

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN RATIONAL LIFE Rasyonel Hayatın Eğitimdeki Rolü

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Abstract

This study gives an overview of the definition of education and life as characterized by the scholars of the field and then offers the role education plays in rational life. Literally, education means to teach something and transfer knowledge from the teacher to the learner. Specifically it refers to developing the intellectual abilities of an individual. Training, on the other hand, refers to flourishing the potential abilities. Other definitions have been offered in this regard. The life literally means the state of being alive thought practically different scholars have offered different definitions and in so doing have focused on different characteristics of life. However it is defined, there is a consensus among scholars on its existence and they believe in its consequences such as reproduction and goal-orientedness, etc. Generally speaking, there are two kinds of life: one is the natural life which human beings practice to survive; the second type is rational life. This refers to those conscious activities which try to lead deterministic and pseudo-deterministic forces of human life towards perfection. Human beings possess lots of potential abilities that can be flourished through education and only proper education can pave the way and lead human beings to virtues. The present research is an attempt to make integration between education and rational life and believes that this integration can best clarify the development paths detailed by Islamic teachings. This is the point the present study intends to add to the previous literature.

Keyword: education, training, rational life, instructor, learner

Özet

Bu çalışma bu alanın bilgilerine göre tanımlanan eğitim ve hayata yönelik genel bir bakışı içermektedir. Ayrıca rasyonel bir yaşamda eğitimin rolünü de açıklamaktadır. Tam anlamıyla eğitim, bir şeyler öğretmek ve bilgiyi öğretmenden öğrenene transfer etmek anlamına gelmektedir. Özellikle eğitim bir bireyin entelektüel yeteneklerini geliştirmek olarak da nitelendirilebilir. Eğitmek diğer bir taraftan da varolan yetenekleri zenginleştirmektedir. Diğer tanımlamalarda bu nedenle sunulmuştur. Tam anlamıyla hayat yaşamak manasıyla düşünülmektedir. Özellikle farklı bilginler farklı tanımlar ileri sürmüşlerdir ve böylelikle hayatın farklı özellikleri üzerine odaklanmışlardır. Tanımı yapılmış olmasına rağmen bilginler arasında hayatın varlığı üzerinde bir uzlaşma vardır ve bilginler yaşamın yeniden türeme gibi sonuçlarına da inanmaktadırlar genel olarak

söylemek gerekirse iki çeşit hayat vardır. Birisi insanoğlunu hayatta kalmak için çalıştığı doğal yaşam; ikincisi ise rasyonel yaşamdır. Bu yaşam insane yaşamının mükemmelliğe doğru yol almasını sağlayan deterministik ve pseudo-deterministik güçlerini bilinç aktivitelerini anlatır. İnsanoğlu eğitim yoluyla zenginleştirilebilecek birçok potansiyel yeteneğe sahiptir ve sadece düzgün bir eğitim ve makul yaşam arasında bir kaynaştırma, bütünleştirme sağlamayı amaçlamıştır. İslami öğretilerle ayrıntılı olarak ele alınan gelişim yöntemlerini en iyi şekilde açıklayabileceği inancındayım. İşte bu nokta çalışmanın geçmiş edebiyata istediği şeydir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eğitim, öğretim, rasyonel yaşam, öğrenen, öğretmen

Introduction

Education is conceived to be able to activate the potential abilities of individuals. In fact, these potential abilities and characteristics form the underlying principles of all educational systems. Education, if conducted properly, can raise individuals to higher values and ethics. In contrast, the learner can be devoid of values under corrupt training.

According to the principles of Islamic anthropology, it is evident that humans are innately predisposed to good as well as evil and both are ingrained in his nature.

Only flawless education can pave the way for perfection and righteousness and confront the negative moral influence exerted on the part of industrialization and materialistic foundations.

The presents study sets out to presents an overview of the role of education in the framework of rational life as termed 'pure life' in Quran and accordingly investigates basic tenets, objectives, responsibilities and educational principles.

Definition of important terms

To appropriately pin down the role education plays in rational life entails a comprehensive knowledge of terms employed in the literature. Following comes the definitions of important terms used in this research.

