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Education of Thinking as a Path to Virtue and Happiness in *Qutadghu Bilig*

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Abstract

Thinking is one of the most distinguishing characteristics of humans. Man/woman can understand through thinking, find his/her way through thinking, and solve inherent problems after giving some thought. Any educational activity, regardless of its type, initially aims to train the ability of our thinking. Thus although there are relatively new definitions such as “education of thinking”, “philosophy with kids”, “critical and creative thinking skills” education of thinking is in reality as ancient as the roots of humanity. The reason activities such as knowing, understanding, living, and creating value collectively delineate man’s main mission on the earth. Scholars, philosophers, ethicists, scientists, and educators are those who contribute to the development of thinking ability. Currently, training of the mind within the frameset of goodness values, to create a culture of living and worldview, and eventually liberating and improving the person is among the key objectives of education of thinking.

Education of thinking does not merely consist of philosophy or pedagogy; it is the combination of both. According to philosophical tradition, activity such as ‘education of thinking’ and ‘philosophy for children’ are structured related with philosophers Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Kant, and Dewey. Through this approach, which enables reconstructing Western philosophers’ views with respect to ‘education of thinking’, ‘philosophy for children’ is similarly viable to reconstruct the works of Eastern philosophers. One of these works is *Qutadghu Bilig* written by Yousuf Khas Khajib. *Qutadghu Bilig* is an outstanding literary work that aims to educate thinking ability and discipline emotions, behaviours and personality through highlighted values. This work attempts to answer the question of how to make *qut*, a coincidental and luck-based condition, which means ‘gizmo, fate, fortune, happiness’ and represents a state of goodness of people who have a temporary existence. *Qutadghu Bilig* asks whether *qut* can become a permanent entity in human, social and political life and whether it is achievable at all. This literary work attributes the continuity of *qut* to virtues such as knowledge, justice, forgiveness, compassion, generosity, tenderness, patience and perseverance. To ensure the continuity of *qut* requires such a higher mental state and spiritual dignity. That is only viable through educating and activating one's thinking ability.

Keywords: Education of thinking, Yousuf Khas Khajib, Qutadghu Bilig, Qut, Knowledge, Virtue.

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Kutadgu Bilig'de Erdem ve Mutluluk Yolu Olarak Düşünme Eğitimi

Öz

Düşünme, insanın en ayırıcı vasıflarından biridir. İnsan, düşünerek anlar, düşünerek yolunu bulur, düşünerek sorunlarını çözer. Hangi eğitim faaliyeti olursa olsun, öncelikle düşünme yetisini eğitmeyi amaçlar. Bu nedenle “düşünme eğitimi”, “çocuklarla felsefe”, “eleştirel ve yaratıcı düşünme becerileri” gibi adlandırmalar nispeten yeni olsa da, düşünme eğitimi aslında insanın tarihi kadar eskidir. Bunun böyle olmasının nedeni, bilme, anlama, yaşama, değer üretme faaliyetlerinin insanın yeryüzündeki temel konumunu tanımlıyor olmasıdır. Bilgeler, filozoflar, ahlakçılar, bilim adamları ve eğitimciler, düşünme yetisinin terbiyesine katkıda bulunan kişilerdir. Bugün de zihnin, iyilik değerleri çerçevesinde, bir yaşama kültürü ve dünya görüşü doğuracak, nihayetinde bireyin otonomisini sağlayacak ve geliştirecek şekilde eğitilmesi, düşünme eğitiminin temel hedefleri arasındadır.

Düşünme eğitimi salt felsefeden ya da salt pedagojiden oluşmaz; her ikisinden de oluşur. Felsefe geleneği açısından bakıldığında, “düşünme eğitimi”, “çocuklarla felsefe” gibi etkinliklerin Sokrates, Platon, Aristoteles, Rousseau, Kant, Dewey gibi filozoflara geri götürülerek yapılandırıldığı görülebilir. Söz konusu yaklaşım açısından nasıl ki Batılı filozofların görüşleri “düşünme eğitimi”, “çocuklar için felsefe” kapsamında yeniden okunup değerlendiriliyorsa aynı şekilde doğulu filozofların/bilgelerin eserleri de okunabilir. İşte bu eserlerden biri, *Kutadgu Bilig'dir*. 1069 yılında, Karahanlı devletinde “has haciblik” (halkın sorunlarıyla ilgilenen ve bu sorunlardan Hakanı haberdar eden kişi) görevinde bulunmuş olan Yusuf Has Hacib tarafından yazılan eser, öncelikle düşünme yetisini eğitmek, öne çıkardığı değerlerle duyguları, davranışları ve kişiliği terbiye etmek isteyen bir çalışma niteliğindedir. Söz konusu eser, rastlantısal ve şansa bağlı bir durum olan; “uğur, baht, talih, mutluluk, devlet” gibi anlamlara gelen ve gelip geçici bir varlık olan insanın yeryüzündeki iyilik hâlini ifade eden *ku'tu*, birey, toplum ve devlet hayatında nasıl sürekli hâle getirebiliriz, bunun bir yolu var mıdır, sorusuna cevap arar ve kutun sürekliliğini, bilgi, adâlet, bağışlayıcılık, merhamet, cömertlik, yumuşak huyluluk, sabır, metanet gibi erdem değerlerinde bulur. *Ku'tu* sürekli kılmak böyle bir zihin durumunu ve ruh yüceliğini gerektirir. Bu da ancak düşünme yetisini eğitmek ve etkin hâle getirmekle gerçekleşebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Düşünme Eğitimi, Yusuf Has Hacib, Kutadgu Bilig, Kut, Bilgi, Erdem.

Introduction

Similar to values education, education of thinking is one of the fields emphasised by the modern education system. Analytical, positive, critical and creative thinking as well as mental activities that identify different forms of thought occur within the framework of education of thinking. One of the reasons for prioritising this form of education is that children and their education is highly valued; the future of humanity is attributed to the power of children's education and education of thinking is considered to have a crucial role in the betterment of humans in the world. Furthermore, the cognitive limitations observed among young people (and even adults) have led to the emergence of activity domains such as 'philosophy for children' and 'critical and creative thinking', which are geared towards the teaching of thinking skills.

