

## PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

### MAKHDUM JA`FAR BUBAKANI AND HIS PERSPECTIVE ON EPISTEMOLOGY: AN OVERVIEW IN THE LIGHT OF HIS BOOK: NAHJ-UL-TA`LLUM

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**Dr. Abdul Ghaffar Madani, Dr Muhammad Israel Khan, Dr Salahuddin, Khawaja Arshid Ali, Sabir Ali, Saba Ghizali. Makhдум Ja`Far Bubakani and His Perspective On Epistemology: An Overview In The Light Of His Book: Nahj-Ul-Ta`Llum -- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 19(4), 653-662. ISSN 1567-214x**

**Key Words: Ja`Far Bubakani, Nahj-Ul-Ta`Llum, Method, Education, Jurisprudence, Classification, Knowledge.**

#### ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the Bubakani`s view on Islamic education through the Nahj-ut-tallum. Makhдум Ja`far Bubakani (d. 1002 A.H) was one of the most eminent Islamic scholars and earlier pioneer educationists of Sindh in sixteenth century A.H. His great contributions are immense and overwhelming in the field of education. He wrote two books on the concept of Islamic education and educational system according to the Islamic perspectives. His first unpublished book Nahj-ut-tallum, (the method of education) and he summarized in his Persian version known as Hasil-ul-nahj (A digest of Nahj).

In Nahj-ut-Ta`llum, Makhдум Ja`far Bubakani provides details about the meaning of knowledge, wisdom, jurisprudence and excellence of knowledge. He further identifies the intention behind acquiring knowledge. He categorized the knowledge in three major types, i.e. Uloom-e-Sharia, Uloom-e-Adbia (literary sciences) and Uloom-e-Hikmia (Natural science and philosophy). Furthermore, he suggested the authentic books as a reference to the context to the types of knowledge. He presented his argumentation on the various Islamic syllabuses. He collected the noble pearls and etiquette for teachers and students, and also incorporated some basic principles of knowledge for learners and teachers. He discussed some other important principles of accruition of knowledge and destructive factors of that tend to astray them to acquire them to acquire knowledge. This brief study introduces as well as explores a profound manuscript on Islamic epistemology. It is also an attempt to investigate the concept, perspective, aim and objectives and the sources of his book.

### INTRODUCTION:

Makhдум Ja`far Bubakani was amongst the most distinguished scholars, jurists, epistemologists and prolific authors of Hanafī jurisprudence in the Sixteenth century A.H. He was a multidisciplinary scholar who wrote books on a variety of disciplines such as Hadīth, Science of Hadith, jurisprudence, mysticism, ethics, and Islamic epistemology and education. He wrote two books on the principles of education, and educational system according to Islamic perspectives. His first book is Nahj-ut-tallum kama yajib al l-muiallim wl-mutaiallim (نهج التعلم كما يجب على المعلم والمتعلم) (The method of education for learners and teachers). This book is the most comprehensive and informative on the Islamic epistemology but this manuscript is not published yet. The perfect and clear version of Nahj-ut-tallum recension has been discovered from National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul. It was a personal copy of prolific author and scholar of Sindh Shah Faqeerullah Alwi Shekarpuri (d. 1195 A.H). This script comprises 290 pages, each page has eighteen lines. The final page contains the reading signatures of Shah Faqeerullah Alwi. The manuscript was transcribed in 997 A.H by Musa bin Ibraheem in life of author.<sup>1</sup> A secondary copy of Nahj-ut-tallum is found in National Museum of Natrua History, France. This is transcribed by Majeed Momin Beigh. This copy comprises 142 pages, each page has seventeen lines.<sup>2</sup> Third copy of this manuscript was found in Arabic and Persian research institute at Tonk, India.<sup>3</sup>

The exact date of compilation of this book is not mentioned, but Bubakani wrote in this book where he mentioned his age that was above seventy at that time. It can be assumed that the book was written in 975 A.H. However, according to Dr. Nabi Bux Balcoh that Bubakani might have written nahj-ut-ta`llum during the period between 1542 to 1551A.D.<sup>4</sup>

Makhдум Ja`far bubakani proposed a progressive, flexible and comprehensive curriculum which contained compulsory, optional, additional and voluntary subjects. Bubakani introduced the six broad level of education. Furthermore, he

<sup>1</sup> Makhдум Jaf`ar Bubakani, Dr Abdullah Khoso, Sindhi adabi board, Hyderabad, 2012, p 265.

