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Islamic Philosophy of Education by Prof. K. Mohammad Ayirur

The reviewed work, Islamic Philosophy of Education, is written by Prof. K. Mohammad Ayirur. Prof. K. Mohammed Ayiroor was born in 7th October 1953 as son of Makkalikkal Kunhahammed and Kuvvakkattayil Thithayi in the village of Ayiroor, Malappuram district, Kerala, India. Prof. K. Mohammed Ayiroor is an Educational Expert with more than four decades of experience in teaching, teachers' training, and development of curriculum, text books and teachers hand books. From 2000 to 2008 he served in State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) of Kerala, India. While in SCERT he led the development of Arabic Curriculum, Text books from Primary to Higher Secondary and Teachers' hand books based on Constructivism and Critical pedagogy. He conducted many Training programs for teachers and developed evaluation criteria. He also led the revision of the Curriculum for Language Teacher's Training and development of the Curriculum for D.L.Ed (Diploma in Language Education). Also, he has served as chairman of D.L.Ed Examination Board, and as member in B.Ed Examination Boards of various Universities.

It is a humble attempt to highlight the philosophical questions confronting to Islamic educational thought. It is published by the Center for Educational Research and Training. It is a soft bind book divided into two parts. Each part is sub divided into 12 and 15 chapters respectively. At the end, references of both the parts are given followed by a short bibliography of scholars mentioned under a title Annexure along with bibliographical note. The Preface of it starts with the limitation of sources in Kerala University for compiling this book which prompted scholar to explore and investigate further material beyond it. While compiling this work, the author has introduced many modern philosophical theories like idealism, pragmatism, realism, naturalism and existentialism, and discussed them in relation to the Islamic context.

This books opens with the thought "educational philosophy" in historical context and declared it as old as human existence on the earth. The author has quoted many scholars like Vivekananda, Pestalozzi etc. In subtitle, Education: meaning and death, distinction is made between the angels and human beings, and objectives of education are discussed starting from the development of inborn potentials to character formation. The other traits like personality development, preparing a mature responsible being, control and sublimation of basic make-ups, moulding citizens useful to the society along with spiritual growth and stimulating freedom of consciousness, are also discussed.

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In “Educational Sociology” relation between the society and philosophy, building society on realistic grounds in order to nurture the moral character among humans to build human mental faculty is succinctly explained. For this purpose, the classroom interaction and schools are set out as meeting grounds for understanding historical events that will serve in socialization process for learners. Purpose of educational sociology is to acquire and disseminate knowledge for progressive and peaceful living.

Education and economics are vital parts of human society. The growth of society relies on the economic production, distribution, exchange and consumption. The author has quoted many economists who worked on the relationship between economy and political science. Among these Adam Smith, John Stuart, Alfred M. Marshall, consider education as real national expenditure, which helps to bring increase in productivity and per capita of people, and helps them to increase potential of spending and accelerating economic growth. The Philosophical foundation of education helps to explore all relevant concepts and methodologies for human progress. A good number of definitions were quoted in which one is, philosophy is a search for summation of the nature by weber” (p.32)

The author has discussed vitality of ordered philosophy and emphasized on dialectical methods put forth by Socrates. He deliberated on importance of philosophy through summation, metrics and its practical results along with its criticism. In this book, many fields of philosophy like metaphysics, epistemology and axiology and their significance in human life are discussed. In the Conclusion, the author opines that the philosophy encompasses all spheres of human life and relationship between them by raising many questions about it while quoting Professor McCann’s who divided ethics in to four branches, psychological, sociological, philosophical, morality and their relationship with day to day life. All these branches are foundations to all forms of literature, art and criticism which provide meaningful contribution to education. Educational philosophies are methodologies for understanding the educational activities to find solution to the problems pertaining to societies. These help to nurture the human character, values and develop human personality. Idealism is discussed in relation to origin of man and its relation with modern philosophies. Idealists consider spirit as self-existing object and a perception of life. Declared all subjective considerations as ideals of objectivity and discussed them in two broad categories, Spiritual idealism and Materialistic idealism. Idealist well come all kinds of knowledge. its aims, curriculum and pedagogies along with learning methods emphasise on self-control and disciplined of life for teachers.

Realism is conferred historicity of materialistic roots along with its principles features and objectives. It is discussed in education in relation to metaphysics, epistemology and axiology. Realists rely on materialistic aspects of life and deny spiritual aspect (p.53). The human values are formed pertaining to the desires, needs and environment of an individual which depend on circumstances. Regarding teaching methodology, realists oppose book learning instead put emphasis on grooming up of learner for practical life for which teacher has to develop self-control, discipline and shun oppressive measures. Moreover, love affection and empathy is required to discipline the students’ life.

Pragmatism and all its principles are discussed at length in academic manner. In principle, motivational forces of life are considered problematic and emphasized on social, democratic

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values and utilitarianism. They snub absoluteness of values and cull metaphysical aspect of knowledge. Pragmatists believe values are determined by verification through constant and controlled observations, explanation and examination. Naturalism is explained in relation to human existence through materialistic interpretations under three headings; physical, mechanical and biological naturalism. Moreover different features and principles of curriculum are explained with emphasis on students being more important than teacher because Teacher's direct involvement would blur potential of learners.