Although 'education of thinking' is a relatively novel approach, the development of thinking ability is as old as the first civilisation. The underlying idea is that the acts of knowing, understanding, living and creating value can make sense of human existence. Humans exist with their thoughts; thinking, knowing and understanding abilities are collectively harnessed; once a person moves away from this characteristic, he/she can no longer be seen as truly human. As Mawlana (1985: 299)

asserted, '[man] is nothing but a simple thought'. Pascal (1966: 22) echoed the same sentiment by saying, 'I can imagine a man having no hands or legs but I simply cannot imagine a non-thinking man; that could only be a stone or a beast' and underlined that thinking ability has a vital share in a person's development. Similarly, the *Qutadghu Bilig*, one of the fundamental products of Turko-Islamic culture, emphasises that anyone without intellect, thought, or knowledge would lose human features and eventually turn into an inanimate object, beast, stone and mud (KB, 139). The mind factor, due to its central position in human development, is given a position of privilege in *Qutadghu Bilig*. The mind is viewed as an instrument of enlightenment, a key that opens the gates to goodness, such that mindless persons are in a void and therefore fail to fully actualise their potential as humans. Abilities such as speaking, knowing and understanding and factors such as values, ethics and laws, culture and civilisation are products of thinking activity. Based on the importance of these elements, training the thinking ability is regarded as one of the main human actions although it has never been a simple task. This condition is proven by the fact that even in the modern age, humans still pose the most serious danger to themselves and the universe. Throughout history, prophets, scholars, philosophers, ethicists, scientists and educators all fought hard to cultivate human thinking ability in the best way to ensure personal happiness, creativity, efficiency and autonomy.

Thinking is not a one-sided act but is a myriad of forms and methods. However, each thinking activity strives to ensure knowing, understanding, comprehension, problem solving and production of ideas. These factors also indicate the quality of thinking action. In this sense, education of thinking is the instruction that trains one's mind to develop correct or appropriate thinking styles. Accordingly, a thinking mind has the potential to become educated, informed, and clarified. Thus, one can argue that the mind is similar to a raw metal; it should be moulded by education so that critical and creative thinking styles can be developed.

Qutadghu Bilig, one of the foundations of the Turkish tradition of wisdom, was written by Yousuf Khass Khajib between 1069 and 1070 for Ruler of Karakhanid State Ulugh Bughra Khan (KB, 1959: 2). This era was the time during which another wise man was born in the same land but migrated to Bagdad, the hub of science, philosophy and culture at the time; Mahmud Kashgari wrote *Diwan Lughat al-Turk*; and Nizamiyah madrasahs were opened in cultural centres such as Baghdad, Nishabur, Isfahan, Rey and Herat. Within the framework of Ahmad Yasawi's moral and ethical values, a parallel education and training movement was formed. In the ensuing years, the period that can be called the age of 'Asian Enlightenment' continued. Hajib, one of the eminent thinkers of his time, served as Karakhanid state's '*has hacib*' (caring for the problems of commoners and informing *khan* –the ruler– about their issues). *Qutadghu Bilig* is the only work from that period of Turkish history that has survived to the present age. This work, which covers the age of Plato to the modern times and focuses on state and social philosophy, is one of the major books of its kind. Although there is no explicit statement in the book about Hajib's familiarity with Plato, the book was based on the concept of 'manners/virtue' and notions of 'humanity', 'justice', 'state', 'order' and value of 'knowledge' can draw similarities with him. Consisting of 6645 verses, the book narrates how emperor Kün-Toğdı stood for justice, generosity and bravery; vizier Ay-Toldı and Öğdülmiş symbolised intellect, wisdom, common sense and agility; and Odgurmış represented ascetism and doom. The book consists of the relationships, speeches and mutual correspondences among these characters.

The problem statement of this study focuses on education of thinking as narrated in *Qutadghu Bilig*. Problem questions relate to the nature of education of thinking and *Qutadghu Bilig's* approach to it, preferred methods and techniques to educate the mind, the kind of connection forged between thinking ability and daily life and the type of human aimed to be raised in this education. *Qutadghu Bilig's* earliest copies are probably Fergana copy written in the 13th century, Kahire copy dating back to the 14th century and Vienna copy written in the 15th century (Dankoff, 2015: 270, Tekin, 1989: 68). In this study, the main work is the *Qutadghu Bilig* text of Reşit Rahmeti Arat, the critical publication of

which was in 1947 and was followed by the edition of the Turkish Historical Society in 1959 that laid the basis for subsequent translation and simplification works. In this article, the text is referenced as *KB*.

1. Knowledge of *Qut*

'*Qut*' or '*qutluğ*' is referred to as 'gizmo', 'fate', 'destiny', 'happiness' or 'state' in *Diwan Lughat al-Turk*, the first Turkish dictionary, which coincided with the time that *Qutadghu Bilig* was written (Kaşgarlı, 1998: 92, 320, 304, 508). According to one verse, 'If God blesses one servant with bliss and greatness, his deeds will be exalted every day' (Kaşgarlı, 1998: 320). Thus, *qut* is reflected differently in the person, society and state. The cumulative meaning in *Qutadghu Bilig* dictates that this reflection becomes justice in the state, welfare in society and happiness in human beings. However, the overall point is the importance of value and knowledge. Only knowledge can save *qut* from being a blurry, dim and coincidental case and turn it into conscious experience. Happiness exalted in *qut* not merely refers to happiness on this earth but rather to 'happiness here and joy in the afterlife' as evidenced in the two-layer ontology presented in the book. Human, state, social and ethical approaches are also defined in the context of this ontology.