<sup>2</sup> <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc4382r>

<sup>3</sup> Shaukat Ali Khan, Catalogue of the manuscripts, Arabic and Persian Research Institute Research Institute Tonk, India, ., 1983,vol 2, p. 244,

<sup>4</sup> Hasil Un Nahj, Dr N.A Baloch Institute of heritage research, Hyderabad, 2013 p 06.

proposed the division of the curriculum in accordance to the capabilities of the students. He realized the significance of curriculum that should be beneficial for the learners and teachers. His curriculum in the view of Dr N.A Baloch “must be the beginner, the teacher should first educate in faith, and then he should introduce him to literature. In each course, the beginning should be made with smaller and basic treatises followed by more comprehensive works. At the third stage, attention should be paid to rhetorics and prosody. During the process of teaching, words of admonition regarding faith should be appropriately introduced. Also there is no harm if during this course, some principles of mathematics and basic concepts of logic are introduced. At the fourth stage, the entire time should be devoted to Hadith, Tafsir, theology and law of inheritance following any one school of law. At the fifth stage, attention should be centred on polemics (theology, kalam) and jurisprudence (Usul e fiqh). At the six stages, the advance work in theology, Medicine, anatomy, and the study of time and directions should be introduced. But mathematics should be given priority over inheritance (Ilm e far`id) observation of time (Ilm em Miqat) and direction (Jihat).<sup>5</sup>

### *A Brief Biography of Makhdum Ja`far Bubakani*

Makhdum Ja`far bubakani was born in 904/905 A.H. in Bubak, a small town in the district of Dadu, Sindh province of Pakistan, This small town produced numerous Islamic jurists, scholars, intellectuals and authors. Makhdum Ja`far bubakani was one of them.<sup>6</sup> He was a descendant of Mufasir e Quran Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas. His 19th forefathers met with Hazrat Abbas (R.A).<sup>7</sup> His ancestors migrated from Arab and settled in Bubak (Sindh) during the King Akbar a ruler.<sup>8</sup>

The family of Makhdum was well known with literacy, religion and tradition, and for that Makhdum was from his childhood in a scholarly environment, he groomed in various discipline of knowledge in the hand of his father, so he acquired basic early education from his father. His father name was Makhdum Abdul karim bubkani who was also well known great scholar of Sindh and the head of the Islamic institution of Bubak and his student name was Makhdum Ja`far bubakani, Sheikh tahir bin yousaf pattai (d.1004), Makhdum Usman bin isa (d.1008A.H), Makhdum Usman Darbalvi (d 1002H), King of Sindh Shah Hasan Argun (d.962). Makhdum Abdul Karim deid in 949H at Bubak.<sup>9</sup>

After early education he went to Harmain shareef for higher education. Makhdum Ja`far Bubakani encountered many renowned Scholars of Islam from whom he acquired various degrees of knowledge. Amongst those scholars were the following are very famous: Muhammad Bin Muhammad Bakari Shafai

<sup>5</sup> Hasil Un Nahj, Dr N.A Baloch Institute of heritage research, Hyderabad, 2013 p 08.

<sup>6</sup> Not sure about his confirmed date of birth but some evidences indicate between 904 to 905 AH.

<sup>7</sup> Pir Syed Husamuddin Rashidi, Tarikh mazhar-e-Shah Jahani, Sindhi adabi board, Hyderabad, 1962, p 82.

<sup>8</sup> Sindhi adabi board, Hyderabad, 1962, p 62.

<sup>9</sup> Makhdum Jaf`ar Bubakani, (Phd, thesis) Dr Abdullah Khoso, Sindhi adabi board, Hyderabad, 2012, p 140.

