

Islamic Education: Towards A Comprehensive View

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Abstract. The writer has attempted in this paper to go beyond the present state of cultural disorientation and overemphasis of the importance of the scientific elements in the modern education of the Muslim people to a more balanced appreciation of "Islamic education" as a stabilizing integrating cultural determinant and a useful tool for change and development. In order to achieve this, the concept of "Islamic education" was discussed, and to clarify it further, some criteria for it were suggested by the writer.

Introduction

It would seem odd a non-Muslim who reads about the "education of the Muslim people" to find the word "Islamic" pre-affixed to the term referring to the content of its traditional part, as though it is offered, outside "the world of Islam", to learners whose indigenous culture is not "Islamic". He would be even more surprised not to read the word "liberal" or "western" preceding the usage of the same term "education," when he finds it used to refer to a modern part of it which he considers more or less identical with that of "liberal" or "western" education – with the difference being only in degree and not in kind. His surprise would be complete when he finally knows that the content of "modern" Muslim education, especially that part of it related to the study of the "Humanities" is just a repetition of Western education [1, p.4] and that it is not studied for comparative reasons, but for its intrinsic value and as an end in itself.

While this position, may be "stunning" to an "outsider," it is hardly appreciated by many educated Muslims to whom the "ideal of Islamic life" might not mean much.

The problem, as Mar'i (1982) put it, is that "theories, models, research findings and techniques of application – especially those related to the field of education are not automatically transferable from a modern (Western) to traditional (Islamic) cultures." [2, p. 247].