Existentialism being modern philosophical thought but its origin is linked back to Socrates. Its modern form is labelled to German scholar Soren Kierkegaard which spread to France and Italy. Existentialists discussed five major themes like existence leads to essence, time is that of essence, humanism, freedom and responsibility. They criticized idealism and naturalism and laid emphasis on relation between man and Nature. Its unique attributes are: child centric, stress on principles of equality and democratization. Educational curriculum, teachers, pedagogy, freedom and discipline are part of existential philosophy. Their main motive is to create a sense of responsibility among learners but considers light punishment at the time learning unavailable. The last chapter of part one "Other Schools of Philosophy" is a conclusion of all chapters.

Part-II of the book is divided into 15 chapters and its basic features and doctrines are indebted with Iman testifying the basic tenants of life supported by Qur'anic verses and ahadith. Main emphasis is given on importance of education in Islam, and words like ilm (779) book, (277) hearing (184), sight (148), aql (49) thought (tadabur and tafakkur) 61 times are mentioned. Many Qur'anic verses and Ahadith are mentioned to prove that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as best teacher and trainer and emphasized to realise the significance of seeking education. In Chapter "Aims of the Islamic Educational Philosophy" human being is reflected as vicegerent of God on earth (p.90). All round development of a person depends on the cognitive, affective and Psycho-motor domains in order to grow as proficient. These domains are further divided into subcategories as; body, mind, spirituality, sensory organs, intellect, wisdom, belief, piety, power character, behaviour and inborn skills. Aim is development of an integrated, balanced and strong personality with political awareness for attaining economic and employment growth. Human nature, character of life, sources and aims of life along with human responsibilities are discussed at length. For this purpose, skill, character need to be enhanced and to stimulate human instinct for knowledge pursuit. The purpose of Islamic education and philosophy is to guide and fashion human nature as objective of life.

The Islamic sources of education, "Quran and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)" are conferred in a sound manner so as to develop all arenas of human life. The importance of the Quran, and it being an adequate source of information, is explained with the help of Qur'anic verse and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). Islamic philosophical concepts of education are further discussed under certain concepts and terms like, Iman, Kufr and Iblees. To a great extent, three approaches, normative, analytical and descriptive are discussed. Axiology from Islamic Perspective is categorized into two components ethics and aesthetics. The aim of both is defined within parameters of human behaviour and creative expressions of human nature. Within the frame work of these two components, axiology have been given foundations such

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as five virtue, truth, justice, beauty and love. Details of these five foundations are given with the help of Qur'anic verses and Ahadith.

Analytical study of epistemology helps to build education in a structured manner related to styles, languages and ideas. It helps to understand methods of knowledge in Islam within Qur'anic context. Metaphysics too helps to understand reality and ultimate truth, visa-a-viz to reconnoitre universe, God, material life, and death etc.

A detailed explanation about curriculum, its nature and causes are provided in the book. Medieval curriculum contains subjects which are necessary for contemporary era. Scholars like Imam Ghazali's pattern of curriculum categorization as voluntary and involuntary. Other scholars like Ibn Khaldun, Shibli Naumani, Jamaluddin Afghani rejected some issues in Ghazalian pattern of curriculum.

A detailed description about a teacher, as role model for society is explained from the Qur'anic and Ahadith point of view. A teacher is considered heir of the Prophets who teaches ultimate truth of life. The qualities of a teacher are conferred in depth like his behaviour and his relation with students. Teacher's responsibilities are elaborated in 16 categories followed by a list of 41 qualities. Very interesting point about Islamic educational philosophy is its non-acquisitive approach and helps to build human character. Four necessary issues; age, knowledge wealth health and their utility with references from ahadith is explained while as student is considered important factor in educational process. Examples were quoted from Islamic history and hadith about the rights of students. Moreover, Umar bin Abdul Aziz and Imam Ghazzali are considered as pivotal to provide deep understanding of student's rights.

Foremost objective of Islamic education is to fulfil the divine desire in order to activate virtues, unity and integrity in the society. To achieve these goal, learning methodologies start from mother's lap up to international level. According to Ibn Khuldun, Abul Kalam Azad etc., the fundamental need to continue educational goals and philosophy initiates in detail periodically from maternal, paternal, filial, tribal, municipal, national, racial and international. It is divided into three basic philosophies and full description is provided regarding these philosophies and achieved through freedom and discipline.

Modern measurements and evaluation methods need to be applied to judge students' development which revolve around qualitative and quantitative techniques. Relevance of philosophy to education, scholar's views are quoted with different from physical slavery to authoritarian regime slavery. While concluding, the role of education is to develop inherent skills, personality development and purification of innate qualities. All this is mentioned in reference to events and incidents which challenge to modern education and mind-set. Furthermore, the Qur'anic verse are specified to achieve *falah* with application of evaluator methods like structural observation, oral test, written tests and interviews. Consecutively, to overcome modern problems, Islamic morality and ethical education has sound role to reform the society.