Understanding of Wara' (Gogliness) as a Feature of Character and Religious Education

Miftachul Huda, Kamarul Azmi Jasmi, Mohd Ismail bin Mustari and Bushrah Basiron
Faculty of Islamic Civilization, University of Technology Malaysia,
Sekudai, 81310 Johar, Malaysia

Abstract: Wara (Godliness) has demonstrated to conceptualise the soul refinement. It becomes an ultimate attainment for religious and character values. However, there has been less virtually attention from scholars to transform it into the educational implementation. In this study we investigate the pattern of wara by considering such its distinctions as moral virtue contributing to religious and character education. After reviewing relevant literatures, we describe how wara pattern can be an effective form as an attempt to clarify the contributions to the field of character and religious education. The result of this study reveals that wara provides some those interested in character development for physical and mental ethics with such distinctions that can enhance educational initiatives and advance the character and religious education research agenda. Finally, this study is expected to contribute the supplying model through caring in mental and physical element. Thus, future studies should attempt to design educational activity to foster moral and spiritual qualities among students.

Key words: Islamic ethical framework, wara (Godliness), physical and mental ethics, character education, religious education

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, the implementation of moral and religious education has been a worldwide program (Halstead and Taylor, 2000). Its purpose is to instil students with character and values through education and activities designed. Cultivating of good character among children has long been the main chief goal of parents, educators and theologians (Halstead, 2014). In order to construct and instil character and moral values into students, it is necessary to formulate a foundational concept as key performance index in character education. In this regard both general and character education is necessary as the ultimate component in the effort to instil noble character and values. Such character and values are significant to equip students not only with having the qualities of knowledge in the sense of cognitive aspects but also in reflecting on how spiritual aspects become a basic developmental element to mould generations with noble character. The quality of the relationship between school environment and family circumstance is a significant aspect of such character and ethical education (Christenson, 2004).

The individual qualities of students as well as children are necessary to make a foundation towards significant performative character education. The emphasis on values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, caring and fairness, helping the students understands needs to pay attention to and apply these values in their own lives (Grove, 2004). It plays an important role to help mental development for children both physically and emotionally to become a fully human being with noble character. The cultivation of good character is a ubiquitous goal of parents and educators, providing the foundation for flourishing in all domains of life (McLellan and Steward, 2015). It means that character education is an active process in the societies geared towards the realisation of quality character building of the young generations.

However, there has been a lack of scholarly work on how the students should act in the specifically shared ways in the context of wara specifically on circumspection. This study aims in filling a research gap by highlighting of the rule of character education by exploring and promoting of "wara" as a way of establishing a quality of life through integrating of moral values in the learning process of the students. Moreover, this model attempts to construct the concept of wara as an integral part of mental and physical aspect of individuals with reference to al-Zarnuji (Huda and Kartanegara, 2015a-b).

Corresponding Author: Miftachul Huda, Faculty of Islamic Civilization, University Teknologi Malaysia, Sekudai, 81310 Johar, Malaysia

ISLAMIC ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

Character is usually defined as the realisation of one's positive development of a person, intellectually, socially, emotionally, culturally and ethically. Character, commonly recognised in Arabic word which is "akhlaq" is internal states, traits, qualities or abilities that individuals possess (Huda and Kartanegara, 2015a-c). Such individual qualities direct them to behave accordingly. This character is developed into habit, whereas its values find its basis in the teachings of Islam. It includes both inward qualities and outward behaviour of human and it is based on the perspective that behaviours are closely related to the soul and its intention. On this view, character includes "attitudes" such as the desire to do one's best and being concerned about the welfare of others; "intellectual capacities" such as critical thinking and moral reasoning; "behaviour" such as being honest and responsible and standing up for moral principles in the face of injustice; "interpersonal and emotional skills" that enable us to interact effectively with others in a variety of circumstances and the "commitment" to contribute to one's community and society (Battistich, 2008).