This work starts with extensive explanations of *qut* and argues that *qut* is the gift of fate and a temporary state; it exists today but is ambiguous tomorrow, it may reside in some and not in others. It has no consistency and continuity. To exemplify the mobility of this notion, the 'ball' metaphor is employed in *Qutadghu Bilig*. Just like a ball, *qut* never stays in one place but rolls down from one point to the next; likewise, *qut* constantly changes location, and like a bird, it flies to various branches to rest. Thus, a person should never be attached to *qut*, and should never believe or trust it either (*KB*, 58). Unsteadiness of life and temporariness of time may give the person an idea about *qut*. One has to remember that like all mortal and temporary things, *qut* is also bound to go away. Being aware of *qut* not only enables human beings to live life consciously but also prepares them for harsh times ahead. Yousuf Khass Khajib extols durable virtues rather than transient pleasures. He also refers to 'knowledge' as the key to permanent values of life. 'If knowledge brings you joy and prosperity, be reminded that this bliss is never eternal', says the writer (*KB*, 131). Accordingly, *Qutadghu Bilig* attempts to answer the question of whether a single way can transform coincidental and unplanned *qut* into something eternal for the lives of individuals, societies and states and an appropriate method and technique can be applied in this pursuit. Hajib also attributes the continuity of *qut* to virtues such as knowledge, justice, compassion, goodness, generosity, moderation, bravery, patience, perseverance and tolerance. Perpetuating *qut* calls for wisdom, elevated consciousness and a praiseworthy soul.

2. Education in *Qutadghu Bilig*

In the works written about the political philosophy, besides the subjects such as the forms of government, justice, social order, there is also a discussion about education problem. Parallel to Plato's *State and Laws* (1988: 24) or Aristotle's *Politics* (1926: 300-301), Farabi's *Virtuous City and Attainment of Happiness* (1974: 38-40) echoes the same notion reflected in ensuing utopias. In them, the place of education in state order is discussed. This aspect is crucial because education is regarded as reproduction of society, order and the authorised and sustaining intellectual power of state dominance. In Plato as well rulers', education is what identifies and trains guards and workers. In Aristotle, lawmakers and rulers of state power are individuals that have received the best education; similarly, education organises society, informing the public about social order and laws and keeping social customs, traditions and beliefs alive.

Qutadghu Bilig is a political treatise, and above all, a book on education and living culture. Its foremost objective is to contribute to raising knowledgeable, astute, visionary, virtuous and fair-minded individuals as model politicians. Reşid Rahmeti Arat argues that Hajib wrote this book

specifically to educate and train young people (Arat, 1959: IX). To highlight this quality of his book, Hajib says, '[in] case you have a son or a daughter, educate the child in your house; never let others do the task. [...] Teach your son or daughter knowledge and humility; that is the best treasure for them in this world and in the after world', thereby adopting a pedagogical attitude within the framework of educational conditions of his age (KB, 326).

Education is not bound to any age limit and yet the neediest population are children and adolescents. 'If the child demands knowledge, s/he should start to receive education at an early age. Humans can [acquire] knowledge when young and attain their wishes once grown up. Thus, [a person] can learn [...] virtue, worthy attitudes and behaviours and correct his/her improper state of actions' (KB, 139). Educating and correcting the child is the main duty of grown-ups (KB, 137). A certain type of attitude and behaviour not adopted at an early age cannot be adopted at a later age. Indeed, the proverb 'a dry tree cannot be mended' (*kuruğ yığaç egilmes*) in *Diwan Lughat al-Turk* reflects the saying '[as] the tree is bent so is the tree inclined', which implies public wisdom regarding the practice of educating children (Kaşgarlı Mahmud, 1999: 198). Hajib continues: 'If a father strives to educate his son, the son will be raised as a good individual under his training. If the father raises his son under strict discipline, the child's parents may feel overjoyed by his performance. If the child lacks a mentor to train him under strict supervision, it is hard to expect any goodness from him. If his father is smart and wise, he should decidedly provide a strict education; that is the only solution and the ultimate remedy to a better end. An experienced, aged man with a child of his own talks thus, so hear carefully: For those whose [children] are raised spoon-fed, it is time for him to lament; misery is on the horizon for certain. If a father spoils the [child] when young, the sin of his wrongdoing and abuse falls not on the child but on the father himself. If the [children] act and behave badly, this wrongdoing is the result of [the father's] acts, not the child's; it is the father that deprived the [child of] goodness. If [the father] educates his [child] under strict discipline and teaches the child all things, then he would be joyful once the child got older. You father, educate your child strictly; do not let the others make fun of you. Teach your [children] virtue and knowledge so that they will rise as good and worthy individuals' (KB, 98).

In the previous ages when nobility, freedom and gentility were determined as one's fate, it goes without saying that inborn qualities significantly mattered. If you were gentle and free by birth, you would then remain noble, gentle and free all your life; on the contrary, if you were born as a slave, peasant or an ordinary person, your life would end up in such a way. Although in traditional Turko-Islamic culture, class distinctions were not rigid and unchangeable, they still played a certain role in the emergence of social structure. In *Qutadghu Bilig*, nobility is not viewed simply as an inborn feature but also refers to 'moral purity', 'a noble and virtuous breed'; those with a clean heredity and roots would by nature be good; thus, rulers should belong to this group of individuals (KB, 183). Furthermore, 'Bey (master) is an inborn ruler; learns through observation and therefore knows which act is a better one to choose' (KB, 147). Knowledge does not offer an inborn quality. In this book, although educational efforts are praised, a story shows how Ay-Toldı, one of the characters, transcended his class and status by gaining knowledge and education.

Reminiscent of John Locke's concept of 'blank page' (*tabula rasa*) (2013: 311) in the context of education, *Qutadghu Bilig* also questions the source of knowledge and determines that source as experiments, experiences and learning. Men cannot have knowledge by birth, and can only be gained by exercising one's ability to learn (KB, 138). Knowledge relates to acquisitions gained later in life with the objective of self-construction and self-education. Nobody is knowledgeable and educated at birth. Thus, according to *Qutadghu Bilig*, '[men] can learn all the assets except intellect and develops that way', '[no] man is born as a scholar, he learns later in life; [the] tongue cannot speak at birth but learns how to speak in due course' (KB, 129, 291). *Qutadghu Bilig* emphasises that man can activate his capacity only through education. This capacity and talent is called 'spirit' to stand for 'God's gift' (KB, 1959: 139). Education is an action that demands a high 'spirit' because it is an inborn talent and

capacity in addition to having the desire to know and learn. This definition is clarified by the noun 'talebe' (demanding to learn) that derives from the verb 'talep etmek' (to demand).