(d.994) Ibn e Hajar Hathmi (d.974), Ali mutaqi Hindi (d.975), Grand Imam of Masjid Nabvi Sheikh Abdul Qadir bin Ibrahim Madani. Sheikh jamal ud din bazdavi and Muhammad bin tahir patni (d. 986) etc.<sup>10</sup>

After the death of his father he occupied himself with the promotion of the knowledge, so he taught the Tafsir (interpretation of the Qur'an), the Hadith, the Fiqh (jurisprudence), mysticism and other discipline of knowledge. He belonged to Hanafi School of Islamic jurisprudence, so he gave the fatwa on Hanafi school of thought. There is numerous notable personalities who got education from him, to name a few; Makhdum Najjam uddin, Makhdum Naseer, Makhdum Abdul Aleem, Makhdum Abdul Ghani, Makhdum Abdullah, Sheikh Yousaf Ali, Mirza Abdur Raheem and other renowned students got education from him.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Makhdum Ja`far Bubakani in the views of Renowned Scholars:***

Mir Ali Sher Qanie Thattvi (1727-1789) famous historian of Sindh, wrote in Maqalat-us Shu`ra: He was one of the leading renowned a far-sighted scholar and jurist of Sindh. He was also great muhaddith and jurit of Hanafi school of thought, a remarkable spiritual leader of his age.<sup>12</sup>

According to Dr Nabi Bux Baloch: Makhdum Ja`far was essentially a teacher who endeavoured to educate people in observance of Shar`iah and the true Islamic tradition governing individual and social conduct.<sup>13</sup>

Justice of Sindh Makhdum Abdul Latif Bin Hashim Thattvi (d 1189) stated that: “ No amount of appreciation suffices for this permanent scholar, a pillar of knowledge, the incredible scholarly teaching and deep rooted spirituality with personage and mentor, attracating all learned circles and general public”.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Compilations of Makhdum Ja`far:***

As it is known that Makhdum Ja`far had spent his life in learning, teaching and compiling the books, he wrote approximately more than fourty books in the various disciplines of Islamic knowledge in Arabic, Persian and Sindhi languages. His Following compilation of books and booklets are found in various libraries of World, more of them are not published yet:

1. **Manjhaj-ul-Ummaal**-an abbreviation of Kanz-ul-Ummaal, the encyclopedia of hadith. By Sheikh Ali Muttaqi.

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<sup>10</sup> Makhdum Jaf`ar Bubakani, (Phd, thesis) Dr Abdullah Khoso, Sindhi adabi board, Hyderabad, 2012, p 151, 152.

<sup>11</sup> Makhdum Jaf`ar Bubakani, (Phd, thesis) Dr Abdullah Khoso, Sindhi adabi board, Hyderabad, 2012, p 225.

<sup>12</sup> Mir Ali Sher Qanie Thatvi, Maqalat-us Shura, Sindhi adabi board, Hyderabad, 1957, p 152.

<sup>13</sup> Hasil Un Nahj, Dr N.A Baloch Institute of heritage research, Hyderabad, 2013 p 05.

<sup>14</sup> Makhdum Abdul Latif Thatvi, Zub alZabab ud drisat, Sindhi adabi board, Hyderabad, 1959, p 68.