In terms of its classification in the context of relation with other creations, character (akhlaq) is divided into six basic components: individual character; character within the social-family; character in the context of social life; character in the context of behaviour towards animals; character in the context of attitudes towards the environment and character in the context of the attitude of the Servant towards the creator (Qardawi, 1981). In addition to Islamic perspective, morality can conveniently be divided into three categories: the obligations, duties and responsibilities set out in the shari'ah; the values and manners associated with good upbringing and the personal qualities of character that a Muslim is expected to demonstrate in everyday life (Halstead, 2007). It is clear that although there are sufficient divergences, character includes the wider contexts of human actions as clearly explained by some experts above including those related to individual development in the social community and the God is the great creator. In the school context, for example, it is an effort through certain programs to instil some character values into the students comprising on knowledge, consciousness or willingness and action emphasising interrelatedness of God, self and society.

Islam guides a way of life of the Muslim (Ahmed, 2002). The source of this belief is derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah (tradition and sayings or teachings of Prophet Muhammad PBUH). Since, Islam is considered to be a comprehensive religion and its ethical system is one of the major sources of ethical system, it embraces all activities and set in accordance with Islamic rules. Based on this view, the ethical values in Islam address the importance of the relationship of man on his creator, society and self-development. In particular, Islam sustains the entire dimension of life considering how to interact with others in a wholesome manner. With more specific expectations and judgements as circumstances change over time but principles such as "adl (justice), salam (peace), iman (faith), ibada (worship), khilafa (human trusteeship), tauhyd (unity), jihad (struggle against injustice and oppression), amal al-salih (virtuous behaviour) and istislah (public interest)" have a timeless quality and are believed to apply equally across the whole of humanity, regardless of colour, wealth, status, ethnicity, power and nationality (Halstead, 2007).

The principle of Islamic ethics is based on divine revelation through the Qur'an which was revealed to His messenger Muhammad (Hourani, 2007, 2014). The Qur'an commands Muslims to act appropriately and refrain in engaging in doing of evil acts. Here are such examples: being good to others, being honest, trust worthy, fair in dealing with others, enjoining of justice and keeping of the promise and forbidden acts: lying, unfaithfulness and breaking of contracts and stealing associating Allah to other beings. Qur'an provided a complete instruction on how to behave in accordance with what Islam has prescribed to attain balance for self-development as well as the community (Saeed, 2005).

Muslims believe that Islam is total, complete and eternal for all times and places (Ahmed, 2002; Endut and AS, 2015). A way of life based on moral virtues and regarded as a social system which is well constructed and designed, features the teachings of Islam. Consequently, every act intended to worship will be given a reward and get the pleasure of Allah. Directives encompassing religious rituals, personal character, morals, habits, family relationships, social and economic affairs, administration, rights and duties of citizens, judicial systems, laws of war and peace and international relations and the protection of the environment become an ultimate foundation on the creed of Islam and ethical foundation for the Muslims.

In terms of religious ethics, especially Islamic ethics both are usually considered as idealistic (Halstead, 2007). It means that the significant difference in idealism or relativism between Muslims and other religious groups is rarely. Virtue ethics theory with a more holistic does not judge every action as right or wrong. Moreover, it looks at ethics as a living experience for those who have an ethical personality. Islamic ethics consists of rules on that help every Muslim to decide what is right and wrong. In addition, it motivates Muslim to commit to a moral

living based on spiritual experience in terms of virtue theory, virtue component and proper application of the Islamic daily principle. In terms of the fundamental concepts in Islamic theology in the levels of religion, there are three levels of religion: Islam, Iman and Ihsan as in the following (Alinejad, 2012).

- The first level is "Islam" construction on the instructions and teachings about the main five pillars
- The second level is "Iman" understanding with strengthening believes and values in heart
- The third and ultimate level is "Ihsan" as the result of understanding both Islam and Iman constructing a spiritual experience underlying every act

Providing a comprehensive explanation of the religious concepts of Islam, Iman and Ihsan are essential concepts which were widely ethical awareness and commitment among Muslims. It also becomes an ultimate attainment in the application of Islamic ethics to give the clear guidelines as a way of life of Muslim.