3. Education of thinking in *Qutadghu Bilig*

Considering that philosophy constructs itself on the grounds of its history and traditions, we can see that activities such as 'education of thinking' and 'philosophy for children' can be traced back to the time of earlier philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau and Kant. With regard to educational approaches and thinking practices, rereading Oriental philosophers and scholars is feasible as well. Just as reviewing and revaluing the views of Western philosophers is viable in the context of 'philosophy for children' in accordance with the works of Islamic philosophers and scholars such as Farabi, Ibn Sina, İbn Rüşhd, İbn Miskawayh, İbn Khaldun, Mawlana and Kinalızade Ali, *Qutadghu Bilig* could also be reread with respect to philosophy for children. *Qutadghu Bilig* is a book that should be refocused and reanalysed because this work aims to train a person's thinking ability and therefore hone one's emotions, behaviours and personality. Thinking ability relates to comprehending the world we live in, as well as life and death. Human life and action are not limited to this earth; in physics and metaphysics, this world and the next world exist concurrently. Good action is the kind that can connect the finite with the infinite, the material with the nonmaterial, and this world with the next world after death. This two-layer ontology originally emerged as a moral attitude and living culture.

Plato, in his dialogues with the Sophist and in the Laws, underlines the need to educate men's spiritual/mental, sentimental, moral and physical traits (Plato, 1892: 304–1988: 21). In his point of view, uneducated men are sick people. Likewise, in *Qutadghu Bilig*, ignorance is defined as sickness, and the way to heal a person through knowledge and education is underscored. The message is that '[a knowledgeable] person is away from the ailments; ignorant ones are always afflicted with disease; the disease kills the one if it is left untreated. You ignorant! Go and receive cure to get better' (KB, 22–23). Hajib does not view this disease as a person-specific condition only, but as a comprehensive concept that can also be traced to the state. By using the mind and knowledge, rulers must save the nation from the plague of ignorance and offer an immediate cure (KB, 162). Education is training in thinking on the grounds of improving one's mind, emotions and body. Knowledge is essential to operate one's mind and ignite thinking performance. Knowledge and thought should be analysed in unison. Only through knowledge can thinking progress towards a proper and actual path. If inadequate knowledge is stored in the mind, the person does not have a sufficient source of material to enable self-improvement. Thus, knowledge is one of the basic materials through which the mind can activate the self. As narrated in *Qutadghu Bilig*, '[man] begins any deed with knowledge and finishes with the mind. The mind is useless without knowledge' (KB, 149). Knowledge is the main form of power that enables the mind to find paths that are different from the mainstream. The mind is shielded against its own darkness under the protection of knowledge and thought; thus, *Qutadghu Bilig* emphasises that the rulers of society should be equipped with knowledge and ideas: '[if] rulers fail in their deeds, their power becomes sick and it should be cured. The cure for Beylic (administration) disease is feasible through the mind and knowledge; only the intellect and knowledge can heal the sickness. Intelligent and wise rulers have higher states of authority here and hereafter. Those [who have] attained both lives can ultimately become blessed (KB, 149).

In *Qutadghu Bilig*, knowledge manifests itself in theoretical and practical frames. Starting with knowledge renders a value as knowledge itself, thereby enlightening the universe, humankind and metaphysical conditions. As an inherent value, knowledge consists of knowing the secret within us and within the universe, illuminating the self and universe for our benefit and removing the shadows over ourselves. Knowledge means attaining a sense of reality. What makes us human is not physical activities alone but also mental comprehension and emotional innocence. This theoretical and practical insight is narrated in *Qutadghu Bilig* as follows: 'Man can become intellectual by learning.

Once he has knowledge, everything becomes easier' (*KB*, 291). Thus, knowing is not only the act of knowing something but is also the ability to produce, solve, hear and understand. Challenges can be addressed by knowledge and thoughts.

Qutadghu Bilig, regardless of the historical period, emphasises that a good life and a high status can only be achieved through knowledge, good thoughts and words. Once the words fall short, a variety of options can be selected. Nonetheless, in the spiritual and mental world of humans, before anything else, the word should be the doer and problems should be spoken about and analysed (*KB*, 26-27). Thus, Hajib says: 'All deadlocks are opened with knowledge; learn knowledge, be tolerant and act mindfully. Act with knowledge, let thy words be true; continue learning and never waste one day of life' (*KB*, 233). The desire and need to know should be active all the time, and a person should be ready to learn at any time; one should be the student not only of books or teachers but of life itself. Hajib further advises his reader to 'be the learner or the teacher'. Being an outsider of a knowledgeable circle weakens human traits and slowly drags the person to a dark, deep hole.

In the process of knowledge and experience, thought embraces all domains of daily life; it surfaces as an activity that guides and leads people across fundamental issues such as ethics, justice and happiness. In education of thinking, 'theoretical thinking' that is directed at understanding and searching for the truth and 'practical thinking' that focuses on actions and solving daily problems exist concurrently. Thinking activity is necessary mainly to ensure that state and social affairs operate effectively. In this way, goodness and justice, happiness and prosperity derive from knowledge and thought; damage and torture stem from ignorance and thoughtlessness. Those who assist the ruler and guide society should also have their share of knowledge and wisdom; they should be able to think, justify and make decisions and choices correctly. A symbol of mindfulness and common sense, the ruler Ögdülmis advises a candidate governor as follows: 'Another group that you must contact with is intellectuals; their science [enlightens the public]. Love them greatly and respect them all the time; be it small or great, learn from their wisdom. By making a division between good and bad deeds, they achieved to choose the pure and right way; if viable, learn about their science and discover their knowledge; deliver them goodness and be helpful. If the world were free from such intellectuals and judges, there would be no food grown even if the land was planted. Their wisdom [is] a torch to enlighten the public; if the torch lights at night, men can find their way right. [...] Do not talk rudely and harshly to them; feed them with salt and bread [lavish them], show respect and reverence. Listen to them and act in line with their knowledge; do not talk behind their back or mock their words and deeds. [...] View them as the shepherd of a herd; let them take the lead and push the herd to the correct path. Engage with them and have good relations; thus, you can achieve welfare in two worlds and be happy here and thereafter' (*KB*, 314).

