The Educational Significance of the Qur'anic Dialogue to Young Muslims in the West

الدلالات التربوية للحوارات القرآنية لفتيان المسلمين في الغرب

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Abstract

This study sheds light on the ethical and social difficulties young Muslims face in the West. It aims to help Young Muslims fit socially without sacrificing the principles of their religion, to acquire Our'anic teachings and guidance, and assimilate Islamic principles and moral values that help them lead a righteous life. It attempts to achieve that through exposing young Muslims Our'anic educational significances and lessons as well as the moral values and Islamic principles derived from two types of Our'anic dialogue: exchange dialogue and the speech dialogue. It seeks to develop a plan that enhances acquisition of ample Qur'anic knowledge and guidance, assimilation of Qur'anic ethical conducts, Islamic codes and social morals. It also seeks to provide Young Muslims with Qur'anic

teachings that strengthen their faith and immunity against non-Muslim passive social influences. As well, it helps Young Muslims refute the false claims about Islam. Moreover, this study recommends educationalists to help young Muslims eliminate indifference toward their religion, foster trust in themselves toward their Islamic identity and transfer this study into educational programs, and conduct further study from another perspective. Finally, this study concludes the abolition of young Muslims' ignorance of their religion and fostering the pure Islamic doctrine in their hearts.

Keywords: Holy Qu'ran, Qur'anic dialogue, Qur'anic verses, educational significance, moral values, Islamic principles, young Muslims, ethics

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الملخص العربي

هدفت الدراسة إلى تزويد فتيان المسلمين الذين يعيشون في الغرب والبيئات غير الإسلامية الأخرى بدروس ومبادئ وقيم تربوية قرآنية، ولتحقيق أهداف البحث استخدم الباحث المنهج الوصفى (تحليل المحتوى) بأسلوب الاستقراء، من خلال دراسة الحوارات القرآنية الكريمة: (الحوار التبادلي، والحوار الخطابي) واستخلاص القيم والمبادئ الإسلامية، واستخلاص دلالات ودروس تربوية قرآنية وميادئ وقيم قرآنية، تم تصنيفها إلى الفئات الست الآتية: الروحية، المعرفية، الأخلاقية، الاجتماعية والتربوية والاقتصادية، وقد صنفت الحوارات القرآنية إلى سبعة فئات: الفئة الأولى تتناول موضوع العلم، أما الفئة الثانية تعالج مسألة البعث، والفئة الثالثة تتناول القيم الروحية مقابل القيم المادية، والفئة الرابعة تبرز الأسس ألأخلاقية والقواعد الاجتماعية المستمدة من التوجيه الرياني في نصوص الحوارات القرآنية، والفئة الخامسة تبين دعوة الأنبياء لأقوامهم، والفئة السادسة تشمل حوارات يوم

القيامة، وأما الفئة السابعة فتضم الحوارات الخطابية الربانية الموجهة للنبي محمد (صلى الله عليه وسلم). وتوصلت الدراسة إلى عدة نتائج تحقق لفتيان المسلمين كثير من الفوائد أهمها:

- اكتساب هداية ومعرفة قرآنية وفيرة.
- تمثل السلوك والقيم والمبادئ الأخلاقية الإسلامية المستمدة من القران الكريم.
- أساليب قرآنية كافية للتكيف اجتماعيا في مجتمع متعدد الثقافات دون فقدان مبادئ الدين.
- مهارات اتصال مقنعة تمكنهم من مخاطبة ومحاورة المسلمين وغير المسلمين بأسلوب ودى، مقنع ومؤثر.
- دروس أخلاقية تزودهم بالحصانة ضد التأثيرات الثقافية السلبية والقدرة على دحض الادعاءات الزائفة ضد التعاليم الإسلامية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القرآن الكريم، الحوارات القرآنية، الدلالات التربوية، القيم الأخلاقية، المبادئ الإسلامية، فتبان المسلمين.

1. INTRODUCTION

It has been noticed that young Muslims who live in the West and have not received sufficient Qur'anic education often face several difficulties in regards to religious affairs and Islamic ethics. Such difficulties are attributed to the different culture of the overwhelming majority of non- Muslim population. Unless these young Muslims are exposed to the basic original sources of the Islamic Education, they may continue in deviation from the righteous way of life and tend to the non-Muslim social norms which are offensive to the Islamic ethics. They may also slip

into non-Muslim passive social habits or fall in the traps of criminal gangs or drug traders.

