:

"Your God has educated you, so He has your education."

In the view of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *al-Ta'dib* is the most appropriate term to describe the meaning of education than *al-tarbiyah*. Because *al-tarbiyah* is too broad in scope including for animal education,⁵ and emphasizes only physical - material and quantitative character.⁶ According to al-Attas, *al-ta'dib* is the *masdar* of the verb *addaba* which means education. From the word *addaba* it is also revealed the word *addabun*, meaning the introduction and acknowledgment of the essence. This understanding according to him is related to the dimension of science and charity at once.

3. *At-Tarbiyah* means Education

According to Abdurrahman al-Nahlawi, the formulation of an understanding of education that was more precise was actually taken from the word *al-tarbiyah*. In terms of the language the word *al-tarbiyah* according to al-Nahlawi comes from three root words, namely:

- a. *Raba* – *Yarbu* means to increase and grow, as the word of Allah follows:

And something usury (additional) that you give so that he adds to human property, then usury does not add to the side of Allah. "(Q.S. Ar-Ruum: 39)

- b. *Rabiya* – *Yarbu* means to be big

⁴ Ahmad. Tafsir, *Ilmu Pendidikan Dalam Perspektif Islam*, (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 1994), hal 30-31

⁵ Syed Muhammad al-Naquib al-Attas, *Konsep Pendidikan Dalam Islam*, terj. Haidar Baqir, (Bandung: Mizan, 1984), hal. 52.

⁶ Amrullah Achmad, *Kerangka Dasar Masalah Paradigma Pendidikan Islam*, dalam, *Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia Antara Cita dan Fakta*, Muslih Usa,ed,(Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1991), hal. 54

- c. *Rabba – Yarubbu* means to repair, manage, lead, supervise, maintain it,⁷ as the word of God follows:

"And say O my Lord have mercy on them both as they both have educated me as a child. (Q.S. Al-Isra ': 24)

In a historical perspective, the terminology-*Tarbiyah* can be classified as something new. This word arises and has links with educational renewal movements in the Arab countries in the early 20th century. This word is not found in ancient Arabic historical recordings. The Arab sources point to the words *al-ta'lim*, *al-ilm*, *al-tahdib*, *al-adab* for what is meant by *al-tarbiyah* as is known now.⁸

The existence of differences in understanding in searching for the formulation of the root words of education in these terms cannot indeed be put together because of differences in the text and context of the sentence. Apart from the similarities and differences, all of which clearly have the same meaning and meaning or are related to the term education.

Terminology Review

In terms of terminology, the definition of Islamic education has been formulated by many experts in accordance with the results of their respective *ijtihad*. In various literatures we can find various formulations of the definition of Islamic education with different emphasis points. But the difference does not reach a contradictory level. Under this the author will describe the definitions of education formulated by experts.

1. Ali Ashraf in his book *Crisis Muslim Education* writes as follows:

*"Islamic education is an education that trains students' feelings in such a way that in their attitudes, actions, decisions and approaches to all types of knowledge, they are influenced by spiritual values and are very aware of Islamic ethical values."*⁹

Understanding of the formulation of Islamic education emphasizes more on efforts to foster sensitivity (learners) on

⁷ Abdurrahman al-Nahlawi, *Prinsip-Prinsip dan Metoda Pendidikan Islam*, (Bandung: Diponegoro, 1989), hal.33

⁸ Roihan Achwa, *Prinsip-Prinsip Pendidikan Versi Mursi*, dalam *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* (Yogyakarta: Fak. Tarbiyah IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, Vol. I, 1991), hal. 42.

⁹ Ali Ashraf, *Horison Baru Pendidikan Islam*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1993), hal. 23.

Islamic ethical values, so that they can apply these values in daily life.

2. Abdurrahman al-Nahlawi in the Principles and Methods of Islamic Education, describes as follows:

*"Islamic education is an individual and social arrangement that can cause a person to submit to obedience to Islam and apply it perfectly in the lives of individuals and society."*¹⁰

Understanding of the definition emphasizes the process of directing individuals and communities (groups) to become submissive and obedient to the teachings of Islam. But all of that does not stop there, but it must be manifested in concrete actions both in one's own life and in the midst of society.