Evidently, *Qutadghu Bilig* focuses on personal differences and establishes them as the main principle. In education, foregrounding of personal differences is a modern approach; what matters most is that individuals can learn in accordance with their capacity, speed, talents and inclinations. Hajib comments that 'only God created humankind; men consist of small ones and big ones, good ones and bad ones. There are wise ones, ignorant ones; poor and rich ones; intelligent and weak-minded ones and impudent ones'. Every individual differs from the rest with his/her unique features. Considering the different talents and learning abilities of people, we can see that personalised education is at the forefront of modern-day educational practices. Personal differences dominate not only education but also other areas of life, including administration. In *Qutadghu Bilig*, this idea is expressed as follows: 'What should be the features of the ruler [khan] so that he can rule a nation [composed of citizens with varied qualities of their own], so that the country may prosper, people may [be enriched]; and when he dies his name is revered with dignity and honour' (*KB*, 146). Human nature and state administration are crucial issues. The way to ensure that people with different character traits can live in peace and harmony is still one of the main problems of modern administrative science.

Likewise, how to effectively educate students with different personalities is one of the most hotly debated issues in modern psychology.

People cannot choose their inborn abilities but still have to personally demonstrate the effort to activate their thinking capacity. 'Knowledge and mind stand for the ball and the chain; [those with a sound ground] act wisely and moderately. Merciful God stopped the behaviour and words of his chosen subject with the mind. Mindless ones are the dead, mindful ones are alive; the mind distinguishes each human being from others in that way. Humans are like a dark house; the mind enlightens it like a torch. Any goodness comes from mind; men can grow and come to the fore through knowledge. Humanity has climbed above with the combination of two; on his path to righteousness he can achieve success with them. Could there be a higher asset rather than knowledge? What distinguishes men from animals is knowledge; humankind seized power through knowledge. So, move forward; do not be an animal; be smart and attain knowledge; speak with wisdom and let your words be worthy' (KB, 33, 140). These words express one of the most eminent features of mind and thought. The person whose mind is trained via knowledge and value is the one who has, as mentioned in the text, bridled his desires (having a rein to train 'köstek'). 'Bridle' (*dizgin*) can be associated with the ability to control one's emotions and behaviours (self-control); indeed, 'those with a bridle do not [pursue] inappropriate tasks;' to be happy, one must learn how to control his emotions, desires and passions. 'The one who can control his animal instinct (self) has the power to access eternal bliss' (KB, 33, 196).

Within this framework, education of thinking firstly teaches a person fundamental values such as 'knowing thyself', 'moderation' and 'self-control'; by training his/her thinking ability, the person can train his soul and acquire the ability of self-criticism, self-control and self-management. Thus, he/she can decide what to do, who to become and make certain choices. He/she can cope with natural and destructive emotions such as jealousy, ambition, anger and violence. The person can also learn to live by thinking, choosing and willing to establish reflection and full awareness of his/her own life. What truly matters is not inborn capacity but the extent to which the person develops the traits he/she was born with. The main issue is the decision to ensure self-improvement, make certain efforts and choices. Hajib states: 'So long as man wants to learn he can do so; nobody is a scholar by birth. Man can become a scholar only through learning' (KB, 116, 138, 139, 147, 148). Therefore, with regard to education of thinking, the most strongly emphasised subject in *Qutadghu Bilig* is the capacity to learn and acquire novel behaviours. A person can gain new experiences through his/her power to learn and thus develop knowledge and tolerance. This daily accumulation elevates one's ability in comprehension and problem solving. Thus, a person can learn to live, develop, change and make sense of his/her existence in the world; knowledge and thinking ability can develop one's power and capacity to be human. This sentiment is in line with the idea of Kant (1992: 6-7) that education has an important role in self-empowerment.

The ability to reflect on an issue elaborately, comprehensively, consistently and questioningly is the most important skill that education of thinking can instil in any individual. 'Describe to me the intellect, explain to me its nature. How does its face, appearance, attitude and behaviour look like; what is its age, intensity, weight and height?' In the personality of Ögdülmiş, this question is answered as follows: 'The mind has a great action and mighty reputation. Its face and shape is always nice; young and fresh at all times; it is the passage to all kinds of goodness. It has a mild, sympathetic and compassionate character; it bears an affectionate soul for all living things. Whatever it touches it gets aligned with; wherever its words reach, that place keeps up with its words. Its face is warm, it is [pleasant to] everyone; people make use of its goods. It has a sharp sight and ability to foresee the future; whatever it does, its feet are firm on the ground. No matter how complex and muddy his works seem to be, they turn into a distilled and purified form; no matter how many inverse knots there are, it resolves with just one look. It deals with things from right and left angles, from back and forth, from

all sides; it knows the correct solution to implement in the most accurate time' (KB, 140-141). Thus, Hajib emphasises knowledge for acquisition of thinking and adds that thought should surround all possible perspectives while reflecting a critical and creative approach of thinking. This is not a dogmatic attitude but a critical approach. Whether or not a person can train his/her thinking ability is reflected in his attitudes and lifestyle. A person who has managed to train his thinking ability is a 'smart and true person, his words and deeds are tender. He is soft [tender minded], peaceful, forgiving [generous heart] and patient. He attentively analyses the work and solves with a peaceful mind. His style and moves are like a senior man's performance; however, if a closer look is taken, he is at a young age. Let him be chief consultant of the emperor or a slave with no value at all; still everyone aspires to him. The mind moves like an old man, but it is young; go wherever the mind lives, stick to the mind. Its childhood is [pleasant], its old age is peaceful, its nature is calm, its soul is benevolent and rather useful for all' (KB, 142).