Muslims have different levels of ethical awareness and commitment according to the richness and depth of their religious experience (level of religion). In addition, the three levels of religion in Islam: Islam, Iman and Ihsan means that in terms of any religious ethic there consists of an obligation, a virtue and a value component (Moad, 2007). Simply, there will be at consequences for its implementation in terms of learning and teaching. In the context of Islamic teaching and practice, being a moral educator involves two tasks: giving of children and young people the knowledge of what they should and should not do (understanding the reasons for the behaviour is in a sense considered less important than knowing what is right and may come later) and giving them the motivation or the will to behave morally (Halstead, 2007). Consequently, any kind of character and values to be instilled into the students should be not separated from the ultimate foundation as mentioned earlier.

WARA' AS A CONCEPT OF CIRCUMSPECTION

Wara' is derived from the Arabic word: wa, ra' and 'ain that mean "to hold" and "to clench" (Taslim, 2014). In other words, it is the concept of circumspection, where such a consequence of physical and mental ability is under religious values-based self-control. This term has a deep meaning that wara' is to maintain the sanctity through refraining from inappropriateness. From this view, it can be analysed that wara' simply is keeping away from shubhat which is something unclear of its status between

halâl (permissible) and haram (prohibited) as prescribed in Islam. Based on elucidation earlier, wara' can be made as a main foundation of building of character by instilling noble values among learners. In this context, wara' should be operationalised by relating it to the social community by interaction between and among individuals or groups vis-a-vis sharing with others. As a result, Ishaq ibn Khalaf views that the significance of wara' in the conversation is more concerned rather that of a treasure as he points out wara' in terms of speech is more concerned with character building than gold or silver. In addition, wara' is divided into three extents as follows (Mirluni, 2012):

- Avoidance of prohibited acts
- Keeping up from the shubhat, widely performed by common individual
- Abstaining of unnecessary matter, immoral acts and focuses on doing necessary regard related to the character building

Moreover, wara' relates to both the inner and outer aspects of a believer's life and conduct. A profound attainment of wara' must have reached the peaks of Taqwa (God consciousness) in all aspects of life of human. Since, wara' is a part of taqwa as an Islamic values, Halstead (2007) points out that such distinctive features of person instilled with Islamic values are "those who believe" and "those who do good deeds" (for example, Sura 2, v. 25, Sura 95, v. 6, Sura 103, v. 2) where both are inextricable link that exists in Islam between religion and morality as reflected in the Qur'an. It means that there is a link that refers to a balance between the concept of moral duty and the concept of religious duty. In Islam, there is no separate view on spirituality and everyday activities of a believer.

Furthermore, some Sufis define wara' as the conviction of the truth of Islamic tenets, being straightforward in one's beliefs and acts by being steadfast in observing of Islamic commandments and by being very careful in one's relations with God Almighty (Tuasikal, 2012). Such sincere action should be intended for the sake of gaining of God's favour. Consequently, the human life should be taken into reflecting a strict observance of the Shari'a commandments and o its prohibitions. In line with such attitudes as mentioned, its significance is that there should be an ethical devotion taking into consciousness and circumspection of any kind of condition in one's daily life period. Both moral and religious duty of human has a significance to enhance one's traits in order to be a better person. This conviction creates a perspective on how to reach a quality of life of Muslim individual and thus it aims to construct a better

attitude of man period. In addition, in term of moral construction of the way how human should act in their life, both leaving a dubiousness and taking alive worthy of living become the main aim of wara'. This perspective is within the concept of circumspection. Since, such an attitude geared towards the condition of life, there should consequently be a conscious way of life in responding to daily challenges which Muslim faces. In depth inquiry of wara', it is clearly identified which one should concern herself or himself of his or her actions period. With this regard, it is significantly pointed out that case of halâl (permissible) and haram (prohibited) are made clearly where between both there is shubhat (unclear status). Whoever is willing to keep away from that case means that s/he has maintained religious obligation expected of him or her.