To cite Stanbery in Sheha (1997:7) "The false freedom that we have granted to our young females and daughters has turned them to drugs, crime and white slavery. Coeducation, sexual freedom and all other types of "freedom" in the European and American societies have threatened the family and shaken moral values and ethics." The educationalists in the West based their educational systems on secular philosophies that disregard the ethical and spiritual perspectives to a great extent. Such education takes part in forming bud personality in such a way that produces a Muslim learner with non- Islamic principles nor moral values. The Islamic World Association (1998) states that young Muslims being a part of the Muslim minorities in the West were largely affected by the non -Muslim unmerciful cultural influences. It became quite common for young Muslims to drink alcohol and eat pork and offer wine to guests, which was a part of Western culture. Ali, cited in Bradley (1984:51) states that, "The imposition and lingering influence of Western secularist approaches to education has been strongly criticized by contemporary Islamic scholarship as doing immeasurable damage to the moral, spiritual and ethical values of Islamic culture and heritage."

Shershal (2001:1) thinks that "if we would like to correct the direction of 'nation', we should start with reforming the educational curricula as prescribed by the HQ; because it includes fundamentals and rules which have been out of reach of modern educationalists' intellects."

However, the Qur'anic educational values derived from this study, the multitude of constructive educational lessons, as well as the valuable Islamic principles are capable of providing young Muslims with what they need to lead a righteous life at the personal, familial and societal levels. On the other hand, such lessons will decrease the possibilities of passive influences of the non-Muslim culture upon them. They can also assimilate through the Qur'anic dialogue the ethical manners that will enable them to deal positively and clearly with other non-Muslim society fellows. In addition, understanding the Qur'anic dialogue will afford Young Muslims living in the West with ample Qur'anic guidance that will certainly enable them to present Islam through good example, good treatment and convincing call. Not only this, Qur'anic dialogue good understanding encourages Young Muslims to participate in the right human global construction process that does not contradict with their Islamic belief and Oneness doctrine. Indeed, this will really and genuinely reflect the value of Islam and Muslims not only to themselves but also to Mankind as a whole. To quote (Al Anbiyaa' V. 107) "And we have not sent you, 'Oh Muhammad' except as a mercy to the worlds."

Undoubtedly, dialogue, in general, plays a significant role in several intellectual fields of life. Yet, the Qur'anic dialogue proves to be more genuine, more effective and much more beneficial to Man than any other types of dialogue. The Qur'anic dialogue with its wide range of types such as the speech, the descriptive, the didactic and the narrative affects the heart and mind, addresses friend and rival, male and female, old and young, and believer and disbeliever. It fosters doctrine, convinces rivals, reaches facts, and keeps believers away of any intellectual or spiritual deviation. The Qur'anic dialogue with its supremacy, clarity, simplicity and diversity has become one of the main original fundamentals of Islamic education and culture as it addresses reason and affection, and cares for guiding people.

This study aims to highlight the conditions of the young Muslims who live in the West; their spiritual status, social problems, as well as the ethical and moral difficulties they usually face. Likewise, this study will bring forth the importance of the Qur'anic dialogue approach to such young Muslims and how they can acquire important lessons, educational significances, moral values and Islamic principles through studying the Qur'anic dialogue text. The main objectives of this study: 1-to provide young Muslims living in the West with ample Qur'anic education, through Qur'anic dialogue, so that they can thereby manage their life effectively and safely in the communities they live in. 2- to equip Young Muslims with Qur'anic dialogue techniques so that they can be able to address Muslim and non- Muslim people with friendly and cordial manners. 3- to shed light on the Qur'anic dialogue educational and ethical lessons. 4- to expose young people to Qur'anic knowledge, practical educational situations as well as real moral lessons that may provide them with immunity against passive cultural invasion, and 5- to refute the false claims against Islamic identity. The researcher puts these research questions:

First, the main question: To what extent can the Qur'anic dialogue provide young Muslim persons living in the West with ample Qur'anic educational significance? Sub questions: 1) Will Young Muslims be able to acquire the right ethical manners that enable them to fit socially without sacrificing the principles of their religion? 2) What Islamic values and principles can young Muslims assimilate through the Qur'anic dialogue? 3) Will Qur'anic dialogue immune young Muslims against passive cultural influences? 4) Will Qur'anic dialogue make young Muslims confident and proud of their religion and able to refute any false claims against their Islamic traditions?