2. **Ijalattul talbeen fi intiqyad al Hafzeen lil Ahdith ul Muzoat.** The abridgement of Tazkirat-ul-Mudouat by Sheikh Tahir Pitni. A special feature is his criticism as Hadith expert on different unfamous, unauthentic narrations.
3. **Nahj-tu-ta`llum:** this comprehensive guide of education to learning and teaching.
4. **Hasil-un-nahj**-this is the abridgement of Nahj-tu-ta`llum in percian language, it is published by Sindh Adabi board, Hyderabad.
5. **Al-matanat-fi-marmat-ul-khazana:** It is most important book on Hanafi jurisprudence, this book is very famous among scholars, and it was printed many times from Pakistan and Arab world.
6. **Kashf-ul-Haqq:** : This important book on Islamic theology, it was edited and researched by Shoaib Farooq, and he got mphil degree from Islamic International university, Islamabdad in 2007.
7. **Irshad-ud-Sadqeen:** It was comprehended on his mystical views, it was in percian language.
8. **Fath-ud-dareen:** This book was also on mystism.
9. **Muaqid-ul-aqaid:** It is also on Islamic theology.
10. **Alisharat-el-mukalimat:** It is commentary of Muaqid-ul-aqaid.
11. **Munhiyat-ul-mukalimat:** It is also on Islamic theology.
12. **Maqaleed ul Islam:** It is also on Islamic theology.
13. **Al-hujjat-ul-qaviya:** It is about issues of Divorce
14. **Al-bisara-fil-amal-bil-isharah:** It is about usul, Fiqh and practice of raising the finger of Shahdah in Salah
15. **Tahzeeb-ul-usool:** It was framework of Islamic law.
16. **Taqreeb-ul-wusool:** It is commentary of Tahzeeb-ul-usool

The above mentioned names are few renowned books of Makhdum Ja`far bubakani. However, many are still remaining to be the part of his contribution.

### ***Death:***

Makhdum Ja`far bubakani died in 15th of Zil-Qa'daah in 1002 A.H, in the city of Bubak and was buried in the ancestors graveyard in Bubak.<sup>15</sup>

### ***A Glance of Nahj-ut-Ta`llum's Portrayal:***

Makhdum Ja`far bubakani was the greatest jurist, scholar and educationist of Islamic epistemology. He outlined his educational thought in the treatise entitled, Nahj-ut-tallum kama yajib al l-muiallim wl-mutaiiallim, (نهج التعلم كما يجب على المعلم والمتعلم). Bubakani has expounded his thoughts of education on the basis of his personal experience and light of others renowned epistemologists. His monumental work is divided into twenty chapters and each chapter of this book is supported by the Quran, traditions and sayings of the learned sages and wise men. He also provided coherent basis for the Islamic perspectives of education. He defined the fundamental principle of pursuit of knowledge, etiquette for learners and teachers. He also stated thoughtful criticism on existing problems of curriculum and he designed a comprehensive and

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<sup>15</sup> Hasil Un Nahj, Dr N.A Baloch Institute of heritage research, Hyderabad, 2013 p 10.

applicable curriculum. In addition, earlier Muslim educational system was divided into two levels but he introduced the six level of education. These levels prescribed by various subjects gradually, In bubakani`s point of view on knowledge, he categorized the knowledge in three main types:

- 1) Uloom-e-Shariaah (Religious sciences). It is further divided into five types: Ilam ul Kalam, Usool ul fiqh, Fiqh Uloom Ul Qura`n, Hadith (science of Hadith is also included in this type).
- 2) Uloom-e-Adbia (linguistics or literature). This category is also subdivided into twelve branches:
  1. Lexicography 2. Etymology 3. Morphology of words 4. Syntax 5. Ma`ani (Rhetoric style) 6. Bayan (Rhetoric Expression) 7. Badi` (Rhetoric: elocution) 8. Prosody 9. Rhyme 10. Scanning 11. Insha (Penmanship) 12. Prose 13. Conversation
- 3) Physics and philosophy these categories are also subdivided into different types.

Practical includes: Tadbir e Mudn (political science) and Tadbir Manzil (economics) these include the welfare of the settled and the moving population. 3 Ethics (Ilm al akhlaq) which religious scholars also call Tasawuf.<sup>16</sup>

Another good feature of Nahj-ut-tallum contained lot of authentic ahadiths from reliable books such as Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidi, Ibn e Majah, Musnad Ahmad and other books of ahadiths. He also designed a well applicable plan for students and teachers. The distinctive feature of this book provides valuable insights into the essential and salient principles of education, teaching and learning, which could still be useful for both students and teachers and, for that matter, Islamic educational institutions (Madrises). Makhdum Ja`far has profound his visions of education on the basis of his personal experience. His epistemological ideas are shadow to other remarkable Islamic educationists like Ghazali Ibn e Rushd. Makhdum ja`far outlined his educational thought in 20 chapters, which are dealing all aspects required in knowledge: following chapters are:

### ***The excellence of knowledge:***

Bubakani has also laid great emphasis on the study of the Holy Quran and the Prophetic Traditions, so in this chapter, he offers a discussion on the excellence of knowledge; and collected the evidence for the excellence of knowledge from Holy Quran and Prophetic Hadith.<sup>17</sup>

### ***The intention to acquire knowledge and the dimension of good intentions:***

In this chapter he explained the purpose and intention of knowledge and he argued the main intention to acquire knowledge is that to reach the pleasure of Allah. Furthermore, he discussed the issues relating to the intention.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Hasil Un Nahj, Dr N.A Baloch Institute of heritage research, Hyderabad, 2013 p 08.

<sup>17</sup> Nahj-ul-ta`llum, p. 1-3

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 3

### ***The meaning of Knowledge, Jurisprudence, wisdom and Islamic law.***

This chapter contained the literally meaning of Knowledge, Jurisprudence, wisdom and shar'iaah (Islamic law). These Islamic terms are expounded with the views of eminent scholar of related field.<sup>19</sup>

### ***The classification of knowledge:***

Bubkani's thoughts on curriculum is expressed in this chapter in detail. He divided knowledge into three major categories that are: 1. Religious sciences. 2. Political literature (linguistics or literature) 3. Physics and philosophy. These categories are also subdivided into different types. Then he proposed the name of books of every type. Bubakani proposed the comprehensive curriculum given which was progressive and vigorous. According Bubakani the educational process should go ahead gradually and side by side.<sup>20</sup>

### ***The permissible and non permissible knowledge***

This chapter mentioned the details about useful Knowledge and useless Knowledge. Bubakani argued that permissible knowledge are divided into four types: 1. Farz-e-Ain (Compulsory Knowledge) 2. Farz-e-Kifaya (Optional Knowledge) 3. Mustahb (Additional Knowledge) 4. Mubah (voluntary). He also discussed on various subjects of knowledge. Then he discussed the non permissible knowledge and its effect on the personality of learners.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Organization of permissible knowledge***

This chapter discusses the various levels for acquiring knowledge and categorizes the subjects according to each level. In this way, six levels have been formed. He expounded every level including books names for every level.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Framework for learning and teaching***

This chapter offers consultancy in order for learners to select the teachers and the books. He advised every learner should get consultation with one who is learned and intelligent, who can give useful guidance, and then he chose the field of knowledge.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Respecting knowledge, students, Teachers and scholars***

This chapter explains respect of knowledge, students, teachers and scholars. In the learning process, it is essential to respect the knowledge, and give the

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 4-6a

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 6-14

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 15-30

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 31-37

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 37-42

comfort and respectable environment for students and teachers, both personalities to be highly regarded by each others.<sup>24</sup>

### ***Efforts, devotion and steadfastness for knowledge,***

This chapter demonstrates the efforts, devotion and steadfastness of acquiring the knowledge. He also advised that if any institution or teacher is not in access to you then, it must be on part of you like the renowned scholars to take long distances in seek of knowledge; they even strived to seek education in hard times. They were even not given facilities to acquire knowledge.<sup>25</sup>

### ***Devastation of knowledge***

This chapter discusses about the devastation of knowledge. Even it is suggested to the learners about the heinous habits that tend to astray them to acquire the knowledge. Further, it is advised to the learners to avoid the bad company of individuals that become the cause of deviation from achieving their actual goal.<sup>26</sup>

### ***The time and place for acquisition of knowledge.***

It discusses about the proper selection of the institute, the age, time and place for acquiring the knowledge. The main focus of this chapter is to highlight the time of acquiring the knowledge by the learners. He also advised that the educational institutions should be clean and beacons. They must be situated in the favorable environment, where the surrounding temperature must not be too high or low. It must be moderate so that the learning should take place in the comfortable zone.<sup>27</sup>