The preliminary goal of education of thinking is to develop virtue and virtuous individuals. An education that fails to put life in order, make it meaningful and valuable and lacks the power to improve personality simply diverts from its main objective and loses its opportunity to be instructive. Unless transformation is achieved in thinking ability, transformation in thoughts and action, in character and personality, is not feasible. Thus, a thought-based education at an early stage prevents life from being an outcome of random encounters, but rather makes it meaningful, valuable and purposeful.

4. Education of Thinking Methods in *Qutadghu Bilig*

What are the methods in education of thinking? Which methods and techniques can train a person's mind and thinking ability? Some hints of the answers are provided in *Qutadghu Bilig*. The first element that the attitude towards living and thinking should be instilled at early ages. Thus, education of thinking can be offered as a precondition of knowledge education. In *Qutadghu Bilig*, this condition is explained as follows: 'Teach your child knowledge at an early age; if he learns knowledge at a young age, he can then attain success in life. Whatever the son or daughter learns as a small child, they would always keep that knowledge until death as they get older' (KB, 116). Knowledge is crucial to develop correct thinking attitude; an ignorant mind fails to perform correct thinking actions. Thus, the person fails to offer appropriate solutions to problems, but rather lives with his/her eyes closed and is merely guided by physical instincts and intuitions.

Aside from knowledge, components of oral and written tradition such as proverbs, idioms, sayings, anecdotes and stories that are distilled from the essence of life set the ground for education of thinking because they are the results of great experiences. Hajib provides the following pieces of advice: 'listen to what an open hearted soul has to say', 'listen to what a devout man has to say', 'listen to what a man with lyrics and write in rhymed lines has to say to help us guess the meaning', 'listen to what a man of law has to say', 'listen to what a man of intellect has to say', 'listen to what a man of knowledge and sense of right has to say' to make frequent references to oral tradition, statesmen, soldiers and experienced people. He shares adages, thereby focusing on the instructive and masterful quality of words. He adds that a person's self-contemplation is not enough to recognise thought styles and methods; rather, the person should refer to wise men's thoughts and sayings and should consume their words like 'delicious food' (KB, 180). With such an instructive feature, the book reflects the quality of a selection of words of wisdom.

In *Qutadghu Bilig*, there is no reference to a 'formal' education in the modern context 'because it does not exist; rather there is emphasis on educating oneself through personal will and demand, being a pupil of his own life experience and striving hard to that end'. Accordingly, education of thinking does not solely refer to school education; on the contrary, it is the art of acquiring attitudes and skills that begin in the family, develops in the social circle and finds its direction and style through

one's life experiences. In *Qutadghu Bilig*, the acculturation process that starts at an early age is centred around the family and social circle. Ögdülmiş, who symbolised the mind, wisdom, common sense and virtue, went through the same process. By virtue of being born in a good family, he became a good person despite losing his father at an early age. Family values are thus transferred to the child. Therefore, the family is frequently extolled in *Qutadghu Bilig* as the core of the individual and society. A good family and good individual in time is equated with a virtuous and disciplined society. Since education of thinking is fundamentally the training of soul, mind, intellect and emotions, it is open to external factors. In traditional societies, observational learning has always been the most powerful behavioural education method. While living in a society, the person can learn by observing, watching, simulating and modelling. Likewise, in *Qutadghu Bilig*, the explanations are in this direction: the child identifies with his/her family, the ruler's son becomes a ruler, a commoner becomes an ordinary citizen; these are examples of the method of modelling, that is, someone is an example for another. Within this framework, good role models are important not only for values education but also for education of thinking.

Words also matter immensely. Expressing words beautifully would make certain thoughts attractive. In *Qutadghu Bilig*, this refers to 'violet smelling' worlds; extensive details are involved in saying a word, as well as listening to it and understanding it. Works produced in Islamic culture emphasise the value of saying a word and listening to it. One reason is that a person can reveal his/her nature through words, which play a key role in communication with others. Words are the mirrors of one's soul, self and personality. Saying the word knowingly and sincerely, listening with patience and attention, not talking unless necessary are main virtues. Thus, thought education in a sense is word education; it is the familiarisation with words, recognition of facts via words and construction of the self through words. Listening and understanding the words as appropriate and speaking in a good manner are not merely the goal of education of thinking but also the integrated education of the soul, mind and emotions. Hajib stated this notion as follows: 'The tongue is the decoration of the mind, the word is the decoration of the tongue; the face is the ornament of man and the eyes are the ornament of the face' (KB, 31).

Within the scope of methods and techniques in the education of thinking, another point to underline is the 'story-telling method'. This method could mean transference of life experience or it could also relate to narrating a fairy tale, saga or anecdote of an anonymous culture. The construction style of *Qutadghu Bilig* is not purely theoretical but rather narrative. In fact, the work itself is a story. It has a plot, place and time setting. The plot starts at a specific point as the actions of selected characters and continues in a certain direction before completion. By telling a story, the author aims to offer to mankind a lesson to learn, acknowledge and share opinions. With this feature, one can argue that *Qutadghu Bilig* is the very first 'pedagogical novel' written much earlier than Rousseau's *Emilé*.² Furthermore, in the context of the question 'what should be the attributes of a ruler?', *Qutadghu Bilig* draws a parallelism with Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, which provided a number of principles on how to raise a prince. Indeed, Locke wrote his book for the ruler of his age whom he referred to as 'Sir' in his letter to underline his subservient position and for the ruler's son (Locke, 2007: 22-24). Hajib also wrote for the education of state rulers, foremost of whom was the khan (Dankoff, 1981: 3-4).