It can be seen from the example that s/he is likened to a shepherd who grazes his cattle around the interdiction land which almost plunged. Given a view, every king has a restrictions land and this prohibition belonging to Allah on earth is case of prohibition. In other Hadith, what is beneficial to Muslim is avoid unnecessary deed. It is emphasised that the ultimate goal of wara' is doing of useful thing and avoiding of its opposite period thus making as careful to response well to situations within encountering daily such as being critical to news that are not important. Subsequently, wara' itself contains physical and mental ethics for the human life as an effort to construct and instil profound understanding of our environment (Taslim, 2014).

WARA' AS PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL ETHICS

In order to develop the new generation with excellence both in talents, character and spiritualty, it is to construct moral judgement by passing through the following: notice, think, aim and act upon. Considering the moral expertise as pointed out, it is certain that whatever person perform in term of achieving both mental and physical aspect should master through four levels above. Since, the criteria of each human being have similarities, therefore, potentials and abilities consequently have the same in terms of a variety of backgrounds.

Among such a means for purifying mental and physical qualities, there should be a way of balancing both carefulness and consciousness in terms of 'amaliyah (practice) and qawliyyah (saying). As a result, al-Zarnuji proposes the nature of wara' as a concept of circumspection (Huda and Kartanegara, 2015b). This concept is to promote the consciousness in the human life at all levels. Consequently, due to the awareness in all pertaining to the human life, mainly for the students in the process of learning, this can enact person to focus on the

object s/he conduct as designed in curriculum. Given a view, the well-designed preparation can give a positive result to the process of instilling some significant values and characters for the mental and physical aspects.

In addition, there are few items in term of elucidating mental and physical aspect, becoming the main foundation as an effort to instil person to be of a noble character. It means that in this context, an actualisation of Islamic values is necessary as it is seen as a supreme importance with regards to once effort to build and instil an Islamic ideology as a way of life (Halstead, 2007). In Islam, the development of human character is mostly seen as a process of absorbing one's passion towards such values. Those values need to be formed and manifested in person to become functional member of Islamic society.

In particular, in the eleventh chapter of Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, al-Zarnuji suggests that eight characteristics of wara' which needs to be addressed, should subsequently be adopted especially by the students, in their daily life and, generally to those who are in the world of education (Huda and Kartanegara, 2015c). Among Islamic values, the specific requirements of wara' can be seen as in the following (Huda *et al.*, 2016a, b):

- Student must not make his or her stomach full
- Student should avoid prolonged sleep and avoid embarrassing others and unnecessary conversation
- Student should avoid mischievous acts
- Student should avoid wasting of time period
- Student should face the Qiblah when studying and adhere in practicing of the Sunnah of the Prophet
- Student should focus themselves on fruitful activities
- Student should not neglect the obligatory prayers
- Student should track the record of his or her daily learning activities

Furthermore, in terms of learning, wara' can guide a person to be aware of his or her talk (kalam) and deed ('amal). In other words, the significance of wara' to human attribute is keeping away from useless things, whether they are mubah (permissible), makruh (tolerated) or haram (prohibited) which is to be embedded within the hearts of every Muslim. In this view, the awareness of one's action is the most important thing as al-Zarnuji emphasised. As a result, the students should refrain from doing unnecessary things so that they will focus on doing useful thing instead. So, their attitude becomes their habit. In doing useful things, they will accustom on learning and thus they have no time to entertain doing useless thing. By caring about such requirements in the educational process, the ultimate aim of education will create the human with noble qualities thus s/he behaves morally in accordance with the teaching of Islam. As a

result both the student's and teacher's interaction must be based on wara' in such a way, awareness of avoiding of useless activities. This will create the generation with the moral expertise in terms of physical and mental aspect. This means that wara' influences behaviour and mental ethics of individual. From this perspective, the quality of relationship between students and teachers, parent and children is very important, since children and students take their parents or teacher as their role model hence love and respect are nurtured (Halstead, 2007). Arweck and Nesbitt point out that the parent's views on how their children should be educated and nurtured must be within the bound of religious teachings.

