Islamic Education: a Tool of Condemning Knowledge without Practice

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Abstract

This paper presented Islamic education as a tool for condemning education without practice. It discussed the meaning of Islamic education, and presented the consequences of learning without practice in Islam through the use of some Qur’anic verses, Hadith of the Prophet (SAW) as well as sayings of the Sahaba (Companions) and Muslim Scholars. Finally, the paper provide recommendations which includes: Muslim Society should be encouraged or be helped to have an intrinsic motivation for the Islamic knowledge as this would help them to develop positive attitudes towards their life endeavors.

Keywords: Islam, Education, condemning, practice.

Introduction

In Islam, a person is not expected to perform any function unless he is fully aware of its legal injunctions as ordained in the Glorious Qur’an and the Sunnah of the prophet Muhammad (SAW) (Salih, 1934). Therefore, one should acquire knowledge in order to know his creator, obey His laws revealed through His prophet (SAW) to mankind, worship Him, and fulfill religious obligations as stipulated in the Glorious Qur’an and the Sunnah of the prophet (SAW). Islam strongly emphasizes and urges the learning of every useful subject regardless of the place, origin or the nationality of the scholar who introduced it. Islam recommends Muslims to have positive attitude towards knowledge and its acquisitions and advises them to be modest and never to overestimate what has been learnt (Al –Beely 1980). It is also equally important for every Muslim to try as much as possible to practice the acquired knowledge, as this will bring about sustainable development towards the learning of the subject in particular and the society in general. Nigeria is a case in point where many Muslims who acquired Islamic education falls into the habits of learning without practice and this is the major reason for carrying out a review of this nature which will be examined on the following sub-headings:-

1. Meaning of Islamic Education
2. The consequences of learning without practice in Islam
3. Conclusion
4. Recommendations

Meaning of Islamic Education

Islamic education is a compound noun consisting of Islamic which is derived from Islam, and education. Generally Islam is defined as the religion of Allah (SWT) which He sent to
mankind through His chosen messengers from the time of creation to the time the last version of Islam revealed to Prophet Muhammed (SAW) through Angel Jibril (AS) (Kaura 2015). However, in context of this review, Kaura (2015) mentioned that, Islam refers to what prophet Muhammed (SAW) received from Allah through Angel Jiril (AS), and which he taught the Muslims who accepted his call within the span of 23 years of his messenger- hood he spent between Makkah and Madinah. Education in general terms means the ability to acquire literacy and proficiency through learning, schooling, acculturation and instructions which sometimes leads to award of a certificate normally acquired through both formal and informal systems. However, education is used in present context to mean kind of learning at formal level of education leading to an award of certificate. Therefore the two concepts i.e Islamic and education joined together, refer to a kind of learning in Islamic sciences along with modern sciences that will lead to award of a certificate in Islamic studies such as B.A (Islamic studies) and Diploma in Islamic studies.

In Islam the main sources of knowledge are the Qur’an and Hadith of the Nobel Prophet (SAW) and this is why Haqq (1979) states, that:

The Islamic knowledge is the kind of knowledge as expressed in the Qur’an and Sunnah of the prophet (SAW).

These two sources complement each other; provide necessary ground for both religious and secular education in Islam. Qur’an and Hadith of the prophet (SAW) serves as the primary sources of knowledge Muslims use in solving their problems. But if the Muslim could not be able to have the solution of their problems from the Qur’an and Hadith, it is allowed to use the secondary sources of knowledge that is fiqh which comprises Ijma’I (consensus of Muslim Junsts) and Qiyas (Analogical deduction). This is in line with the episode that has happened when the (prophet SAW) sent Mu’az Ibn Jabal to yemen as a Governor. The Prophet asked him, how will you decide case brought before you? He (Mu’az) replied I shall decide it according to the Book of Allah. (He) the Prophet said, if you did not find it in the Book of Allah? (He) Mu’az replied then I shall decide it according to the Sunnah of Allah’s messenger; (He) Prophet said and if you did not find it in the Sunnah of Allah’s messenger? (He) Mu’az replied I shall exercise my own personal judgment without any hesitation. (He) the Prophet of Allah patted on the chest of Mu’az and said praise be to Allah who has caused the messenger of Allah to do what pleased the messenger of Allah (Abu Danwad).

