The Pedagogical Divide: Toward an Islamic Pedagogy

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Abstract:
The past decade of educational research on Islamic education has increasingly adopted language and trends common to mainstream market-driven educational practices. In the push toward making Islamic schools more effective, mainstream conceptions of effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability have been employed without critical reflection on the values they promote. Several issues and concerns relating both to the purpose of an Islamic education and the values promoted through neo-liberal educational practices, call for a philosophical inquiry. This paper is divided into two sections. The first section addresses the purpose of mainstream public education and the neo-liberal agenda from a critical pedagogical perspective. The second section critically examines how Muslim educators in North America have attempted to negotiate an Islamic education within prevailing discourses of mainstream educational practices. Issues of the purpose of an Islamic education and the criteria, standards, and norms used to determine the quality of Islamic education will be addressed. It will be argued that without such critical analysis, Islamic schooling reproduces existing dominant values and promotes, often unintentionally, success in the market economy as an end rather than a means. In contrast, we propose a foundational return to an Islamic pedagogy that transforms the heart and brings out one's humanity through the enactment of an *Adamic education* based on an Islamic epistemological framework.

Introduction: Contextualizing the Islamic School Challenge

The past decade has witnessed a rapid upsurge in the number of privately run, yet provincially or state approved Islamic schools across North America. Every major city from New York to Los Angeles and Toronto to Vancouver has seen the rise of private parochial schools that are intended to provide an "Islamic" alternative to the mainstream educational system. To date, Ontario, Canada, for example, has over 25 full-time Islamic schools, of which traditional *madrassa* or the evening and Sunday schools whose primary focus is on religious instruction are not included.[1] These full-time Islamic schools are alternatives to the public system that attempt to provide an "Islamic environment" that intends to preserve an "Islamic identity."[2] The vision of providing an Islamic environment and identity has been achieved primarily in two ways, the first of which provides a learning space where Muslim students can establish prayers, daily routines of remembrance (*adhkaar),* ethical behavior and dress, and most often are taught by those who exhibit the same. The second method of fulfilling the purpose of an Islamic education, and one that is a more recent emphasis is the aim of integrating Islam into the curriculum. This relatively recent approach has looked for ways to integrate Islamic content into the province/state approved curriculum in order to broaden students' knowledge base by including the contributions made by Muslim scholars to the ocean of knowledge in all academic areas and disciplines. It is the combination of these two approaches that we wish to take to task and question whether they are really achieving the "Islamic" in Islamic education.

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[1] http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/privsch/index.html
[2] Necva Ozgur, ***Top Ten Hot Issues for Islamic Schools,*** *paper presented at ISNA conference March 2005.*

The purpose of this paper is not to criticize the efforts of Muslim educators in their attempt to Islamize mainstream practices, but to encourage them to question the values that are promoted through mainstream practices and whether those values are consistent with an Islamic pedagogy. We would not deny that Muslim educators have made huge strides in establishing Islamic schools and altering the learning environment in which in our children learn. But at the same time, we must, for our own self-improvement, extend our articulation of the "Islamic" to go beyond environment and curriculum integration. What we are proposing Muslim educators take to task is not necessarily the content taught in mainstream schools but the purpose of schooling itself. The purpose of mainstream public schools to feed students into the market, consumer driven society as an end in itself affects the practices that are common to public schooling.[3] Standardized curriculums, standardized testing, managerial-like administrations, and the avoidance of the range of substantive social justice issues in schools disallows for the nurturing of socially active, ethically aware, compassionate, transformative human beings. Values of individual consumerism supersede concerns of social justice and our schools reproduce dominant values without even knowing it. In fact, some researchers have gone as far as to criticize this model of modern schooling, arguing it to be "fundamentally anti-learning in nature", based on studies from anthropologists and learning psychologists who claim that "this 'standard model' of schooling/education is inherently ineffective and inefficient at any age."[4]

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[3] Tyack, D., & Cuban, L. (1996). *Tinkering toward utopia: A century of public school reform.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[4] Farrell, J. P. (2000). Improving learning: Perspectives for primary education in rural Africa. Paris: UNESCO. p.7

Integrating Islamic content within a school model and curriculum that is itself failing in nurturing human potential for anything more than a job needs to be critically reflected upon. [5] As educators, therefore, we need to re-open the discussion of the aims of education and question all angles: what are the aims of education in the mainstream system, what are the aims of education in an Islamic school system, and how can we come to a fertile synthesis of two?

