

## EDUCATIONAL VIEWS OF IBNU SINA

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### ABSTRACT

*Some crucial questions have been raised in recent decades about proper Islamic education: its aim, underlying philosophy and assumptions, value system, and the most profound question is how to integrate the dualistic and contradictory systems of education to solve the problem of dualism or bifurcation faced by the Ummah in this present day. Some Muslim scholars suggest that the pre-requisites of being excellent in this world and the hereafter are going back to al-Quran and al-Sunnah. Unfortunately, the views of the Islamic scholars on Islamic education have been neglected due to the domination of western elements and modern ideas. Therefore, it is a great need for us to examine the previous Muslim philosophers' views and contributions. To discuss the Muslim philosopher's view of education, Ibn Sina's concepts and ideas concerning education derived from some philosophical and epistemological domains have been analyzed. Extensive documentary analysis was made for this purpose, while previous literature of Ibnu Sina's was referred to. A 'biographical' works were done, which refers to a work that draws on whatever materials are available to Ibnu Sina's to represent an account of his life and achievements. Narrative analysis is used to elicit results, and a comparative analysis of this philosopher with Western thinkers such as Aristotle and John Dewey also ensued. It is hoped that this would explain Ibn Sina's genuineness in developing knowledge in accordance with al-Quran and al-Sunnah and his contribution to the contemporary educational system.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic Education, Islamic Philosophy, Muslim scholars, Islamic World-view*

### (PEMIKIRAN PENDIDIKAN IBNU SINA)

### ABSTRAK

*Ada beberapa persoalan penting telah dibangkitkan sejak beberapa dekad kebelakangan ini mengenai konsep sebenar pendidikan Islam: matlamat, asas falsafah dan andaian, sistem nilai. Persoalan yang paling penting ialah bagaimana*

*mengintegrasikan sistem dualistik dan percanggahan pendidikan dalam usaha untuk menyelesaikan masalah dualisme atau pertembungan yang dihadapi oleh ummah pada masa kini. Sebahagian cendekiawan Islam telah mencadangkan bahawa prasyarat untuk menjadi cemerlang di dunia dan akhirat adalah kembali kepada al-Quran dan al-Sunnah. Malangnya, pandangan cendekiawan Islam mengenai pendidikan Islam telah diabaikan akibat dari penguasaan elemen Barat dan idea-idea moden. Oleh itu, menjadi satu keperluan utama bagi kita untuk mengkaji pandangan dan sumbangan ahli-ahli falsafah Islam sebelum ini. Bagi tujuan membincangkan pandangan ahli falsafah Islam dalam pendidikan, konsep dan pemikiran pendidikan yang diperolehi daripada beberapa domain falsafah dan epistemologi Ibn Sina telah dianalisis. Analisa dokumentari secara menyeluruh telah dibuat bagi tujuan ini, manakala kajian sastera mengenai Ibnu Sina juga telah dirujuk. Biografi ringkas mengenai Ibnu Sina juga dibuat dengan merujuk kepada apa sahaja bahan-bahan penulisan yang ada seperti latarbelakang kehidupan dan pencapaian beliau. Analisa secara naratif juga dilakukan bagi mengenalpasti dapatan dan analisa perbandingan Ibnu Sina dan pemikir Barat seperti Aristotle dan John Dewey juga dibuat. Diharapkan semua ini akan menjelaskan akan ketulenan Ibn Sina dalam membangunkan pengetahuan selaras dengan al-Quran dan al-Sunnah serta sumbangan beliau kepada sistem pendidikan kontemporari.*

**Kata kunci:** *Pendidikan Islam, Falsafah Islam, Cendekiawan Islam, Pandangan hidup Islam*

## **1. Introduction**

Some crucial questions have been raised in recent decades about the true Islamic education: its aim, its underlying philosophy and assumptions, its value system and the most serious question is how to integrate the dualistic and contradictory systems of education in order to solve the problem of dualism or bifurcation faced by the Ummah in this present day. According to a contemporary prominent scholar, Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1985: 5) the Islamic conception of education, which has attracted so much attention recently, cannot be fully understood without an appreciation of the views of Islamic philosophers concerning all aspects of education from its goal to content and from curriculum to method.

