

‘Islāmic education: moral standards of a ‘teacher’

Academy for Learning ‘Islām - ALI 315

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قال نبينا و حبيب الهنا محمد (ص):

أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ عَنْ أَقْوَامٍ لَيْسُوا بِأَنْبِيَاءَ وَ لَا شُهَدَاءَ يَغْبِطُهُمْ [النَّاسُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ] بِمَنَازِلِهِمْ مِنْ
اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ عَلَى مَنَابِرٍ مِنْ نُورٍ قِيلَ مَنْ هُمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ هُمُ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ
إِلَى اللَّهِ وَ يُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ إِلَى عِبَادِهِ قُلْنَا هَذَا حَبَّبُوا اللَّهَ إِلَى عِبَادِهِ فَكَيْفَ يُحِبُّونَ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِلَى
اللَّهِ قَالَ يَأْمُرُونَهُمْ بِمَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ وَ يَنْهَوْنَهُمْ عَمَّا يَكْرَهُ اللَّهُ فَإِذَا أَطَاعُوهُمْ أَحَبَّهُمُ اللَّهُ

The Holy Prophet and the Beloved of the Almighty - Muhammad (May the Almighty's peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny):

“Shall I not inform you about people who are neither prophets nor martyrs (but) people will envy them (on the day of Judgement) due to their (high) stations near Allah (jj) on pulpits of radiant light? It was asked: Who are they O’ Prophet of Allah? He (s) said: **They are the ones who endear the servants of Allah (jj) to Him and become means of Allah’s (jj) endearment near His servants.** We said: This person (understandably) makes Allah (jj) loved by His servants but how does he make Allah (jj) love His servants? He (s) said: He (this person) reminds and commands them towards what Allah (jj) loves and forbids and refrains them from what Allah (jj) disapproves, so (when) they obey him, Allah (jj) loves them.”

Questions

- What is education?
- What is knowledge?
- Who is a teacher?

Education in ‘Islām

- Inspired from the Tawhidi worldview (God-centered) – whole life becomes sacred and purposeful
SOURCE → PURPOSE + WAY OF LIFE → GOAL
- Understands the true nature of the human and nurtures it holistically (multidimensional)
 - Fitrah (God-inclined nature, innate Perfection-seeking conscience)
 - Soul (the seat of existence) and the body (the outer dimension)
 - Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Social and the Spiritual growth
 - Preparation for the world and the Hereafter
- Of Prophetic proportions
 - إنما بعثت معلماً “I have been sent forth only as a teacher” – Holy Prophet (S)
- THUS:

Education is a means for (1) the actualization of the God-given potential (2) in all dimensions (3) to reach Perfection which lies with the Almighty, (4) by following the Tawhidi worldview and applying the Divinely-revealed values in the individual and the society.

Education – multiple terms

- Tazkiyah (تزكية) – purification of the soul (SOUL - vices + virtues)

..هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ

“It is He who sent to the unlettered [people] an apostle from among themselves, to recite to them His signs, to **purify them...**”
al-Jumu’ah:2

- Ta’leem (تعليم) – assistance in conceptualization (develop thought, intellect)

..وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

“... and to **teach** them the Book and wisdom, and earlier they had indeed been in manifest error.” al-Jumu’ah:2

- Tarbiyah (تربية) – nurturing and laying down groundwork for actualization of potential

قُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْتَنِي صَغِيرًا

“And say: My Lord! Have mercy on them, just as they reared me when I was [a] small child.” al-Isra:24

- Ta’dib (تأديب) – inculcating exquisite and refined characteristics

أَدَّبُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ خِصَالٍ حُبِّ نَبِيِّكُمْ وَ حُبِّ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَ تِلَاوَةِ الْقُرْآنِ

“Refine your children in three traits: the love of your Prophet (s), the love of his Ahlulbayt (as) and the recitation of the Holy Qur’ān.” Qāmūs-e-Qur’ān pg 2

- Ta’allum (تعلم) – result of Ta’leem (from the student’s perspective)
- Tahzib (تهذيب) – pruning evil tendencies from the soul

Knowledge in 'Islām

- God-centeredness → Knowledge-centeredness (al-'Aleem)
- Seeking (true) knowledge → Seeking God
- Importance of Knowledge
 - Virtue of seeking, holding, acting upon, imparting
 - Merits of servicing education and educators
- Reality of Knowledge
 - Acting on the implications of the Oneness of God (Tawhid)

Q: Is there religious and secular knowledge?