We will argue that the narrow definition of an Islamic education that Muslim educators have grown satisfied with -- providing an Islamic environment and an integrated curriculum -- is the result of two factors. The first, as Paulo Freire has fiercely espoused, is the fatalistic mentality that we cannot change the way things are. Muslim educators who established Islamic schools have by and large accepted the mainstream model of education, its overemphasis on standards, testing, accountability, and efficiency as an inherently good thing. It has been this core ideology that has immobilized us from being able to think differently.[6] The farthest Muslim educators could have gone against the grain was to integrate Islamic content into a standardized curriculum and accept that as a victory. We have strove to adapt Muslim children to societal norms so that they can financially survive. Emphasizing technical training without questioning the values that are being ingrained as a result of this sole emphasis will inevitably create a deeper divide from our essential purpose. Quite simply, such a limited vision of education denies us our humanity; it robs us of our right to learn for a greater purpose than material

[5] Simon, Roger, (2001). Introduction in John P. Portelli and R. Patrick Solomon (Eds.), *The Erosion of Democracy in Education: From Critique to Possibilities* (pp.13). (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd).p.13.

[6] Deschenes, S., Cuban, L., & Tyack, D. (2001). Mismatch: Historical perspectives on schools and students who don't fit them. *Teachers College Record*, *103*(4), 525-547.

consumption.[7] In attempting to revive a model of education that nurtures one's humanity as the primary goal and yet does not sacrifice market success, Islamic schools face a fundamental challenge. The difficulty in implementing an Islamic pedagogy that reframes mainstream practices of schooling is that there is no fluid articulation of what that would be.[8] The task ahead for Islamic schools, therefore, will not come easy. We must begin by using opportunities where Muslim educators have already gathered, like the ISNA Education Forum, to ask critical questions of how our own language and recommendations might unwittingly adopt dominant practices that are limiting the human potential of all of humanity and not just Muslims.

The Neo-liberal Agenda enacted in Public Schools

As the pages of history have entered into a new millennium, public institutions are witnessing an increased push toward efficiency and effectiveness. The neo-liberal agenda is no secret for the ages: in its simplest terms it is to make each citizen a useful, contributing player in the market economy. And that is the overriding ideology of our current historical moment.[9] The aim is to give individuals the skills they need to become economically self-sufficient – purchase a home, put clothes on their backs, and to feed their families. But not only will citizens have the ability to serve their own personal interests with purchasing power, becoming skilled will allow each citizen to make a worthy contribution to the preservation and functioning of society. Like a well-oiled machine, citizens will abide by laws that they have had a chance to create through the democratic voting process, have relative access to consuming, and will gain a sense of

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[7] Freire, Paulo (1998). *Pedagogy of Freedom* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers).p.27.

[8] Wan Daud, W.M.N. (1998) *The educational philosophy of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas: an exposition of the original concept of Islamizaiton* (Kuala Lumpur, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization).

[9] Giroux, Henry A., *Proto-Fascism in America: Neoliberalism and the Demise of Democracy*, 61.

personal fulfillment through contributing – in all, each citizen will help define the extent of efficiency and effectiveness possible.[10] That is probably the most simplistic and uncritical definition we can give to an ideology that is far more complex. But for the purpose and scope of this paper, let that explanation suffice.

For schools, the language of neo-liberalism has had a direct impact on the practices of teaching and learning, let alone the values that are subliminally advocated. Becoming more efficient and effective has been interpreted to mean schools need to run a "tighter ship" with regards to setting higher standards, maintaining stricter discipline, evaluating success quantitatively, and managing change to ensure that these quantitative results are produced. Schools play a vital role in ensuring that each citizen receives the basic skills that will enable them to contribute, otherwise the project of schooling has failed from the neo-liberal perspective. However, by defining the success of our schools around a market-driven ideology we have equated knowledge with that which is of some marketable value. Schools, therefore, reframe all forms of knowledge as skills: literacy skills, math skills, life skills, social skills and so on.[11] The intrinsic fact about reframing knowledge into a set of skills is that it allows for its attainment to be measured through a process of evaluation, quantification, and judgment on how well a student has learned the skill. This naturally serves the purpose to allot and categorize students into their position in society based on breadth and depth of skills attained – not to mention their ability to perform those skills. Besides the few select elite who are groomed to lead the nation, our two-tier system of education prepares the vast majority of students with adequate skills

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[10] Gatto, J. (2000). *The Underground History of American Education.* New York: Oxford Village Press.