## **2. Islamic Concept of Education**

According to Al-Zeera (2001: 78), Islamic education to take into account this fact and builds its theory accordingly. A purely materialistic and rationalistic epistemology [or education] which takes only mind and matter into account and which draws its experiences of the senses is not suitable for Muslims simply because it does not address an important part of their being – and does not teach them how to deal with it. An idealistic epistemology, which considers only a person's soul and inner being, will not suit Muslims either because it will neglect the mind, intellect, body and material dimension of life. Thus, neither a pure material nor a pure idealistic epistemology is appropriate for the Muslim world. An Islamic epistemology is required to fulfill the needs of both the religious and material dimensions of life. Such an epistemology should be rooted in religion, philosophy, science and technology. It has to be comprehensive and holistic, dealing with all aspects of both the knower and the

known. Such an epistemology takes into consideration the fact that there is a real world, in which we live, an ideal world, for which we strive.

According to Syed Hossein Nasr (1985: 5), these philosophers “proposed an educational philosophy which, while remaining faithful to the nature of man in the light of his nature and entelechy, served as a background for the creation of not only Islamic philosophy but also the Islamic science.” Hassan Langgulung (1989), mentioned on the concept and model of education that, “... it is crucial, in this, as in other domains, to avoid two errors: blind copying of the West and an outright rejection of everything Western. We should acquire Western science and technology selectively, creatively, and critically.”

Unfortunately, the Islamic philosophers have been neglected because most Muslim academicians and scholars are more interested in educational thoughts proposed by Western philosophers such as John Dewey, John Locke, Immanuel Kant and others. They simply ignore the Islamic intellectual legacy and heritage due to domination of western elements and modern ideas. On the other hand, there are Muslim academicians who simply say that the pre-requisite of being excellent in this world and the hereafter is to go back to al-Quran and al-Sunnah, which inform us of every aspect of life without any need to examine other ideologies and personalities. However, it is believed that there is a great need for Muslim to examine the previous Muslim philosophers’ views due to the fact that their thoughts are in accordance with the teachings of Qur’an and al-Sunnah.

### **3. Research Methodology**

For the purpose of discussing Muslim philosopher’s view of education, the writing of the ideas and concepts concerning Ibn Sina as a subject of analysis was done. An extensive documentary analysis was made for this purpose, while previous literatures of Ibnu Sina’s were referred to. A ‘biographical’ works were made which refers to a work that draws on whatever materials are available to Ibnu Sina’s to represent an account of his life and achievements. Narrative analysis is used to elicit results (Richie, 2003). This is a form of analysis used for chronologically told stories. It focuses on how elements are sequenced, why some elements are evaluated differently from others and how the past shapes perceptions of the present and how the present shapes perceptions of the past and of course, how both shape perceptions of the future. Gauging from that were Ibn Sina’s conceptions of educations, his worldview and some philosophical and epistemological domains were visited and analyzed selected. This was done by blending both prevalent theories and Islamic conceptions of education. Then, an attempt at a comparative analysis of this philosopher with Western thinkers such as Aristotle and John Dewey were made as to arrive at triangulative findings of his works and ideas. Finally, Ibn Sina’s contributions to the contemporary educational system of today were deeply analyzed.

It has been asserted that Ibn Sina was deeply influenced by Greek philosophy, as transmitted to him by the great Arab and Iranian translators and commentators of the third and fourth century such as al-Farabi . However, without any doubt, Ibn Sina is being considered as the first Muslim philosopher who has treated the question of education in a significant approach and methodology. And not to forget, Ibn Sina’s genuineness in developing knowledge in accordance with Quran and al-Sunnah.

#### **4. General Background of Ibn Sina**

Ibn Sina is one of the brightest intellects of the world. Though influenced both by Al-Kindi and Al-Farabi he tried to reconcile religion and philosophy through allegorical interpretation (Massarat Hussein Zuberi, 1992). Ibn Sina however, is a great systematic thinker of the highest order. Al-Dhahbi describes (as cited in Abd al-Rahman al-Naqib, p.53) Ibn Sina as ‘the leader of Islamic philosophy’. According to George Sarton (cited in Saeed Sheikh, 1974, p.97), he is the most famous scientist and philosopher of Islam and one of the greatest of all races, places and times.