WARA' AS CHARACTER AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Wara' can make us conscious of our actions in dealing with others and the way how we face life significantly. It means that maintaining of wara' nurtures nurture human behaviour morally, thus it makes human with noble character. In this perspective, it is pointed out that whoever is doing prohibited acts will significantly influence his or her life outcome, thus he or she is removed from the path of wara'. In terms of its significance to character formation and its profound influence to religious education, let us discuss in the following.

Its significance of character education: Character education is usually patterned through programs which aimed to promote the values of the students as well as to develop their character. It can be seen through the positive relationships of character education and influential factors to the development of character on students (Christenson, 2004) at which all these scientific studies in the field of character development and character education have been made with emphasizing the childhood stage (McLellan and Steward, 2015).

Furthermore, based on the significance of character building through education, it is a urgent to introduce this by providing these important values through ethical foundations to achieve the best in both learning process and of social life and interactions. In this view, it can be argued that to build the spirit or soul of human as an infinite spiritual substance which can emit the light of life. This means that character education controls the spiritual aspect of life and it actualises the human hidden potentialities through applying the spiritual noble character and morals. In other words, character education maximises the potentialities of human character. As a result, in the educational level, the student may learn not only at an intellectual level but inevitably seeks to extract meaning from content; this affective process consists of

reflecting on the implications of the content, integrating the content with life experience, being challenged by the content to deeper awareness or sensitivity, responding in a personal and creative way to the content. In addition, Cush and Robinson suggest that the possible implications for religious education in schools, with an approach of diversity, tradition, local and global context, should be considered in particular in terms of such a mission and vision of education which is well designed. Particularly, the significance of wara' is philosophically integrated into the five basic principles as the central mission of student' character as follows:

- To build virtuous life of individual who is possessing a noble character, hence he becomes a functional member of society with strong sense of responsibility
- To enhance students values and character acceptable to the community
- To produce individuals to become part of human capital who are better equipped with intellect (fikr), skills ('amal) and with moral (zikr and qalb)
- To produce individuals who are sensitive to the diversities of cultures across the divide
- To make students competitive and able to face global challenges

Subsequently, it is sure that there should be conceptualised a critical review on the distinction of nature, regarded as supplying for mental and physical element as an effort to construct personal with an approach of spiritual ability.

Its significance for religious education: Baidhawy (2007) points out religious education makes balance human and interpersonal interaction. He emphasises on these characteristics of education. There are three others are how to learn, how to do and how to be) how to live together with others collectively encouraging sincere human relationships. Religious education should exemplify an approach with wara' to support teachers to inculcate religious beliefs and practices to their students. Thus, teachers are instruments in propagation of religious education, wara'. Hence, teachers in secondary school must make their teaching styles and strategies more exciting, memorable and make their lessons on religious education appealing to the students by employing new and attractive pedagogy (Tuasikal, 2012). In this context, teacher's ability to integrate wara' into their lesson significantly promote moral values among the students.

Moreover, in terms of wara' significance to religious education, it aims at encompassing such examples with an approach on teaching and learning in the classroom through an exciting and flexible condition (Mirluni, 2012). Therefore, the life of the religious person or community is

so to say, a social practice entailing living a life refracted through complex sets of behaviours, beliefs and correlated actions. It means that social practices established the certain forms and patterns of relationship between individual and society across the political, cultural and social life of the community.

CONCLUSION

The present study has demonstrated the pattern of wara' as a concept of circumspection. By reviewing a set of moral education through a comprehensive approach to explore pattern of wara' as a part of ethical foundation of moral and religious education for the students to enhance the quality of interaction as the integrative part of morality to be implemented in the educational process of which it encourages to transform individual qualities with spiritual and intellectual sense. The significance of wara' is that there should be concerned taking into consciousness and awareness in terms of physical and mental aspect. In fact, its contribution is also to describe the religious and character education as a part of the complete element in fulfilling of the soul and body spiritual purpose. Thus, this study is aimed to enhance the quality of the student's interaction as the integrative morality to be implemented in the educational system.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, A.S., 2002. Discovering Islam: Making Sense of Muslim History and Society. Routledge, New York, USA., ISBN:0-203-71454-0, Pages: 250.