[11] Davis, Bob. Skills Mania: Snake Oils in Our Schools? (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2000).

for their "primary, social roles as providers, workers, and consumers in a modern market economy."[12]

Current discourses on curriculum development place a strong emphasis on preparation for the working world and as a result regard curriculum content "as a body of knowledge and skills that have some market value."[13] The problem lies not in the content being taught necessarily but in the purpose that drives the pursuit of market-driven learning and the knowledge that is silenced as a result of that. When the purpose of attending school and learning becomes primarily for the attainment of practical skills that will be evaluated and soon forgotten, the essence of learning for personal fulfillment is sacrificed. By imposing universal or national standards in curriculum, for example, governments presuppose that we all have similar values and meanings to life. The value of cut-throat competitiveness that is ingrained in students through constant evaluation and the imposition of predetermined standards make ranking an aim in itself. Setting aside those many citizens who are oppressed as a result of this spirit[14], these market-driven values of competition and individualism "have a global effect and influence the way all countries define quality…."[15] Quality education then becomes linked with that which improves a child's position and learning. As a result, learning is limited to what takes place within the confines of a classroom.

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[12] Carr, W. and Hartnett, A. (1996) *Education and the struggle for democracy: The politics of educational ideas.* Buckingham: Open University Press. p. 44

[13] Carr and Hartlett p. 44

[14] Freire, Paulo (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Group).

[15] Moller, Jorunn (2005). "Democratic Leadership in an Age of Managerial Accountability" in *Democratic Learning.*

The marketization of schooling has had a much graver impact than what is presented here but at its root, it has altered and narrowed the primary aim of learning to be for an economical reason when the goal of education, from a critical pedagogical perspective, should be that learning never ends.[16] An analysis of the defining practices of the neo-liberal agenda: common curriculum standards, standardized testing, outcome based education, big business involvement in determining educational purposes and as a result the lack of support for programs that focus on issues of equity, diversity, and social justice will illustrate how the mainstream model of education has narrowed the purpose and definition of education to economic competition.[17] By reducing all forms of learning to concerns driven by profit gain is oppressive in itself. Success is defined by those that have material wealth versus those that do not.[18] The core of this ideology is the ability to measure the accumulation and vying for material objects – everything is objectified into things that need to be attained and the discourse of ethical values and virtues are swept away. Both educators and non-educators would agree that the absence of nurturing students toward good character, or what Freire would call a universal human ethic, has had a tremendous affect on society. A larger number of students are apathetic toward community concerns or learning for personal fulfillment because of the learning for the test syndrome. [19] And many students feel disenfranchised in the classroom because of the language of labeling: special needs, at-risk, developmentally challenged, individual education plans, and the like. The rhetoric of "re-organizing education to enable our

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[16] Kohn, Alfie. *What does it mean to be well educated? And more essays on standards, grading, and other follies* p.10
[17] Portelli, *Erosion of Democracy* p. 15
[18] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p.58
[19] Hargreves, A. and Fink, D. "Why Ontario does not measure up?" *Toronto Star* October 25, 2005.

citizens to compete in what is assumed to be an increasingly competitive global economy…has gone awry."[20]

Many educators, therefore, have begun to call for a reconsideration of what it means to educate again. Core assumptions and purposes of education need to be re-addressed in a time when mainstream practices have been accepted as historical norms. From the perspective of critical theory, education "means developing the capacities for self-development, political agency, and moral leadership, without sacrificing the necessary competencies to determine the frames of the future economic viability of our communities."[21] Nurturing students to become self-reflective, negotiate a political voice to speak out against injustice, and lead both their own lives and of their communities through moral principles are all consistent with an Islamic pedagogy. According to Khan, the Islamic concept of education means "not only knowledge but also action… *'Ilm* is usually considered necessary for *iman* (faith) and *'amal-I salih* (virtuous action)…Side by side with theoretical knowledge, it also emphasizes applied aspects of knowledge."[22] Therefore, Muslim educators need to join together with those who are articulating both a critique and possibilities for the reframing of educational practices and add to the discourse by articulating what the Islamic tradition has to offer. And we need to become self-reflective ourselves in constructively analyzing our own language and educational practices to ensure that we do not reproduce an educational system that is inconsistent with the vision of Islamic education.