This paper attempts to highlight Ibn Sina as a philosopher of education who has contributed great ideas and brings a great impact to education theoretically and practically. According to Hassan Langgulong (1989), Ibn Sina like other philosophers of education, has had a great impact on educational thought from ancient to modern times, as great an impact as that left by Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and others. He also had great impact on educational practice that can be seen in his works on medicine, science, math, linguistics as well as poetry. In addition, al-Naqib (1993, p.53), asserts that Ibn Sina represents a lively illustration of the meeting between philosophy and education where both philosopher and educator deal with similar problems: truth, goodness, the nature of the world and man, and so on. It is obvious that he has his own views on education and his philosophy of education has been transformed into an educational theory that he himself practiced.

#### **5. Life of Ibnu Sina**

Ibn Sina’s full name is Abu ‘Ali al-Husayn b. ‘Abd Allah b.al-Hasan b. ‘Ali Ibn Sina. He is called by the Arabs *al-Shaykh al-Ra’is*, i.e. ‘the shaykh and prince of the learned’ (Saeed Sheikh,1974). He is known in the West as Avicenna. He was born in 370 AH (980 AD) at *Afshaneh*, near *Bukhara* (Uzbekistan) of an Ismailian family concerned with intellectual sciences and philosophical inquiry. He lived in the fourth century of the Islamic era, ‘the most flourishing ‘Abbasid period’ in terms of learning and knowledge (al-Naqib,1993).

Ibn Sina received his early education in Bukhara under the direction of his father. By the age of ten, he became well versed in the study of al-Qur’an and much Arabic poetry. He started studying philosophy by reading various Greek, Muslim and other books on this subject and learnt logic and metaphysics from Abu Abdallah Natili, Aristotelian philosopher. He mastered Islamic law, then medicine, and finally metaphysics. By the age of 21, he had already gained a wide reputation as an outstanding physician. But the power of concentration and the intellectual prowess of Avicenna were such that he was able to continue his intellectual work with remarkable consistency and continuity and was not all influenced by the outward disturbances. His intellectual independence was served by an extraordinary intelligence and memory, which enabled him to quickly surpass his teachers and gained much of his knowledge on his own. He died at Hamadan in Persia, on a Friday in *Ramadhan* in 428 AH (1037 AD) at the age of 57.

#### **6. Ibnu Sina’s Philosophical Foundations of Education**

Ibn Sina’s writings exceeding 250 pieces include short treatises and letters. He wrote 99 books, almost in Arabic, the language of religious and scientific expression in the entire Muslim world at that time. His writings cover natural philosophy and

astronomy, theology and metaphysics, medicine, psychology, music, mathematics, and physical sciences and poetry. His famous works are those in philosophy and medicine.

He composed the *Kitab al-shifa'* (the Book of Remedy), a vast philosophical and scientific encyclopedia, and *Qanun fi I 'Tibb* (the Canon of Medicine), which is among the famous books in the history of medicine. His philosophical works on knowledge such as *Najat* (The Book of Deliverance); summary of the *Shifa'*, *Kitab Al-Siyasah* (The Book of Politics); *Tadbir Al-Madinah* (Public management) & *Tadbir Al-Manzil* (Household Management), *Uyun al-hikmah* (Fountain of Wisdom), *Al-Isharat wa'l tanbihat* (The Book of Directives & Remarks), *Falsafah Isyraqiyah* (oriental philosophy) and many others. He classified the entire field as follows: theoretical knowledge: physics, mathematics and metaphysics; and practical knowledge: ethics, economics and politics. His philosophy synthesizes Aristotelian tradition, Neoplatonic influences and Muslim theology.

Before examining Ibn Sina's views on education, his philosophical works on the nature of man and his soul and intellect need to be discussed briefly in this paper because of their crucial educational significance. Those concepts are significantly related to the subject of education due to his dealing with man and also his final end and the means of the attainment of perfection. Hence, the process of this attainment must go through education. In addition, Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1985: 9) confirms that "no discussion of Ibn Sina's views on education would be complete without mention of his doctrine of the intellect, the faculties of the soul and the hierarchy which determines the different levels of man's intellectual perfection."