The Consequences of Learning Without Practice In Islam

It was observed from the research conducted by Mrs Liman and Mirs Abdulhameed in the (NATAIS) at 40 (Journal 2015) that IRK teachers in North – central Nigeria lack of the commitment to teach the subject zealously and religiously. Ibrahim Muhammad, a teacher in Islamic Academy Suleja in an interview lamented that some teachers display nonchalant attitudes towards their Jobs, also confirms this. Indeed, they resume and leave the schools at will. Some are even found of using the school hours in pursuing their private business and neglecting their students without given them due attention. In addition, it is noteworthy that teachers in the school system are expected to be morally upright; unfortunately, this is not the case with some teachers of Islamic religious knowledge in some parts of the north-central
Nigeria. Our study reveals that some of these teachers do not measure up to expectation when it comes to character building.

This is in line with the sayings of Qutb (1979) where he said that:

We in most part of Muslim world do not resort to shariah nor do our life governing laws draw up it. Our lives on the whole are not patterned to Allah’s curriculum. Which comprises belief, duties of worship, work, feeling, conduct politics, economic, sociology etc: In fact it encompasses life and the hereafter in one self contained discipline. But our concept and approaches, or feelings and thought, our moral and mode of behavior are not derived from Islam. The vast of it has reached us from every Corner of the world where Islam is unknown and not believed in.

Yabo (2002) also opined that:

Majority of those graduating from our educational institutions today could be said to have been only found worthy in learning by passing the prescribed examinations but not equally found worthy in character as we always claim. Hence when employed in the public or private sector services engaged in all sorts of fraudulent activities.

However, it is worth noting that when Islam prescribe on every Muslim to search for knowledge, it also made it compulsory to put that knowledge into actions. This is because learning alone will not be enough it should be combine with the real practice. Allah (SWT) in many places of the Glorious Qur’an in integrated belief/learning and practice to go hand by hand just like where He said:-

Those who believed (in the oneness of Allah) and work righteousness, Tuba (all kinds of happiness or name of a tree in paradise) is for them and a beautiful place of (final/return. (Qur’an ch: 13-v: 29)

In contrary to this, therefore, Islam prescribes severe punishment and disgrace on those people acquired Islamic knowledge without practice. This could be describes in many places of the Glorious Qur’an, Hadith of Prophet (SAW) as well as sayings of the Muslim scholars. Thus: Allah (the Exalted) says

Enjoin you Al-Birr (piety and righteousness and each and every act of obedience to Allah) on the people and you forget (to practice it) yourselves, while you recite the scripture (the Taurat: Torah). Have you then no sense: (2:44).

O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Most hateful it is with Allah that you say that which you do not do. (Qur’an, 61: 2-3).

The above verses showed that it is an act of mentality and a great abomination to acquired knowledge without practice. This is why on the commentary of the first verse, narrated Abu Wa,il (RA) that:
Some said to Usama (RA), will you not talk to this (uthman) (RA)? Usama said, I talked to him (secretly) without being the first man to open an evil door. I will never tell a ruler who rules over two men or more that he is good after I heard Allah’s messenger (SAW) saying A man will be brought and put in Hell (fire) and he will circumambulate (go round and round) in Hell (fire) like a donkey of a (flour) grinding mill, and all the people of Hell (fire) will gather around him and will say to him, so and so, Didn’t you use to order others for Al-ma’aruf (Islamic monotheism and all that is good) and forbid them from Al-munkar(poly-theism, disbelief, and all that is evil)? That man will say, I used to order others to do Al-ma’aruf but I myself never used to do it, and I used to forbid others from Al-Munkar while I myself used to do A-munkar (Al-Bukaari).

Similarly the Prophet (SAW) said, from what was reported by Abu Na’im: as cited by Bello in Nabingo (2013).

Woe to one who does not know and woe and then woe to one who knows but does not practice. The worst punishments on the Day of Judgment will on a scholar that Allah did not benefit him with his knowledge.

In relation to the above AlHassan said that: I fear for tongues describing actions that heart know are deeds that contradicts.

Asha’aby said that;

Some people from paradise will look towards some people in deed, Allah made us enter paradise due to your training and teaching to us, and they will say; we used to command you to do good but we never did it.

Hatim Al-asam said that

On the Day of Judgement, there will be none more regretful than one who taught people knowledge, which they practiced, but he did not practice it. They succeeded because of him but he perished. It is also said that the example of one who teaches people but does not practice is like a candle that burns itself to give light to other.