The Voice of Muslim Educators:

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[20] Simon in *Erosion of Democracy* p. 12
[21] Simon in *Erosion of Democracy* p.13
[22] Khan, M. S. (1987). Humanism and Islamic education. *Muslim Educational Quarterly*, 4(*3*), 28.

For the past few decades the Islamic Society of North America, ISNA, has served as the voice of Muslims in both Canada and the United States. Through annual conferences, resources sharing, establishing places of worship and schools, ISNA has been the catalyst for establishing a Muslim presence. In 2000, ISNA expanded its approach to dialogue on issues affecting Muslims to include education. An annual education forum was established to address the challenges that Muslim educators were facing in establishing weekend schools, full-time Islamic schools, traditional *madrassas*, and the need for accurate representation of an Islamic identity within textbooks used in mainstream schools. The forum continues to serve as a meeting place for Muslim educators to gather, share ideas, and look for solutions in making the vision of an Islamic education possible.

Among the varied attempts to bring about an Islamic education, out area of interest remains the ministry/state approved full-time Islamic schools that are being established ubiquitously throughout North America. In attempting to establish these alternative schools based on an Islamic paradigm, Muslim educators, we feel, are faced with the greatest challenge of demarcating the lines between what is Islamic and what is not. Granted, most would argue that the definition of "Islamic" is open to interpretation and we would not dare to disagree. But on the issue of education, we believe there are aspects of the neo-liberal agenda practiced in mainstream schools that all Muslims who have a sense of either their religious tradition or a sense of humanity, would find inconsistent with the vision of an Islamic education. By accepting the standardized state curriculum for example, as given facts, and not recognizing that there is a hidden agenda behind its social construction, is a grave error. How can we not questions whose

standards these are, who created the standards, with what end in mind, and who benefits by these standards? The fact that the government curriculum is designed to ensure a dropout rate is alarming. By not entering into a critical dialogue we will and have unknowingly reproduced the dominant market-driven values of individualism and competition that is eroding the human spirit. Saying that Islamic schools can learn from the management-staff relations[23] of public schools is problematic by the very language used. There is little doubt that public schools have become business ventures in themselves with corporate sponsorship, an emphasis on skills based training, and the need to "manage" success, but Islamic schools need not follow such practices if they prove contrary to the purposes of education from an Islamic perspective. Establishing larger school institutions, as another example, where "human resources for administrative and academic collaboration"[24] become possible simply co-opts a model whose primary purpose negates the nurturing of full human beings. Proposing that Islamic schools need to have staff to fill the roles of "counseling, attendance, school nurse, bookkeeping, office management, special events, supervision, enrollment etc." assumes that the public system from which Islamic schools are borrowing their structure is the way education should be. That is not to say that such structures are inherently opposed to Islamic practices, but Muslim educators need to question whether that is the ideal for which we should be aiming for.

The recommendations of some educators is to move away from family oriented methods of organizing day to day affairs and adopt more manager-employee like relationships within the Islamic schools comes with major implications. The inevitable

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[23] Dr. Omar Ezzeldine, "What can Islamic Schools Learn from Public Schools?" at ISNA Education Forum

[24] Ibid.

next step in any bureaucratic-managerial model is to then assert top-down definitions of success based on imposed mission statements, imposed conceptions of quality, and methods of evaluations for teachers and especially students to ensure that they are measuring up to the imposed standards. Contributions and voices of students, parents, and even teachers on accepting structural differences are often silenced as a consequence. The gravest implication of adopting a top-down managerial approach to Islamic schools is that administrators become consumed in imposing rules and regulations that robs students of the essence of Islamic education.

In some cases, we may be imposing an Islamic identity on students without explaining the reasons behind why Islam has set limits, thereby reducing the opportunity to be transformed through a process of self-awareness and God-consciousness. Islam, for many students, becomes something you practice while in the confines of the school walls and not outside of it just as learning has been equated with what goes on in school and not outside of it. Anytime something is imposed, it is problematic. And a managerial model to structure schools reduces the essence of Islamic education to that which is tangible. Outward aspects of identity that can be measured like whether a child can recite the Qur'an, rhyme off everyday supplications for eating, traveling and the like, and exhibit a working knowledge of historical facts becomes the marker for a successful Islamic education. The unmeasurables like the degree of humility and reverence with which a student approaches other learning pursuits, activities on which one spends their spare time, the ability to articulate a conviction for an Islamic way of life, and the motivation a student has for addressing social injustices are all deemed irrelevant when the purpose of education is shifted toward managing success.