### **6.1. The Concept of Existence and Human Being**

According to Hassan Langgulong (1989), Ibnu Sina's philosophical works are essentially concerned with ontology; the study of existence which is characterized into two fundamental distinctions; the first is essence or quiddity (*Mahjiyya*), and the second is the existence (*wujud*). For Ibnu Sina, whenever a person thinks about something, immediately in the framework of his mind, he can distinguish between those two aspects; for example, between the idea of the house or its quiddity such as its shape, colour, form and so on, and the existence of that house in the external world.

Closely connected to the previous idea, Hassan Langgulong (1989: 60), discusses further concerning the division of being that is not formulated by Aristotle but originated from his own ideas. Ibn Sina divided the concept of being into three distinctive groups; the first group is impossible (*mumtani*) that is the essence of the object in the mind and it could not exist. The second group is Possible (*mumkin*) which consists of eternal (angels) and temporal (creatures) in the Universe whose essence could neither take on existence nor its nonexistence. The third is necessary (*wajib*) which refers to God whose 'Being is His essence and His Essence is Being' whereby the Being refers to existence.

As Syamsuddin Arif (n.d.: 246), points out, for Ibn Sina, "human beings are privileged, for unlike the rest of living creatures, they alone are endowed with a unique faculty that is highly capable of reasoning and abstract cognition." He defined human as a 'tangible body on the outside, revealed within by means of anatomy.' It consists of both hidden (*sirr*) element i.e. mind powers and open (*'alin*) element i.e. sensory perception. In Ibnu Sina's view, the substance of human being comprises three elements; first is intellect (*'aql*) that is completely divorced from matter and potentiality (al-Naqib, 1993). Secondly, soul (*nafs*) which has need of a body in order

to act and lastly, body (*jism*) which accepts divisibility & has length, depth & breadth (Hassan Langgung, 1989). This paper will dwell further on the concept of soul and intellect due to their significance in the process of education.

### **6.2. The Concept of Intellect and Mental Faculties**

The mental powers motivate the human being, and cause it to carry out its activities and behave as a human being. Ibn Sina classifies mental faculties of human being into three groups; the first group of faculties is shared by humans and plants which comprises of vegetative faculties namely feeding, growth and reproduction. The second group is faculties making animals superior to plants and are shared by human beings and animals which comprises of two types; the motive faculty which includes instinctive reaction and rational movement; and the perceptive faculty that covers the exterior world through the five senses; and the second type is within the world through common sense, imagination, memory and reflection. Finally, there is group of faculties which distinguish the human being from the animal. They comprise of active faculty which direct the human's practical conduct; practical intelligent and cognitive faculty which direct his intellectual conduct; contemplative intelligence (al Naqib, 1993).

According to the theory of the intellect (*'aql*) in Ibn Sina's view, "man possesses both a theoretical and a practical intellect whose faculties he must strengthen, moderate and perfect as the case may be". Hence, education of the mind is essentially which involves the theoretical intellect, while education of the character involves both the theoretical and practical intellects. In sum, education on the higher level is the process of actualization and perfection of these faculties of the theoretical and practical intellect (*al-'aql al-nazari* and *al-'aql al-'amali*) (Nasr, 1985).

### **6.3. The Concept of Human Soul and Its Faculties**

Ibn Sina deals with the soul and its faculties in "several of his works especially Book Six of the *Tabi'iyat* of the *Shifa'*." (Nasr, 1985: 9) Ibn Sina mentions that the properties of the soul are immaterialities that have the capability of apprehending the intelligible and immortality which does not perish when the human being dies (al Naqib, 1993).

It is amazing to know that "for the survival of soul after death, Ibn Sina argued that it is clear that human beings can acquire knowledge and think without the instrumentality of sense-organs and this prove that the intellect has no need of the body and can therefore live independent of the body" (Qadir, 1990: 88). Thus, Ibn Sina's views are quite close to the views of the orthodox Muslims and are not in accordance with the views of Plato, who maintained the immortality of the world soul and not that of the individual soul (Qadir, 1990).