Education

Different scholars have offered different definitions for education. Lucas and Bernstein (2004) believe:

Education is the learning of knowledge, information and skills during the course of life. Teachers may draw on many subjects, including reading, writing, math, science and history. Teachers in specialized professions such as astrophysics, law, or zoology may teach only a certain subject, usually as professors at institutions of higher learning. There is much specialist instruction in fields for those who want specific skills, such as required to be a pilot, for example. Finally, there is an array of educational opportunity at the informal level- such as with museums, libraries and the

Internet. Informal education also includes knowledge and skills learned during the course of life, including education that comes from experience. (p. 36)

Richard and Schmidt (2002) offer the following definition: in a general sense, the formal and informal processes of teaching and learning used to develop a person's knowledge, skills, attitudes, understanding, etc., in a certain area or domain. A distinction is sometimes made between the broader goals of education, described above, and training, which refers to the processes used to teach specific practical skills. (p. 174)

Sadat (1987) states that education is preparing the ground for the development to of individuals' cognitive abilities. Rahbar (1998) defines education as the transfer of knowledge from the instructor to the learner.

Training

Deilami (2003) believes that training is to know how to employ and develop internal abilities and potentials in order to establish and expand ethically approved qualities and behaviors and achieving higher moral virtues. Shokouhi (1995) defines training as taking measures to pave the way for the development.

Life

Literally, life refers to state of being alive. However, there is no consensus on its specific definition. It seems that the essence of life, as it is true about the essence of existence, is an unknown fact.

Biologists give different definitions for life most of which refer to the outcome of life such as nutrition, growth and reproduction. What is common among all these definitions is the high degree of organization and cooperation among creatures. What is more, there exists a single destination for all forms of life activities. Materialists including Aparin also believe in these two points.

Philosophers, theosophists and biologists each view it partially from a certain perspective. They have in effect characterized the outcome of life rather than its essence. Sadr'almotaahelin argues that life is a certain form of the existence of something which emanates effects supposed to be issued from a living organism. Sohrevardi (2001) contends that 'life is the very embodiment of existence for an individual and a living thing is supposed to be perceptive and agentive.' (p. 117)

According to Tabatabaei (1983) 'a living creature is perceptive and performer; then life is the origin of perception and action is the departure point of knowledge and power.' (p.169) Akhavan'alsafa (1957) believes 'life and death to be of two kinds: life as belonging to body and that belonging to soul.' (p.57)

Rational Life

Rational life is defined by Jafari (1980) as a conscious life which using volition regulates the deterministic and pseudo-deterministic forces and activities of natural life, on the way to achieve partial perfection, and gradually promotes human personality to the sublime goal of life.

Awareness to life means being aware of the objectives and basic principles and values of life. In other words, it was a feeling of being alive on the part of the human being and this confirms the superiority of his existence compared to other creatures. Without this, human beings would be alienated and this ignorance would make him unaware of the basic regulations of life. If this occurs, the objectives and values of life would flee his conscious attention. Such a life would be comparable to a plant or animal life being easily affected by temporary changes.

Method

The study aims to investigate the role of education in rational life. Since, key books and sources have been employed to expose the problem, it can be considered as a survey. Similarity, as the study makes an attempt to confirm the influence of education in rational life, inference is adhered to as the basic analytical technique.

The Role of Education in Rational Life

Education has been assigned three tenets, namely:

- 1) principles of education
- 2) educator
- 3) learner

As regards the first tenet, two meanings are attached to these principles in Islamic teachings:

a) The original and classic Islamic resources assumed to describe 'mankind the way it is' and 'mankind the way it should be'. These Resources include Koran, Sunna, Consensus and Intellect. Two sources have been thought to contribute to the achievement of Wisdom through education which are analogous to the relation of 'eye' to 'light'. These sources are i) perfect thought and ii) the divine Script, Sunna, Consensus, which altogether shed light on the Divine will regarding what is to man's benefit and what to his harm. These sources also provide the preliminaries necessary to arrive at the end-point objective of this life, namely approaching the Divinity in Paradise on Divine days. (Jafari, 1985)

b) Principles, regulations and objectives that are focused on in Islam for education. These include all rules and instructions which derive from four above-mentioned sources. Principles, with this meaning assumed, have two subdivisions: 1) absolute and relative purposes which are considered the end

objective in education and 2) principles and rules that are the foundations of education.