This study is considered a recent work presented to young Muslims who live in the West so that they can learn through it what can reform their spiritual and social sides of life. It is not mere recommendations or procedure prescribed for other

authors to follow. Actually, the researcher has not come across a study that follows the same procedure planned for this study which is meant to guide the young Muslims through Qur'anic dialogues to the best of educational significance that may help them develop their concern in leading a balanced life with hope and self-reliance in a multi-cultural society and enable them to deal with non-Muslim people with trust and confidence without losing their Islamic identity.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The Qur'anic dialogues of this study have been classified, in regards to form, into two main types: 1) The exchange dialogue, and 2) The speech dialogue. The exchange dialogue could be a) narrative, b) descriptive, c) evidential or d) didactic, while the speech dialogue could be a) didactic or b) instructive. The chosen dialogues of both types have been linguistically studied, and educationally and psychologically analyzed taking into consideration that they address mind; develop affection and cultivate behaviour.

First of all, the close meaning of the Qur'anic verses (translation) has been placed side by side with the Qur'anic text. Then, a convenient linguistic analysis of the dialogue has been developed in relation to its specific situation and general atmosphere. Next, the educational lessons, principles, psychological bases, ethical values and Islamic manners have been carefully elicited from the text. The researcher has depended upon several sources to accomplish this task: 1) Interpretations of the Holy Qu'ran that point out the literary meanings of Qur'anic verses. 2) The translations of Abdullah Yousef Ali, 3) Mohammed Taqui Addin Alhilali and Mohammed Mohsen Khan, as well as 4) Saheeh International. 5) Holy Hadith 6) Studies of previous researchers, scholars and authors who have been concerned with the elucidation of the meanings and benefits of the Holy Qu'ran in general and the Qur'anic dialogue in particular, and 7) any educational, literary or scientific studies have been taken into consideration as long as they serve this study and priority has been given to the educational sources.

The researcher has managed to come up with a big number of Qur'anic educational significances and lessons out of the selected Qur'anic dialogues. Moreover, thirty-three Qur'anic principles and forty-four educational values have been elicited out of the study and classified within the following categories: educational, intellectual, spiritual, moral, social, and economical values and principles.

ISSN: 2410-1818

2.1 Selected Dialogues

The Our'anic dialogues of this study have been classified into these topics: the first topic deals with knowledge that includes: the Divine dialogue with the angels and Adam (peace be upon him) (*2:30-34) the Divine dialogue with the Satan (7:11-18), the dialogue of Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) with his attendant (18:60-65) and the dialogue of Musa (peace be upon him) with Al-Khidhr (18:71-80). The second topic includes the Resurrection issue which embraces four dialogues: the dialogue of Ibrahim and Nimrod (2:258), the Divine dialogue with Uzair (2:259), and the Divine dialogue with Ibrahim (peace be upon him) (2:260), as well as the Divine speech dialogue addressed to mankind (36:77-83). The third topic tackles the spiritual values versus the materialistic values (18:32-44). The fourth topic embraces the Qur'anic social regulations that include: the speech dialogue of Lugman the wise (31:13-19), and the Divine addresses to believers (17:22-39), (24:27-32), (49:6,11,12). The fifth topic encompasses the Prophets' call to their peoples: Nuh (26:105 -122), Ibrahim (19:41-50), Lut (11:77-83) and Musa (26:10 -68) peace be upon them all, as well as the Divine dialogue with Prophet Isa (peace be upon him) on the Judgment Day, (5:116-120). The sixth topic comprises the Hereafter dialogues: the Divine dialogue with the people of Hell (23:105-111), the dialogue between the weak followers and their arrogant masters in Fire (40:47-52), the dialogue between the companions of Paradise and the companions of Hell, (7:44-45 and 50-51), and the dialogue between the people of Paradise themselves (52:26-28). The seventh topic involves the Qur'anic speech dialogues directed to: Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) (33:1-3), believers (66:6,8), unbelievers (66:7), people of the Scripture (4:171), and to mankind (49:13).