Alinejad, M., 2012. Nature and domain of Islamic education. Soc. Sci., 7: 90-94.

Baidhawy, Z., 2007. Building harmony and peace through multiculturalist theology-based religious education: An alternative for contemporary Indonesia. Br. J. Religious Edu., 29: 15-30.

Battistich, V.A., 2008. Voices: A practitioner's perspective: Character education, prevention and positive youth development. J. Res. Charact. Edu., 6: 81-90.

Christenson, S.L., 2004. The family-school partnership: An opportunity to promote the learning competence of all students. Sch. Psychol. Rev., 33: 83-104.

Endut, M.N.A.A. and N.A. AS, 2015. The Islamic epistemological element of Al-Yaqin in critical thinking. Pertanika J. Soc. Sci. Hum., 23: 91-102.

Grove, M., 2004. The three R's of pastoral care: Relationships, respect and responsibility. Pastoral Care Edu., 22: 34-38.

Halstead, J.M. and M.J. Taylor, 2000. Learning and teaching about values: A review of recent research. Cambridge J. Educ., 30: 169-202.

Halstead, J.M., 2007. Islamic values: A distinctive framework for moral education?. J. Moral Educ., 36: 283-296.

Halstead, J.M., 2014. Values and Values Education: Challenges for Faith Schools International Handbook of Learning, Teaching and Leading in Faith-Based Schools. Springer, New York, USA.,.

Hourani, G.F., 2007. Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK., ISBN-13:978-0-521-26712-0, Pages: 285.

Huda, M. and M. Kartanegara, 2015a. Distinctive feature of Al-Zarnuji's Ideas: A philosopical inquiry into the book Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim. Am. Int. J. Contemp. Res., 5: 171-177.

Huda, M. and M. Kartanegara, 2015b. Ethical foundation of character education in Indonesia: Reflections on integration between Ahmad Dahlan and al-Zarnuji. Proceeding of the International Confer ence of Malay Muslim Prominent Scholars KUIS, April 28-28, 2015, Selangor, Kajang, Malaysia, pp: 404-420.

Huda, M. and M. Kartanegara, 2015c. Islamic spiritual character values of al-Zarnuji's Ta-lim al-Muta-allim. Mediterr. J. Soc. Sci., 6: 229-235.

Huda, M., J.B. Yusuf, K.A. Jasmi and G.N. Zakaria, 2016a. Al-Zarnujis Concept of Knowledge. SAGE Publisher, New York, USA.,.

Huda, M., K.A.C. Jasmi, A.K. Mohamed, W.W.H. Embong and J. Safar, 2016b. Philosophical Investigation of al-Zarnuji's Talim al-Mutaallim: Strengthening Ethical Engagement into Teaching and Learning. Social Science Press, Beijing, China,.

McLellan, R. and S. Steward, 2015. Measuring children and young people's wellbeing in the school context. Cambridge J. Edu., 45: 307-332.

Mirluni, P.I.F.A., 2012. [Seven benefits of piety]. Samudera Ilmu, Malaysia (In Malay). http://faisalchoir.blogspot.com/2012/08/7-faedah-tentang-wara.html

Moad, E.O., 2007. A path to the Oasis: Shari'ah and reason in Islamic moral epistemology. Int. J. Philosophy Religion, 62: 135-148.

Qardawi, Y.A., 1981. Al-Khasa is Al-Ammah Lil Islami. Maktabah Wahbah, Cairo, Egypt,.

Saeed, A., 2005. Interpreting the Quran: Towards a Contemporary Approach. Routledge, New York, USA., ISBN:0-415-36537-6,.

Taslim, A., 2014. Meaning attitude wara: The meaning of wara]. Konsultasi Syaria, Indonesia (In Indonesian). http://www.konsultasisyariah.com/makna-sikap-wara/.

Tuasikal, M.A., 2012. [Be wara be, behave and act wara]. Rumaysho. Com, Indonesia (In Indonesian). http://rumaysho.com/akhlaq/bersikaplah-wara-3016.html