Objectives and Duties of Education

1. Controlling raw emotions and correcting false beliefs existing in one's mind.

2. Making acceptable for the learner the facts and high values and virtues.

3. Purifying and training individuals and teaching Wisdom to them. As it comes in Qoran, 'It is He who has raised up from among the common people a Messenger from among them to recite his signs to them and to purify them and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom, though before that they were in manifest error.' (Jomoah, verse 2)

4. The end objective of Islamic education is the worship of God and approaching Him. 'We have raised a Messenger in every nation to worship only God.' (Nahl, verse, 36). 'So those who are hopeful to meet God are expected to do valuable things and take no one second to the worship of God.' (Kahf, verse, 110)

Tenet One: Principles of Education

There are some principles for education:

1. Education is a gradual process and there is no exception to this rule.

2. No definite promise in any form can be given in education.

3. High virtues should be conveyed and clarified in education.

4. Education requires discipline and perseverance.

5. In education and perfection-seeking self rather than natural-self should be targeted.

6. Education should pay special attention to individual differences since each individual possesses different personalities and motivations. 'While He created you in various stages.' (Nooh, verse 14). As a result, education needs to have personalized orientation.

7. The crucial principle in education is to know that virtues should be highly valued and should not be subjected to mere achievement of the results.

8. Every action entails a reaction. Jafari (1986) argues, 'if we bestow a bunch of flowers to a person or population, we are doomed to receive one. If this fact is taken seriously in education, the spiritual revolution of mankind will follow. (p. 301)

9. Both the instructor and the learner should know that they should not expect any payments before making an attempt. 'There is no benefit for mankind but through his efforts.' (Najm, verse 39)

Tenet Two: Instructor

God is the first trainer. He has taken the responsibility through sending prophets. This fact has been emphasized in Koran was mentioning the words 'Rabb' a thousand times. He has emphasized his being a trainer to his creatures. He has granted them the potential to learn and move to perfection. On the other hand, he has sent prophets to them to lead them to perfection through education.

Those who consider themselves as instructor should meet some requirements some of which are as follows:

1. Instructors should have a complete dominance over the materials they aim to teach. 'Don't follow that which you lack knowledge about.' (Asra, verse 36)

2. Teachers should be devoted to their job and know that they would be profited sooner or later.

3. Teachers should know that their deeds take precedence over their words. Their external and explicit behavior is a sign to show their degree of devotion. Indeed, deeds are more influential.

4. 'The trainer is expected to be trained and feel a permanent need to train himself.' (Taha, verse 114). Jafari (1978) believes that the best teacher is one who always sees himself in need of education. Put another way, the best teacher is most of all the best students. One who sees himself leader of a group should first behave himself and before training others in words should teach them through his deeds.

5. Interest of the teacher to the progress and development of the learners.

6. Seek help from God.

Tenet Three: The Learner

Human is a flexible creature; in the world every creature stays the same during the course of his life. For instance, no mosquito changes to eagle or no whale changes to lion. However, human is the only creature which experiences and has potential to change widely. Teachers should know that a novice in front of them is likely to change to a prominent figure or in reverse to a mean person. This said, we can go through principles governing human education:

1. The education history of the learners: since each life period has its own particular specifications, each stage of education requires special care. For example, a child is firmly dependent on parents and models them. The child's personality prior to cognitive development depends on others. But when he is able to take control over his affairs and characters, he will develop an independent personality. In fact, the physical growth decreases

from youth to middle age and under proper conditions potential abilities flourish.

2. The more one gives value to the learner, the more efficient learning can be expected. The more one considers teaching/learning materials significant, the more vigorously one will go through them. The reason why knowledge is acquired more efficiently in the early years of life is that what is taught in this period is considered the most important element of life. In every stage of life, if a fact is vitally important for you, its psychological influence would be remarkable. Given these facts, teachers should always make palpable the significance of the learning materials provided that the teachers themselves believe in their importance.

3. The importance of conformity between parents and teachers' line of thought.

4. Raising interest in learners to be inquisitive. Measures should be taken to help the learners develop an argumentative mind. Only in this way can a celebrity with a highly creative mind be expected.

5. Avoiding the learners to be award-oriented: they should be trained to seek for the facts. They should teach their learners the importance of following truth in order not to think superficially in their life.

Discussion

The findings regarding the role of education in rational life imply that humans have potential abilities which can flourish if appropriately channeled through education. Humans are psychologically flexible and only proper education can lead them to virtues and values. In this industrialized world, an increasing need is felt for education which is in line with human nature. The present study integrates education with rational life and presents new horizons in this area. It is suggested that those who experience rational life will give a new direction to their education.

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