3. Muhammad S.A. Ibrahim, a Muslim thinker born in Bangladesh, limits that the definition of Islamic education is as follows:

*"Islamic education in true sense of the learner, is a system of education, whicc enables a man to lead his life accorded could mold his life in accordance with tenets of Islam."*¹¹

The above definition has referred to the emphasis on the development of future human life, without removing the Islamic principles mandated by Allah to humans, so that humans are able to fulfill their needs and demands for life along with the development of science and technology.

4. Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamaly defines Islamic education namely:

*"Efforts to develop, encourage and encourage people to be more advanced based on high values and noble life, so that a more perfect person is formed, both related to reason, feelings and actions."*¹²

5. Sayid Sabiq sets limits on Islamic education as follows:

*"Islamic education is to prepare students both in terms of body, mind and spirit so that he becomes a member of society that benefits both himself and his people."*¹³

¹⁰ Abdurrahman al-Nahlawi, op. cit., hal. 41

¹¹ Muzayin Arifin, *Kapita Selektta Pendidikan Islam dan Umum*, (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 1991), hal. 3.

¹² Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamaly, *Filsafat Pendidikan dalam al-Qur'an*, (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 1986), hal. 3.

¹³ Abu Tauhid MS, *Beberapa Aspek Pendidikan Islam*, (Yogyakarta: Sekretariat Jurusan Fak. Tarbiyah IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 1990), hal 11.

The two definitions above, both Fadhil al-Jamaly and Sayid Sabiq, seem to have similar emphasis in providing the definition of Islamic Education. Each emphasizes more on aspects that need to be formed and prepared by educators to their students.

6. Anwar al-Jundi in *al-Tarbiyah wa Bina 'al-Ajyal fi Dou' al-Islam* wrote the following:

*"Actually what is called Education according to the understanding of Islam is to grow people with continuous growth since he was born until he died."*¹⁴

In the above definition Anwar al-Jundi emphasizes the length of the continuous educational process, namely lifelong education.

Based on the formulations of experts on Islamic Education that the author has mentioned above, all of them have no fundamental differences. Even these definitions can be followed by a common thread, namely the similarity of *dqasar* values that are used as a starting point for Islamic education, namely Islamic teachings.

Epistemology of Islamic Education

The epistemological position of education science today invites the controversy of thoughts, insights and views among many experts in various forums. This problem is essentially not just a bluff of thought that wants to gain recognition, but rather a conceptual-philosophical critique of *logos* construction of Islamic Education itself.

The insights of critical thinking by Muhammad al-Sayyid, through his work *"Miracle al-Islam al-Tarbawiyah"*, Malik B. Badri in his writing *"The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologist"*, Sajjad Husain, Ali Ashraf, and also Abdul Hakim Mahmud on the outline reveals the weaknesses of Islamic education today both conceptually and factually. The role of Muslim thinkers in building the image of Islamic education, especially in terms of actual theories originating in the repertoire of the Qur'an, still demands development, improvement, and adjustment to the dynamics of change.

This weakness in the conceptual field of Islamic teaching is the beginning of the problems of the appearance of the figure of Islamic education and its various developments in the theoretical area and practice. The effort to formulate the concept of Islamic education was

¹⁴Ibid., hal. 12.

apparently not easy. The main obstacles to the preparation of such concepts are mostly not coming from outside the Muslim community, but rather arise from within the body of education a "scientific ideology" that is used to maintain an epistemological artificial falsehood in the development of Islamic intellectuals.¹⁵ This can be seen in Islamic education activities as a kind of educator indoctrination so that students think, think, and act as the educator.

Fazlur Rahman's sharp criticism of the chaos of Islamic thinking about Islam into a debate on scientific ideology is a dilemmatic and controversial situation that not only alienates Muslims from science, but also from the Qur'an. As a result, the potential of students' critical thinking that should be the main orientation of the teaching and learning process cannot develop.

The grip of sclastic discourse has resulted in Muslims being caught up in the freezing of theology and fiqh. In his book *Rethinking Islam*, Mohammad Arkoun critically attacked and rejected Muslim militants who carried out mythology and ideologization on Islamic ideology that grew in history.¹⁶ According to Arkoun, by referring to Clifford Geertz's opinion, to understand Islam, historical issues and semiotic linguistics should have been given more attention before focusing on theological studies.¹⁷ As a result of the lack of historical and sociological analysis of Islam, the Qur'an can be lost or disconnected from its context and historical relevance, so Islamic studies are present in packages of products of middle-age scholars who are mutually exclusive and tend to be considered final.