After establishing Islamic schools that served the purpose of providing an "Islamic environment" within a bureaucratic-managerial structure of schooling, the second wave of educational improvement has been to integrate Islam into the curriculum.[25] Many Muslim educators see the integration of curriculum as a necessity in making Islamic education more Islamic.

> Advocates of systematic curriculum integration insist that it is a necessity, not a luxury. Muslim schools' mission to infuse academic subjects with Islamic knowledge and values, and the value of holistic learning based on the oneness of the Creation offer clear arguments. [26]

We by no means question the intent of these educators and in fact in many ways are ashamed to be even critiquing their efforts. These educators have worked tirelessly to bring about an alternative system of education for all children with the sole intention of gaining the pleasure of our Lord. But for the sake of continued growth and self-reflection, we wish to bring to light the inadequacies of the curriculum structure to which Islamic knowledge is being integrated with. As we have argued earlier in this paper, the concept of a standardized curriculum that is developed at a state, if not national level, with the intent to impart a skill-based curriculum solely for employment is highly problematic. To accept the values that are promoted through such a curriculum and attempt to enhance it by integrating Islam within its structural deficiencies may not be the optimum approach. By integrating Islam within notions of a standardized curriculum, we inevitably also adopt that which is part and parcel of such a curriculum: standardized testing, structured outcomes, and report cards. Among the many Islamic schools in

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[25] Susan Douglass, Ann El-Moslimany, and Sommieh Uddin. "Modeling Methods for Integrated Curriculum—Three Teaching Units" – ISNA Education Forum

[26] Ibid.

Ontario, for example, we can mention a half-dozen that now use their school's provincial standardized assessment scores as a method to attract more parents to enroll their children. As a result, standardized tests define the quality of the school and student emphasis on learning inevitably becomes consumed in improving test scores.

We know that for all Muslim educators the goal is that when a "student graduates from an Islamic School he should not only be prepared for the American college level as any public school student, but also should have attained a solid Islamic foundation."[27] This perspective has also been shared by other Muslim educators in the West. For example, Sweet refers to views of the principal of an Islamic school in the Netherlands on integration:

> Our philosophy…is, if we want to integrate into a multi-faith society, then children should know their own religion and culture. They should come from a position of strength in order to contribute to society. If they have nothing to contribute, then they will be assimilated.[28]

Before we are misunderstood, let us be crystal clear. We are not saying that we should not prepare our youth for the market and to be successful in matters of the business world. Rather, We are concerned about the language, definitions, and practices of mainstream education that we have adopted in our government-inspected Islamic schools without critically reflecting on their consistency with an Islamic pedagogy. Muslim educators need to veer away from looking for ways to integrate Islam into the mainstream curriculum and question how the knowledge of the mainstream curriculum

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[27] Amirah Desai and Rabia Sonday, Integrating Islam into regular American school curricula of social studies and language arts. – ISNA Education Forum

[28] Sweet, L. (1997). *God in the classroom: The controversial issue of religion in Canada's schools.* Toronto: McClelland & Stewart. p.134.

can be integrated within an Islamic pedagogy. Islamic schools need to impart an Islamic education, not an education with Islam in it. Perhaps a brief statement of Ibn Sina's understanding of education would be useful to share here: "Education…should be undertaken for the spiritual development of man, and with the aim of deepening his understanding of the world around him…and to use this understanding as a gateway to spiritual love and apprehension of God."[29] There is no doubt that this vision is a challenge to bring about but that should not detract us from our goal. We need to be people of hope combined with a conviction that Islam has something useful to offer to the discourse of education that can be of benefit to all.

In the words of Paulo Freire, we know that some will critique my thoughts to be unrealistic and impractical; "that this optimism and hope of mine are nothing but a daydream of an inveterate dreamer." But as Freire responded to his critics, "I am not angry with people who think pessimistically. But I am sad because for me they have lost their place in history."[30] As Muslim educators we need to revisit our essence and purpose and be willing to challenge a status quo that has engendered fatalism in us. Progress, as Martin Lings said, is not a forward motion but a move back toward our roots. An Islamic pedagogy based on personal transformation has much to offer contemporary educational practices. We need to learn to give as much as we have learned to take.