## **7. Ibnu Sina's Philosophy of Education**

Ibn Sina deals specifically with the question of education in his *Tadbir al-manazil*, while also refers to this subject in several passages of the logic of the *Shifa'*, *Risalat al-siyasah*, and the *Canon* (Nasr, 1985). Before, we discuss further Ibn Sina's educational view; a crucial question is raised here "Is the human being good or evil by nature?" Ibn Sina views that the human being is born "upon the natural disposition" and neither good nor bad by nature. In this matter, he posits that "all moral

characteristics, the good and the bad, are acquired". In other words, human being changes and adapts according to the influences of the environment and its educational system. Therefore, "if he is accustomed to evil, he will become evil; if accustomed to good, he becomes good." (al Naqib, 1993: 56). Hence, there is a need for education in the formation of man's specific moral character.

### 7.1. *The Classification of Knowledge*

According to Ibn Sina's view, knowledge is divided into two major categories; the first category is called as theoretical knowledge while the second category is named practical knowledge. The former category aims at perfecting of the soul by knowing as such or "the occurrence of positive belief of the things" whereas the latter is not only as the perfecting soul with knowledge, but also as "acting in accordance with the requirements of that knowledge" (Hassan Langgulug, 1989: 65). In other words, the aim of theoretical philosophy is truth, while that of practical philosophy is goodness.

The theoretical philosophy comprises of three kinds of sciences which are similar to Aristotle's ideas; these are natural sciences (*'ilm Tabii*), mathematical sciences (*'ilm Riyadhi*) and theological or metaphysical sciences (*'ilm Ilahi*). In this category, he adds absolute science (*'ilm Kully*). On the other hand, practical knowledge covers three branches of knowledge as proposed by Aristotle; those are ethics (*akhlaq*), the household management (*'ilm tadbir al-manzil*), the public management (*'ilm tadbir al-madinah*). He adds prophetic science (*Syari'ah*) in this category (Hassan Langgulug, 1989). On this matter, we can see Ibn Sina did not imitate the whole ideas of Greek philosophy but as a true Islamic philosopher, he successfully Islamized alien philosophy and made it compatible to Islamic teaching and world-view.

### 7.2. *Aims of Education*

According to Rosnani (1996: 84), Ibn Sina's view of the aims of education is similar to other Muslim philosophers' such as al-Farabi. There two aims of education identified in his view, firstly the ultimate aim of education that is "the cultivation of intellect". Secondly, another important aim of education that is "to prepare children for their calling in life."

The first aim reflects obviously his belief of the uniqueness and distinctive intellect of man from other creatures whereas the second aim is more vocational and practical in the sense that preparing the students for appropriate jobs and life-earning. Or in other words as stated by al-Naqib (1993: 57), Ibn Sina sees the aim of education as "the overall growth of the individual: physical, mental and moral; followed by preparation of this individual to live in society through a chosen trade according to his aptitudes." Therefore, unlike other philosophers' thought, Ibn Sina does not restrict the aims of education merely to the training of philosophers or elites, but must prepare a person for a specialized vocation and profession as a social and economic contribution to the society. Thus, this kind of education contributes the formation of a strong and integrated personality with competence in body, mind and character.

Mofrad (n.d.: 65), asserts that Ibn Sina evolved the Aristotelian concepts within an Islamic framework with her arguments that "Ibn Sina agreed with the Greek philosophers that the development of intellect is the true aim of man. Aristotle also believed that practical wisdom, or common sense, is our best guide to action. Virtue should be instilled by habituation, and theoretical education should be carried out with

firm moral commitment. To acquire knowledge is to understand the real, universal and necessary essence of things.”

### **7.3. The Educational Stages and Their Methods**

In Ibnu Sina’s view, “education begins at the moment of birth and even before at the moment that man chooses a mate whose moral and intellectual character will deeply affect the child who is yet to be born.” (al Naqib, 1993). In the Canon Ibnu Sina discusses in detail concerning the education that involves a few stages with their specific methods started from infancy to adolescence.

#### **7.3.1. The Stage of Infancy: from birth until the second year**

Ibn Sina is thoroughly concerned with a lot of things to do with an infant that begins from birth and other activities including sleep, bathing, suckling and suitable exercise. At this earliest stage of human life, formation of character (*ta’dib*) is much concerned where the child is to be given discipline from the time of breastfeeding and the first steps in his learning manners and morals (Nasr, 1985). Obviously, the role of mother in bringing up of the child and giving his earliest education is significant.