What Arkoun said, if it is related to the study of conceptual and functional Islamic education on universal humanitarian problems, it seems that until now we have not found it, it is still a debate that is not over. By borrowing Arkoun's term, now is the time for the reconstruction and understanding of Islamic teachings that are considered standard and should not be sued.¹⁸ Because such models besides having an impact on formal education, non-formal education

¹⁵ Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Pendidikan Islam Dalam Perspektif Epistimologi*, dalam, Panji Masyarakat No.743, 11 - 20 Januari 1993, hal. 49

¹⁶ Mohammed Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, pent., Yudian W. Asmin dan Lathiful Khuluq, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1996), hal. Xxiv - xxv

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Muhammad Arkoun, *Nalar Islam dan Nalar Modrn: Berbagai Tantangan dan Jalan Baru*, pent., Rahayu S. Hidayat, (Jakarta: INIS, 1994), hal. 25.

better known as da'wah is trapped into ideological propaganda without being able to touch the heart of the problem of human life. The Islamic thought of losing reason which actually contradicted the mission of the message of Muhammad SAW was present in response to problems faced by society and history. Paradigmatically the presence of Islam is a guide for all humanity in every phase of history to carry out their duties as caliphs.

It should be explained about the historical phenomenon when the Qur'an was revealed at a time when philosophical thought had stagnated for about 1 century. When the great Greek tradition experienced the destruction of Islam present. Not this phenomenon has functional meaning for the destruction of Greekian intellectual culture which was built for about 10 centuries. . Not insignificant if since then philosophical thinking began to spread again around the chaos of Muhammad.

The next problem that was not less interesting was the fact that around 5 centuries later Islamic thought began to aggressively attack the Greek tradition. A tendency that emerged when the Muslim world failed to maintain its political supremacy over the world. It is not appropriate to ask a question that the presence of Islam is a salvation of the great traditions of mankind by doing things besides criticism as well as giving new breath that is fresh, full of life and creativity.

The sharp attack on the Greek tradition that developed in the Islamic world and on matters relating to the Greek tradition above resulted in Islamic education being compiled based on unclear and less functional concepts. This problem is a serious problem in the intellectual development of Islamic thought amid the pace of social change and the development of science and technology that increasingly finds its own way. The application of inappropriate concepts often widens the distance between what is supposed to be and what is actually. Now it's time to design a concept of Islamic education that is constructed with the building of modern science and still within the frame of the Qur'an which is directed to foster logical and critical reasoning.¹⁹

The decline of Muslims in the field of scientific and technological thinking which caused acute stagnation due to the loss

¹⁹.M. Amin Abdullah, *Falsafah Kalam Di Era Postmodernisme*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1995),hal.12.

of the tradition of dialogue and discussion in education and teaching activities. Learning is more of a textual study of books than understanding the subject in question.²⁰ This is more encouraging to use memorization than actual understanding, in turn it will form the educated negative attitude towards the concept of science. They see that knowledge of something that must be obtained is not something that the mind must look for and find.²¹

Efforts to solve the above problems need to be done critically immediately, among others, through philosophical approaches, especially Epistemology and paradigmatic and functional approaches. Something that needs to be considered is not only philosophical results, but also applied concepts that function for solving short-term and future problems.

Conclusion

The existence of differences of opinion about the formulation of the concept of Islamic education comes from the existence of differences of opinion in taking root words that have an understanding of education

Although these differences do not reach the level of controversy, basically there is a common understanding that what is meant by al-ta'lim, al-ta'dib and al-tarbiyah all have meanings related to the problem of education, only the point of accent is different.

Epistemological criticism of the concept of Islamic education actually lies in the conceptual-philosophical building of Islamic education that does not have a clear and functional concept in dealing with the development of science and technology

Islamic education experiences lethargy and does not have the power of vitality that is not capable of giving birth to the concept of science that is able to solve the problem of universal humanity because it is trapped in the confines of the dogma of theology and fiqh of medieval scholars.

²⁰.Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, pent. Ahsin Muhammad, (Bandung Pustaka, 1984), hal. 252-253.

²¹.Ibid, hal. 275

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