Toward an Adamic Education:

If it has not been a fatalistic mentality of "this is the way things simply are," then it has been our "weak theoretical foundations, simplistic interpretation, and intemperate

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[29] Zibakalam-Mofrad, 1999, p. 71
[30] Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*, p.26

application"[31] of an Islamic pedagogy that has been the greatest challenge to Islamic schools in North America. The lack of a clearly articulated Islamic pedagogy and what that entails for both the purpose and practice of Islamic education within the modern West must be addressed with a sense of urgency. We will conclude this paper, therefore, with some preliminary thoughts of what the purpose of a quintessential Islamic education would be even within the West. We have chosen to adopt the term Adamic Education from Abdal Hakim Murad (T.J. Winter), as opposed to the commonly used term Islamic Education to illustrate the roots of an Islamic education and also its relevance to the greater discourse on education.

Western epistemologies refer to the moment that Adam was sent from the heavens to spend the remainder of his life on earth as the great "Fall." That single moment of ignorance where Adam ate from the forbidden tree and therefore earned himself the consequence of being sent to earth is understood in the Islamic epistemology as an ascent, not a fall. Islamically, Adam's physical displacement from heaven to earth is understood as an ascent because spiritually he was raised from a state of ignorance to one of knowledge.[32] Through a process of education, Adam was raised in status in becoming Allah's *khalifa* (vicegerent) on earth and the angels bowed to him. It is therefore this process of education and move from a state of disobedience to obedience that raised Adam in status to an "Adamic state".

The process of becoming educated is not a forward motion toward things unknown, rather it is a search for knowledge that will bring an individual back toward their *fitra* (natural state of purity). "All education is a re-education – a reclamation" of a

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[31] Wan Daud p. 24
[32] Qur'an 2:37

pure state of being again.[33] It is a process of recognizing the magnanimity of the Creator – of His Oneness (*Tawheed*). All forms of knowledge that bring an individual closer to that state of understanding are considered educative. There is no distinction, as Imam al-Ghazzali notes, between knowledge that is considered secular or that which is considered religious.[34] Ahsan states in a beautiful metaphor that within Islam, all areas of knowledge are "like branches of a single tree rooted in the cognition and awareness of God."[35] Learning is for the purpose of attaining a state of being, whether that is achieved through learning about photosynthesis or prayer, the intent is the same. Learning (*ta'allum*) is a form of worship (*ibaada*) that proclaims an individual's slave hood (*ubudiyyah*) to the Creator. It is no different than fasting and prayer – because all of them are processes of returning and regaining what we have lost.[36]

An Adamic Education therefore, alters the purpose of schooling entirely. It is about "human transformation and not merely about the transmission of knowledge."[37] The acquisition of knowledge as an act of worship makes learning into a sacred event. Everything about the class is treated with a sense of reverence, dignity, and austerity; "utterly unlike the modern educational experience."[38] In trying to revive the essence of Islamic education, we do not propose that we can import medieval Islamic educational paradigms and expect them to be relevant in our context. But we can reframe the purpose

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[33] Murad, Adbal-Hakim (2001), *The Essence of Islamic Education.*(Deen Intensive Program and IHYA Productions).

[34] Nofal, N. (1993). *Al-Ghazzali.* Prospects, Vol. 23, 519-542.

[35] Ahsan, M. M. (1987). Teaching Islam to pupils in British schools. In J. M. Halstead & A. Khan-Cheema. Muslims and worship in the maintained school. *Westminster studies in education*, 10, 27.

[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

of schooling and hence critically question and improve the methods we employ to achieve that Adamic possibility. We cannot escape our environment and nor should we try to for we can certainly learn from the West. But to fully understand our environment we must understand the ethos that frames its purpose. By reviving the essence of Islamic education we will also make a huge contribution to the contemporary discourse. We are not alone to "denounce bureaucratic and factory-model schooling, characterized by the assumed neutrality, fragmentation, segregation of groups, and differential education that are the requirements of a market economy."[39] Nor are we alone in aspiring for an education that will give access to empowering forms of knowledge that "nurture humanity and decency…cultivate appreciation…create social community…and support deep learning about things that matter to the people in them."[40] The question is whether we as Muslim educators can revive our educational tradition that has the potential for addressing the gaps in the human experience that mainstream models of schooling cannot offer?

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[39] Portelli and Solomon p. 17
[40] Darling-Hammond (1998) p. 85-86

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