#### **7.3.2. Stage of Childhood: from the third to the fifth year**

For this stage, Ibn Sina does not mention any specific kind of teaching but he suggests with creating a happy childhood as regards physical, mental and moral health. There are three educational concerns involved, those are firstly the child’s moral, secondly development of the body and movement; and lastly the development of taste and behavior. Moreover, Ibnu Sina insists that each child should be given individual attention and brought up according to his or her particular make up (al Naqib,1993).

#### **7.3.3. The First Stage of Teaching: begins at the sixth year and ends at 14 years of age**

It is the stage of primary teaching in which the child begins receiving more serious and organized study as proposed by Ibn Sina “when he has reached the age of 6 years, he should be brought to the tutor and the teacher” (al Naqib,1993: 61). He will learn the principle of Islamic culture including as al-Qur’an, Arabic poetry, calligraphy, Islamic rules of good conduct and should recite the *rajaz* (poetic verse) and the *qasida* (classic ode). The method of teaching is group instruction as suggested by Ibn Sina “the child should be taught alongside the children of nobility whose conduct is good & whose habits are acceptable”. Besides, Ibn Sina insists to give them light exercise and avoid entailing toil and hardship at the stage of between boyhood and adolescence (Nasr, 1985).

#### **7.3.4. The Specialized Education Stage: Age 14 onwards**

Ibn Sina emphasizes that the teachers play very important roles in identifying student’s abilities and they must know ‘that not every craft the child desires is possible nor opportune for him, but the one that conforms to his nature and suits him’(al Naqib,1993, p.61). The students should also define for himself the type of study or the type of vocational work that appeals to him depending on his inclinations and

aptitudes. There are two types of method higher instruction applied; the first is theoretical instruction which is divided into two types; transmitted and philosophical theoretical teaching. The second is manual or practical instruction such as trade, jewelry making or another craft (al Naqib, 1993).

## 8. The Significance of Ibn Sina

After analyzing Ibnu Sina's educational views (particularly in the theory of knowledge or epistemology), a question was raised by Hassan Langgulong (1989) i.e. "where do we place Ibnu Sina among the philosophers of epistemology?" It is amazing that he can be placed in all three categories of philosophies namely 'otherworldly', 'earth-centred' and 'man-centred' philosophies. Ibn Sina could be claimed as the otherworldly and earth centred philosopher simultaneously due to his attempt to harmonize the two philosophers; Plato and Aristotle and also his painstaking effort to defend Islam from the Jewish and Christian religious authorities. In addition, his writings on ethics and politics gave the impression as though he is a man-centred philosopher.

In sum, according to his place in the classifications of philosophies, he can be recognized as a comprehensive and well-balanced philosopher. It occurs to me Ibn Sina is the most prominent leader of worldwide philosophical thought because he is the source of both Islamic and Western thought in various disciplines and his influence of thought is enormous both in the Islamic and western world. Similar to Aristotle, Ibn Sina claims that "knowledge is at best when its contents are universal and necessary....Universality and necessity of general epistemic claims must be maintained if we were to have a sort of knowledge that allows explanation and prediction, rather than a mere collection of facts" (Syamsuddin Arif, n.d.: 102).

It is a matter of fact that Ibn Sina adopted Aristotle's ideas into his philosophical thought and he "is so deeply steeped in Aristotelianism that he became the Aristotle for the whole world for centuries." (Zuberi, 1992: 19). Al-Ghazali brackets him with Farabi as the two leading interpreters of Aristotle. It is known that his basic concepts were based on Aristotle's 'De Anima' but modified in treatment. For example, he accepted Aristotle's definition of soul but at the same time put it as incorporeal substance.