Also, to show the implications of learning without practice so that Muslim society should be guided to the right path, Allah (SAW) narrated a story that happened in the history of the children of Israel. The story is documented in suratul-Al-A’araf, verse 175-176. Where Allah (SWT) says:-

“And relate, o muhammed to them” i.e. to the Jews, so they would actually knows the veracity of your (profession/claim of
prophet hood; or relate to all people, so they would be admonished “the story” i.e; the tiding “of him to whom we gave our signs, but he cast them off” i.e; on account of his disbelief, he pulled out of the signs just as a snake pulls out of its skin. That man was Bal’am, the son of Ba-oora, he was one of the scholars of the children of Israel. He deviated, after he had guidance, away from the signs of Allah, such that he could perceive and understand them, but he cost them off; and pulled out of them; and followed vain desire; so he did not hold fast covenant. No did he hold fast by the signs of guidance. “so Satan followed him up” i.e; Satan met him (in other words, Satan became associated with him), and he became a friend of Satan . That is to hyperbolically say that he became a model for Satan to follow, “and he was among those who went astray” (Gummi, 1426)

And had we willed, we would surely have elevated him therewith, but he clung to the earth and followed his own vain desire. So his parable is the parable of a dog; if you drive him away, he lolls his tongue out, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls his tongue out, such is the parable of the people who reject our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verse, lesson, signs, revelations etc) so relate the stories perhaps they may reflect. (Qur’an7: 176)

From these verses we can infer that Muslim society should try as much as possible to practice what they are learning from the Islamic ethics or else they would became model of the followers of Satan, thus they would be among those to be punished both in this world and in the Hereafter. Furthermore, Prophet Isah (As) says:- as quoted by Bello in Nabingo (2013)

The similitude of someone, who acquires knowledge but does not practice it, is like that of a woman who committed fornication in secret but her pregnancy appeared and she was disgraced.

The one who does not practice his knowledge Allah (SWT) will disgrace him on the Day of Judgement in the presence of everybody. Al-khalil ibm Ahmad in Nabingo (2013) Said:-

Practice what I taught you and do not look at my deeds. My knowledge benefits you and my shortcomings will not harm you.

A poet says:-

I am like the wick; it gives light to others while it is burring.

Malik bn Dinar (722 AH) also said:-
If a scholar does not practice his knowledge his admonition slips away from the hearts the way cotton slips away from the weaver.

A poet says:-

O you admonishing people, you have become a suspect, you condemn them on things you do.

Ibn Sammak (826 AH) said that:

Many reminders about Allah are themselves forgetful of Allah and many callers to Allah are running away from Allah. Many who recite the Book of Allah are themselves outside the verses of Allah.

Ibrahim Attamiminy (926 AH) said that:

Whenever he weighs his words with his deeds he finds his words lying.

Ibrahim Ibn Adam said that:

We spoke well without breaking the rules of grammar, but in our deeds we broke all the rules.

Conclusion

Going by what transfers in this paper, it is clearly understood that Islamic education comprises knowledge of the, Glorious Qur’an, Hadith of the prophet (SAW) as well as sayings of the Muslim scholars through which Muslims practice the Islamic system of life in Nigeria. The paper also displayed different penalties given to a Muslim who refuses to practice the knowledge acquired appropriately. Therefore, every Muslim must be a good role model to his fellow brothers. That is to say, whoever acquired knowledge must always exhibit exemplary habits to the society. One of such habits is that the teacher must be a practicing Muslim in words and deeds. He should not teach students something only to come around and contradict it. He should be the first person to obey religious instructions and laws so that students will copy from him.

Recommendations

In recognition of the mandate Islam infuses on Muslims to practice what they are learning from the Islamic views, the following recommendations are forwarded for the sustainable development of the society.

1. Muslim society should be encouraged or be helped to have an intrinsic motivation for the Islamic knowledge, as this would help them to developed positive attitudes towards their life endeavors.

2. Authorities concerned should make sure that lecturers, teachers and Ulama to be employed to teach Islamic education should be of good behavior, so that they can be models for their students.

3. It is only the application of Islamic knowledge as ordained by Allah (SWT) in the Glorious Qur’an and Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) that bring sustainable
development in the society. Muslims therefore, should try as much as possible to follow the teachings of Islam, not only to acquire knowledge without application.

4. Workshops and conferences should be encouraged among Muslims so as to enlighten each other the importance of application of Islamic knowledge towards the development of the society.

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