*'Islāmicity of knowledge is drawn by it's ability to point towards the core reality of knowledge which is represented by the knowledge and recognition of the Almighty (jj) who Himself is the essence of Knowledge.

How may I become a good teacher?

1. Realization

- Center my life and all my work on a Tawhidi worldview
- First be a humble student - then a Godly teacher
- Education: not limited to one dimension, morals intrinsic to education
- Knowledge: incomplete rather dangerous without practice
- Role model: My actions speak louder than my words

2. Self-knowledge and self-building (Taqwa)

- Become an utterly obedient servant of the Almighty
- Work to promote and serve the Divine mission of establishing purity and felicity on earth for all

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ إِذَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ يَخِرُّونَ لِلْأَذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا وَ
 يَقُولُونَ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنْ كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا لَمَفْعُولًا وَ يَخِرُّونَ لِلْأَذْقَانِ يَبْكُونَ
 وَ يَزِيدُهُمْ خُشُوعًا

“Indeed those who were given knowledge before it when it is recited to them, fall down in prostration on their faces, and say, “Immaculate is our Lord! Indeed Our Lord's promise is bound to be fulfilled”. Weeping, they fall down on their faces, and it increases them in humility.” (Al-Isrā’:107-109)

يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ مَنْ أُوتِيَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَا يُبْكِيهِ لِحَقِيقٍ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدْ أُوتِيَ عِلْمًا
 لَا يَنْفَعُهُ

The Holy Prophet (s) has said: “O’ Abadhar! The one who gets from knowledge that which does not make him cry (humbles his heart) surely has received knowledge which does not benefit him (non-‘Ilm Nāfi’).” (Makārim al-Akhlāq pg 462)

Character and Conduct

- Character (شخصيت – ملكات نفسانية)
 - inner qualities of a human
 - the natural and acquired characteristics (constituted by the worldview, inclinations, styles and capacities of a person)
 - shape the behavioural output by the individual (conduct)IDEAL: * the virtuous esoteric image of the human soul*
- Conduct (أفعال - أعمال)
 - to lead or direct one's conscious behaviour within the bounds of moral principles specific to each situation
 - being subtly proper in etiquette so as to control one's mannerisms and direct output in speech and action.
- Character is manifested in conduct while conduct further nurtures the character

Character

- **Cognitive traits (ideology)**

1. ʿImān (faith) and Yaqīn (certitude)
2. Ikhlās (sincerity of intention and action)
3. Orientation to Haqq and ʿAdl (Truth and justice-centered)
4. Professional knowledge (Takhaṣṣuṣ)

- **Habits (values)**

1. Taqwā (spiritual fortification/self-protection/piety)
2. Spiritual connection with the Source and conduits of Knowledge (Tawakkul (utter reliance) and Tawassul (intercession))
3. Mercy (Rahmah) and Compassion (Raʿfah)
4. ʿAmānah (honesty/trustworthiness)
5. Broadening self-capacity: sharḥ as-Sadr (tolerant inclusiveness), Ṣabr (patience), ʿIstiḳamah (perseverance) and Ḥilm (magnanimity)
6. Being positive towards others: Possessing Good opinion (Ḥusn al-Dhann) and Hopefulness
7. Being positive within: Self-confidence and Clarity of thought

Conduct

- **Speech**

1. Beautiful speech
2. Chastity of speech
3. Avoidance of self-praise and aggrandizement

- **Mannerism**

1. Tawadu' (Exhibiting humbleness and avoiding haughtiness)
2. Honoring and nurturing self-esteem
3. Enthusiasm and Good-naturedness
4. Fulfilling promises and commitments
5. Generosity
6. Disciplining through encouragement and restriction
7. Respect for cultural, linguistic and social norms
8. Maintaining physical appearance

طُوبَى لِمَنْ طَابَ خُلُقُهُ وَ طَهَّرَتْ سَجِيَّتَهُ وَ
صَلَحَتْ سَرِيرَتُهُ وَ حَسُنَتْ عَلاَنِيتُهُ

The Holy Prophet (S):

“Beatitude be for the one whose morals refine
and nature purifies and inner secret thoughts
become composed and outer actions become
beautiful.”

Al-Kāfī vol 2, pg 154

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