Although he has adopted some Aristotle's ideas, he can be considered as an original Islamic philosopher because he has modified those ideas in the *tawhidic* framework and he had attempted to add his own distinctive educational views such as in classification of knowledge as what have been discussed previously. There is no doubt regarding the genuineness of this great philosopher as the contemporary scholars such as Seyyed Hossein al-Nasr (1983: 5), also believe that Islamic philosophy had been developed over the centuries is "Islamic in character and is an integral part of the Islamic intellectual tradition". It is true that "those who claim otherwise are influenced either by Western interpretations of Islamic philosophy which sees it as the only Greek thought in Arabic dress or of the Islamic theological and juridical schools of thought which have traditionally opposed *falsafah*." (Nasr, 1983). Therefore, as Muslims, we should perceive our previous philosophers and their thoughts in our point of view, not others.

Ibn Sina might be identified as both 'the philosopher of education' or 'philosophical educationist' due to the fact that al-Naqib posits that Ibn Sina represents a lively illustration of the meeting between philosophy and education; both faced with the same problem: truth, goodness, the meaning of knowledge and human

nature (al Naqib, 1993) and some other related concepts. We also can consider him as a practical thinker based on two reasons; firstly, his philosophical ideas had been formulated into an educational view that he himself practiced and experienced through his own intellectual endeavor and hardship. Secondly, his educational view more emphasizes on specialization and profession in preparing students in the future. It is worth noting that Ibn Sina proposes open-ended education which continues throughout life and indicates life-long learning. Like al-Farabi, Ibn Sina went through life-long effort of learning and not just through school system. Unconsciously, this matter gives strength to the writer to keep on seeking knowledge although in hardship.

Ibn Sina's attitude towards education is liberal i.e. spiritual liberation from worldly concerns which meet the goal of Islamic education that is to develop an individual who is internally free. He is also a scientific man due to his attempts to bring the Greek theories into concrete study. His integration of theory and practice which is obviously significant in his educational views is similar to the most significant American philosopher, John Dewey. As Westbrook (1993: 277) points out, Dewey's commitment to "the integration of theory and practice was most evident in his career as an educational reformer." Thus, Ibn Sina is very advanced in his theory of education and gives new contribution for educational systems that need changes. Although he has left us for more than a millennium, his thoughts in various disciplines are still valid and applicable to the present-day education.

As Seyyed Hossein al-Nasr (1983: 7) argues, it is impossible for present-day Muslims to re-create an authentic Islamic education system without any consideration of the views of past philosophers concerning the content, goal, methods and meaning of education. In his words, he asserts, "The view of the Islamic philosophers concerning education is of great significance not only because of its innate value but also because it was this world-view associated with the philosophers that produce, over the ages, great men of learning and science." Moreover, according to al-Nasr previously, there was the educational system which provided a training of Islamic philosophers and scientists simultaneously; it was a single educational system which made possible the appearance of the Muslim philosopher-scientists over the ages.

In addition to the previous notion, it was believed that previous great Islamic personalities doesn't only go through the single educational system, but they also practiced life-long learning process which requires rigour and vigour from one's inner self. Then, Mofrad (n.d.: 71) analyzes that Ibn Sina places a lot of emphasis on the personal efforts of the students and there is an important role of teacher to show appropriate reactions to the individual differences between his students.

## **9. Conclusion**

Finally, we should admit that the views of previous Islamic philosophers, particularly in education, are essential in order to re-establish a single Islamic educational system which will able to produce an integrated and holistic personality with both strong moral and intellectual character in the future. It is a matter of fact that in the past, Islam could produce great Islamic and Intellectuals in all disciplines and sciences. Therefore, there is a need to examine seriously previous educational views and yet, transform them into our present-day educational system. Thus, it is not impossible the Muslim world will reproduce an Ibn Sina in the future. To end this paper, it would be appropriate to ponder upon this short poem which originated from our great Islamic and genius personality, Ibn Sina:

*“Up from Earth’s Centre through the Seventh Gate I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sat, And many a knot unraveled by the Road, But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.”*

This poetic notion illustrates the greatness of this all-rounded philosopher in which he could solve numerous problems during his life-span, but he is indeed the most humble servant of Allah because he knows his limitation when he admits that the human fate lies with the absolute power of Allah. For me, it is his fate when he had been given with *hikmah* in various disciplines of sciences as Allah mentions;

*“He gives hikmah to whomsoever He wishes; and he to whom hikmah is given, he truly has received abundant good.”(al-Qur’an 2:269)*

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