### ***Undertaking the study: its method, conditions and reasons***

This chapter contains resources, methods and the conditions to acquire the knowledge. It provides the detailed discussion on the selection of teaching and learning methods in class, even the circumstances of learning and teaching environments are presented.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Necessities for acquisition of knowledge, Ink, transcription, Books and Narrations***

This chapter explains the basic requirement of stationeries and other essential items to acquire the knowledge by the learners to pen down the lectures within the classrooms. He also guided that the work to transcribe the narration of teacher or the book should be collected and compared skillfully.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 43-47

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 48-50

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 51-57

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 57-62

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 62-82

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 83-92



### ***The etiquette for students and teachers,***

This chapter contains a detailed discussion on the adoption of specific etiquettes to the students and the teachers in a learning environment of institution. It includes the plenty of good manner. It intends to highlight the actual practice of learning and teaching process to facilitate the both instruction and adoption of knowledge in benefit of teachers as well as the learners in acknowledge acquiring institutions.<sup>30</sup>

### ***The causes of retention and forgetfulness***

This chapter explains the causes of retention and forgetfulness of knowledge within learners. It is guided about the process to retain the knowledge for longer period and to practically state the retained knowledge into real life situation. He further advised to avoid the course of habits that tend to ruin the knowledge and becomes the cause of forgetting the retained knowledge.<sup>31</sup>

### ***The factors responsible for the promotion of knowledge and attainment of excellence in it***

This chapter discusses the factors responsible for the promotion of knowledge and attainment of excellence in it. He further suggested to acquire the higher stage in knowledge and capable enough to gain fame as a distinguished scholar within the field.<sup>32</sup>

### ***Essential for Expert of Quran and Hadith***

This chapter contains the essentials for becoming an expert of the Holy Quran and the Hadith. He collected the principle of hadith and Usul e Hadith which is essential for the scholars.<sup>33</sup>

### ***Essential for Mujtahid and ijtehad***

This chapter contains the essentials for becoming Mujtahid and performing Ijtehad. He also defined the principles and rules for various judgments of Islamic laws. He argued that Mujtahid should be able to determine the contemporary situation of the modern era with Islamic perspective. For this, mujtahid must possess the following abilities like of the well-versed of the Qur'an, Sunnah, Ushul Fiqh and other related religious teachings.<sup>34</sup>

### ***Key features for Seeking and giving Fatawa (religious verdicts)***

This chapter contains the discipline of Fatwa and Iftaa. He further stated about the clear position of Mufti and the conditions that hail his status in society. His

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 93-117

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 118-124

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 124-127

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 128-131

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 132-135

decision should be crystal clear and depend on different aspects of comprehensive knowledges so that no one should raise voice against his decisions. The decision of mufti should be bind on perceptives of different religious scholars. His decision should also visualize the fear of Allah in dispatching the justice.<sup>35</sup>

### *The excellence of Scholars and condemnation of useless literature*

The excellence of teaching and scholars are defined in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith. In the following chapter, he discussed the excellence and importance of the righteous Islamic scholars, as well as the condemnation of useless knowledge.<sup>36</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

This brief study is an attempt to to summarize Makhдум Ja`far bubakani`s epistemological thoughts and content of his comprehensive book. It can be said that Makhдум Ja`far was pre-eminent epistemologist of sub-continent He had given comprehensive curriculum for students in his time. His epistemological views and suggestions are comprehended and are very much realistic with practical approach. They fulfil the needs of the educational society. He discussed in detail about various aspects of the education. He categorized the knowledge into its various types. Furthermore, he recommended the books for every category and emphasized that the subjects taught should be both knowledge based and skill based. It is gradually by mastering on one stage and then proceeding to the next. It may be said that his structure of curriculum covers all the aspects of Islamic epistemology. It tends to elaborate the objectives of education. He suggested the few guidelines and instructions for the teachers and also advised the ethical guidelines for instructions of students. This book is contented the concept of education, particularly in designing the curriculum as the basic element for educational process.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 135-138

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 139-142