As mentioned in *Qutadghu Bilig*, learning of knowledge constitutes the most essential part of education of thinking. One can start his/her education of thinking via knowledge attainment. In the absence of knowledge, no thinking action is possible, and any thought would simply be plain,

²The term 'pedagogical novel' relates to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emilé*. This work, in terms of development of educational approach and emergence of modern educational practices, is similar to a revolutionary step and reformation act. The scenes and characters display how the entire process of a pedagogical narrative is created.

disorganised and fruitless. Thinking is an act that is performed by processing knowledge sets. Revising knowledge and thoughts, applying a questioning and creative attitude are the first features that education of thinking should instil in learners. In addition, a person's life experiences also go hand in hand with his/her education of thinking. Thus, everyone should be a good observer of personal life, be able to witness one's existence, and learn from his/her own experiences. The world is an instructor, and a person can be the student of what he/she sees and experiences. 'Why bother to ask for my advice, you men; what fate teaches you is more than enough', says Hajib (*KB*, 371). One should be open to change and development. A person who stays the same is someone who never learns. A man of mind is one who can learn from experiences and avoids repeating the same mistakes. This process is also reflective of the person's adaptation to society. Public wisdom that favours one calamity to a thousand warnings (Aksoy, 1988) also asserts that life experiences are useful educational tools. In this case, one of the most salient methods of education of thinking is helping the individual to benefit from ample life experiences so he/she can view life as a lesson from the beginning to its end.

Asking appropriate questions constitutes the main part of thinking activity, and we can even argue that thinking starts and develops by asking questions. The question-and-answer method is evident in *Qutadghu Bilig*. The process of learning is conducted by asking and listening, and transferring one's knowledge and experience by talking. In this book, as expressed by the main characters Kün-toğdı, Ay-Toldı, Öğdülmiş and Odgurmış, basic virtues such as *qut*, knowledge, justice, patience, goodness and generosity are communicated in dialogue form through questions and answers, letters and testaments. Speaking and listening play vital role. Great respect is paid to the scientist and scholar, knowledge and intellect, speaking and listening, word and text. Believing that justice and order, happiness and prosperity can only be attained through knowledge and virtue drives the main axle in education of thinking. At a certain point conversation between Öğdülmiş and Odgurmış adopts a Socratic flow and almost evolves into dialectic style. World–afterworld, exteriority–inwardness, seclusion–sociability are the focal issues in this dialectic. Odgurmış focuses on the mortality of this life and states that real virtue is saving oneself from futile errands in life; he laments and demeans life in the world. He mentions the burden and efforts in marriage, governmental positions and having children. He concludes that the joy and beauty in life are nothing but pain and lament; one can set himself free from this burden only by turning his face against it and facing death in the end. Turning away is the condition of piety (*KB*, 361-365). Odgurmış reminds the reader of Kierkegaard's aesthetician, although based on different grounds, the two characters run away from society and life experiences, avoid marriage and prefer an introverted lifestyle (Kierkegaard, 1992). The most salient difference is that one character secludes himself for religious and piety motives, while the other follows his sensual ambitions. The Emperor Kün-Toğdı and Öğdülmiş warn Odgurmış to leave seclusion and accept social life, get married, take on responsibilities and duties to achieve usefulness and religious service. In this way, Odgurmış represents a thesis that confronts the antitheses, Öğdülmiş and Kün-Toğdı. This dialectic style terminates with an acknowledgement of the legitimacy and validity of Odgurmış's thesis. Thus, abandoning the world, secluding oneself to survive with minimal needs and avoiding earthly deeds become a dominant practice as Öğdülmiş and Kün-Toğdı's previous attempts prove ineffectual. Nevertheless, the question formulated in *Qutadghu Bilig* still ignites a novel thinking activity: How should we deal with the world we live in? Should we not do anything at all for its sake? Can one become devout by leaving the world's pleasures in favour of a virtuous life? Does pure piety entail abstaining from life or embracing life as it is? The same chasm pervaded different faiths throughout history; the 'inability of one servant to kneel before two masters', which is formulated by Kierkegaard as 'either/or', is repeated in *Qutadghu Bilig* as a problem of mentality. 'I am a mortal being so I should value life' would not be the message. Kafesoğlu relates this attitude in *Qutadghu Bilig* to the effects of Buddhism. He also makes this interpretation: 'In this work, it makes great sense that 'akıbet', which stands as a representative of mystic concepts to move men away from the world, is compared with the 'mind'. With positive and fact-based answers, the mind is presented in a form that

can demonstrate one virtue of ancient Turkish communities that pursued life (Kafesoğlu, 1980: 15). Dankoff also shares this view: 'From this conclusion follows that Wide Awake [Odgurmuş] "represents" Buddhism and Highly Praised [Ögdülmiş] "represents" İslam' (Dankoff, 1981: 13). As we analyse the incident in the context of education of thinking, the question-and-answer method and gradual evolution of this method to a dialectic style is noteworthy.

Conclusion

In *Qutadghu Bilig*, education of thinking is educating the mind. The mind is a potential and capacious power that can be activated with knowledge and experiences. Acquisition of knowledge and thoughts, learning the methods and techniques of thinking is, at the same time, a step taken towards a virtuous and good life. This is why education of thinking is not only the transference of thought and knowledge but rather the acquisition of an attitude. Education of thinking develops by adopting appropriate life attitudes, making right choices and decisions; adaptation, self-criticism, self-control and self-management; demonstration of skills; problem solving; understanding oneself and surroundings/conditions; questioning one's ideas, feelings and thoughts; realising one's predispositions; asking appropriate questions in the face of situations and problems; understanding thoughts and intentions; and ability to criticise.