2.2 The Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that through the Qur'anic dialogue, the young Muslims who live or reside in the West and in other non- Muslim communities will:

- 1) acquire ample Qur'anic guidance,
- 2) be equipped with ample Qur'anic procedures to fit socially without sacrificing their religion principles,
- 3) attain educational lessons and ethical manners, and
- 4) assimilate educational Qur'anic principles and moral values.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are a number of previous studies including the recent attempts of Muslim scholars who have done their best to diagnose the reasons of the young Muslims' problems, and prescribe the right educational solutions for such social and ethical maladies. Al-Tom (1990:34) defines the Islamic fundamentals of education as " the bases and sources that gush out of them all the educational studies, which are considered a demonstration to the Islamic educational principles and concepts derived from the Holy Qu'ran and Holy Sunnah" Likewise, Maghamsi (2007) points out that contemporary Muslim scholars recommend the educationalists to cling to Islamic fundamentals when they write curriculums for students. Besides, Safadi (1992) suggests building curriculums on learning everything necessary for the two worlds, and building up the educational bases on fighting the destructive notions, such as atheism and secularism.

To cite Rahil Brightehhard (2008), (Bayan magazine, No. 150) who declared, in a forum held in London under the name of "The reality of woman in the West", pointing out the statics that show the dangers of coeducation and mixing males and females. She mentioned these results: "1. The percentage of pregnant adolescents at mixed British schools is 75%. 2. The percentage of pregnant adolescents at non mixed British schools is 5%. 3. The percentage of pregnant adolescents at non mixed Islamic schools is zero %." These statistics also highlight the positive results of the Islamic education at school as well as paternal care and ethical guidance at home.

Additionally, the American educationalist Valiante (1986:56) announces the alarm of social danger in both the American Muslim family and society in general as a result of the deterioration of ethics and social peace. She says:

"North America has made much progress in science, technology, psychology, medicine, human sciences, as well as in the standard of living. It insists its social and economic values are the only viable option to achieve human equality, financial prosperity, and peace and justice."

However, Valiante criticizes the social maladies prevailing in the American society. She adds "North America finds it exceedingly difficult to provide its own citizens the peace of mind and a healthy social environment in which parents can raise their children without the fear of random violence in schools, homes or in the streets." That is why, Valiante calls for reformation of the American Muslim and non-Muslim families "in the light of the principles of the noble Qu'ran".

Furthermore, Mohamed cited in Bradley (1999:17) points out that, "What the early educational modernizers did not fully realize was the extent to which secularized education fundamentally conflicted with Islamic thought and traditional lifestyle." Likewise, Bradley (1999: 21) says, "Secularism, with its veneration of

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human reason over divine revelation and precepts of the separation of mosque and state, is anothema to the Islamic doctrine of Tawhid (Oneness), where all aspects of life whether spiritual or temporal are consolidated into a harmonious whole." Also, Shaker (2006:14) points out,

"This is an outlook that many parents have passed down to their children, both under occupation or in immigration, a sense of inferiority, a complex as such, that European and Western cultures are superior and better than that of their own culture. This is a mentality that encourages imitation, following and serving others rather than looking for leadership."

In addition, Ajmi (2001) emphasizes that because of the capacity of dialogue in convincing rivals and reaching facts, it is used in the Holy Qu'ran, so does the Holy Sunnah. What's more, Ajmi considers dialogue as one of the paramount Islamic educational methods that fosters doctrine and develops thinking. Furthermore, Nahlawi (2004:9) demonstrates the importance of the Divine dialogue to believers and mankind in general. He states that:

"Through the Divine dialogue, Allah (Exalted be He) addresses his slaves, enjoins them, forbids them, and guides them. He (Exalted be He) also wills his slaves realize their place in the presence of their Lord and to use the blessings of reason and the ability of distinction between good and evil, and between right and falsehood; as He (Exalted be He) calls them to follow the right after defining it and warns them against evil after pointing out its dangers and ill consequences." Moreover, "Allah (Exalted be He) calls His slaves to correct their manners and behaviour in accordance with such revelations."

Previous educationalists like Al Tom, Al Safadi, Ben Shershal, Shaker, Zaki and others reached these conclusions: going back to the bases that led to the superiority of their predecessors who contributed in the ethical, spiritual and scientific advancement of the East and West, reviving the Islamic fundamentals of education and culture so that they may save the coming generations from what badly affected the previous ones, and assuring that the Holy Qu'ran is the foremost Islamic fundamental that educationalists can rely upon in their course of reformation of education and regaining the lost Islamic identity among young Muslims.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Discussions

Undoubtedly, young Muslims are in dire need to understand the teachings of their religion that point out to them what is right and what is wrong, what is permissible and what is not permissible, namely what pleases Allah (Exalted be He) and what displeases Him, and ultimately what leads to Paradise and what leads to Hell. Moreover, these young Muslims long for Ideal models so that they may follow and learn from their righteous manners. The Qur'anic dialogue is abundant of diverse kinds of characters, and since the good types shall be greatly rewarded, on the Day of Judgment, due to their righteous deeds, while the evil types shall be punished as a result of their immoral deeds; young Muslims will find themselves highly motivated to follow the good kinds and avoid the evil ones. What is more, young Muslims are likely to lead a balanced good social life through their acquisition of Islamic principles and moral values.

The selected Qur'anic dialogues of this study are linguistically studied, and analyzed educationally and psychologically. Educational significances and lessons are brought about; the moral values and Islamic principles are highlighted and introduced for the benefit and wellbeing of the youngsters. The goal of this study is not simply to encourage scramming students' minds with information about Islam, but rather to teach them about being Muslims, develop young Muslims' understanding of the position of the Holy Qu'ran in Islam, provide young Muslims with general understanding of Islam and how to be good Muslims, develop young Muslims' awareness of their Islamic identity to promote the appreciation of Islamic ethics and code of personal behaviour. Most important of all, effective Islamic teaching and learning must be value-based. By focusing on values and by considering the ethical dimensions of topics, Islamic education becomes a powerful vehicle for character and moral development, thus it can achieve its real purpose.

4.2 Results

The information derived from this study reveals that the Young Muslims can achieve: 1) deeper comprehension of the Islamic doctrine "the Oneness of Allah" 2) acquisition of Qur'anic principles and moral values, 3) overcoming passive cultural influences such as lack of confidence and subjugation to the norms and fashions of non-Muslims, 4) elimination of indifference and ignorance in religion, 5) awareness of faith, piety and interest in the Qur'anic teachings, 6) attainment of abundant Qur'anic knowledge and guidance, 7) getting hold of dialogue skills that enable

young Muslims to address Muslim and non-Muslim persons in a friendly approach, and 8) the ability to disprove the false claims against Islam and the Islamic identity.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher's recommendations for other researchers and educationalists: Other researchers are recommended: 1) to investigate the educational significance of the Noble Prophetic traditions (Sunnah) to Young Muslims from the same perspective, 2) to transfer this study into the educational programs, 3) to produce TV programs that can highlight the significance of the Qur'anic dialogue and 4) to prepare an easy- to- apply plan for teaching the Qur'anic dialogue to non- Muslims who are interested in understanding Islam. Besides, other educationalists are recommended 5) to conduct further study on the Qur'anic dialogue from other perspectives.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study results have answered the research questions and strongly confirmed all the hypotheses. However, the results may exceed the hypotheses, the answers to research questions, and explicitly the researcher's expectations. As a final point, it is hoped that this study may achieve young Muslims' hopes and solve their social and cultural problems.

7. Acknowledgment

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Professor: Ali Khalid Al Medhawi, the head of Education Department at Sudan University, for his kind effort, invaluable advice, fruitful guidance and helpful comments. I would like also to thank Professor: Muhammad Sa'eed Al Tahir the Vice President of AL Neelain University for his encouragement and advice. As well, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Amna Badri for reading the plan of this study and also to Dr. Abd Alrahman the coordinator of Al Neelain Graduate College for his care and guidance. I owe special debt to Professors of Om Al Qu'ra University: Dr. Abd Almajid AL Tayyeb for his kind cooperation and reading parts of the research and to Dr. Adnan Ba Harith for his constructive remarks. Besides, I am grateful to Dr. Mabrook Al Maliki for providing me with essential sources to this study. Moreover, I also appreciate Dr. Walid Saleh Ba Samad the manager of the Makkan Haram Public Library and the supervisor of the afternoon period, Mansour Muhammad Al Naqeeb as well as the library officials who offered me the opportunity to collect the research literature for this study and to spend long hours by day and night preparing this study therein. I also owe special debt to the officials of the libraries of AL Neelain University, Sudan University and Sana' University for their pleasant cooperation. Last but not least, I would like to thank Yaser Al Surrori and Musa Al Khalidi for assisting me in formal transactions, and my profound love to my son Mohammed and my daughter Elham for helping me type and format this dissertation.

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