Qutadghu Bilig presents crucial implications and inferences on the education of thinking. The first premise is that humans have potential power, the second is that their potential for self-development and self-transformation is not predetermined, and the third is that education is a sine qua non to activate one's inner potential and transform his/her identity. To attain the good soul within one's corporal flesh, he/she must be educated; he/she needs education to give birth to goodness within oneself and make a virtuous human being from one's own flesh. Education basically starts with educating the mind, educating the emotions and finally, as a combination of both aspects, educating the personality. Although learning capacity is inborn, skills in knowledge attainment and utilisation can only be viable within the framework of thinking and values. This attitude that refers to a higher purpose than knowledge attainment can also offer a new perspective to the many problems that modern individuals deal with. At this point, Hajib draws attention to an issue that might be the key to modern awareness: that power attained with knowledge should not be destructive, exploitive and dehumanising and that humanitarian and moral values should function as a protective and sheltering body. This idea is feasible only via education of thinking.

The mind has an inborn ability of knowing, understanding, thinking and comprehension; thus, the education of the mind does not only integrate theoretical knowledge but also entails whether or not good ethics/manners have been adopted. The issue that emerged in *Qutadghu Bilig* and deserves further attention is that the education of thinking not only elevates one's mental capacity and potential but also instils good manners and moral values. All of this education focuses on the value of goodness and how it is attained. This is the equivalent of 'good ethics'. Knowledge education aims to raise good people, whereas the education of feelings and mind aims to raise good humans. Therefore, in *Qutadghu Bilig*, the education of thinking highlights personality-related forms of behaviour. Among the signs of an educated mind and a person with thinking ability are values such as compassion, patience, amiability, moderation, decency, self-knowledge and generosity. On this account, correct thinking relates, first of all, to appropriate living and virtuous behaviour. The education of thinking sets the mentality and designs the ways of using one's mind. Unless this crucial form of education is provided in full awareness, the mentality that would guide the experiences and behaviours to form the way of harnessing the mind would emerge in a disorganised, coincidental manner; the mind that was as pure as a blank page at birth would be embedded with random markings. The education of thinking that associates happiness with personal values lays the foundation for any type of education. The person initially receives this education from his family, environment and culture; even if the process is

random, certain experiences and lessons would direct one's thoughts. The person who has received education of thinking is the one who manages to train his/her mind and thinking ability, behaviours and acquired good ethics.

All paths in the education of thinking emphasise positive values that stand as the main authentic value of mankind on earth; that is, goodness itself. In *Qutadu Bilig*, the most frequently featured value is that of goodness. It is such a powerful idea that one can even argue that 'man was born for goodness and performs good deeds only'. Goodness is the top value that man can introduce to this life. All actions are aimed towards its realisation. Goodness is the value through which the human soul unites with the persona and becomes liberated, enabling the soul to accomplish its objective. The education of thought exists merely to comprehend and actualise the value of goodness. On his deathbed, Ay-Toldi shares his last will with his fellows by urging them to stay away from evil and get closer to goodness (KB, 93). Goodness is essentially the basic ingredient of words, the very last word to say, the purpose and reason for the existence of humans on this earth. From this viewpoint, nothing looks better on men than goodness itself. This belief and insistent emphasis on goodness recalls Kant (2002: 9): 'on this earth, even beyond the earth, nothing is better than the desire for good'.

Positive thinking bring people closer to the right, good and lovely life from where theoretical and practical thinking attitudes arise. Philosophy, ethics and art are the outcomes of such an attitude, and so are achievements in science, technology and social life. In *Qutadghu Bilig*, administration and social approach starts with value and the education of thinking. In this manner, thought foregrounds action and practice; the action starts to be shaped in line with a specific worldview and moral character. Thinking ability is trained first, and behaviours are developed subsequently. Within this framework, terminal behaviours are not encouraged through dictation or external force but rather become the kind of actions that the individual willfully performs. The education of thinking reveals and elevates freedom of choice, hones will power and forms an intellectual capacity that can justify one's decisions and actions. In the end, the individual is saved from being an entity governed by external forces. Rather, he/she is transformed into an 'authentic individual' who is enlightened within by discovering individualism, taking the responsibility for his/her own actions and justifying the selected behaviours. In this sense, the education of thinking emerges as the education of character. The person whose mind and identity have been train is represented by the model of Epictetus, who can attain the highest value and bliss even if he was a slave, because he has elevated his own value of humanity.

Any given intellectual work is essentially the product of its own milieu. Thus, when studied from a different time period and its specific conditions, *Qutadghu Bilig* can be criticised from a multitude of perspectives. One point is gender discrimination and another is tolerating violent punishments in education. In the very same work, education is primarily associated with training the boy child who would replace the father figure and continue family traditions and customs.³ Several paragraphs of Hajib's work express harsh ideas about women and daughters. This approach conflicts not only with modern mentality but also with traditional Turkish and Islamic ethics, which do not discriminate between girls and boys (KB). Turning one's back on the world to attain 'Zühd' (asceticism) is also not justified in Islamic faith or Turkish customs; this is another point to accentuate in a critical approach.

Thus, one can concluded that *Qutadghu Bilig* is a piece of art that seeks answers to the question of transforming *qut*, which is a coincidental, transient, inconsistent and incidental state, to achieve a permanent condition. When the book is treated as a whole, the continuity of *qut* can only

³The same phenomenon is evident in Rousseau's *Emile*, a pillar of modern education. Education here refers to teaching a boy child. Behind Rousseau's reformist approach is an implicit discrimination as he recommends traditional approaches in the teaching of girl children. For him, an ideal upbringing for girls is being raised by their parents to become accomplished housewives and mothers (Rousseau, 1977: 394-395).

be possible with a certain degree of thought and value education. From one perspective, thinking and value education transforms *qut* into a deliberate and wilful/voluntary acquisition and from another, it looks for ways to save it from being a coincidental and random state and turn into a permanent virtue. Once a person can live in full awareness and knowledge and design his/her own values, his/her thinking ability is activated. The education of thinking lays the groundwork for all educational approaches led by ethics and value education in the first place. This being the case, *qut* is saved from being a transient phenomenon in the life of state and society but becomes a consistent and permanent reality. From this viewpoint, the education of thinking is the medium of a mature personality and virtuous life. Thus, the last remark in *Qutadghu Bilig's* tradition of wisdom, which claims 'knowledge is virtue, virtue is happiness', is resuscitated and allowed to flourish.

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