

An Islamic Paradigm of *Tarbiyah*

Unlike other creatures, humans possess a unique blend of instincts, emotions, thoughts, and will, granting them the capacity to think and choose. These internal forces can be either strengthened or weakened.

Humans are innately aware of their limitations and are driven by a deep desire to transcend them and achieve infinite bliss. This quest for freedom from the constraints of ignorance, inability, and mortality is a core part of the human experience. When this pursuit is organized and purposeful, it is known as *tarbiyah*.

The tools and value of *tarbiyah* are defined by its ultimate goal. In the contemporary world, which largely focuses on the physical and sensory realm, the purpose of life is often seen as the pursuit of pleasure and social benefit. Consequently, *tarbiyah* is often limited to correcting worldly behaviors, disregarding questions of "truth and falsehood" or the correctness of one's thoughts.

In contrast, the Islamic school of thought views the purpose of life as the purification and refinement of the human soul. Behavioral correction is simply a means to this higher goal of cleansing the heart. This perspective is grounded in a "self-founded" reality—an objective truth not subject to human will. Within this framework, truth is defined by conformity to this reality, making the concepts of truth and falsehood, and the correctness of one's actions, profoundly meaningful.

The Islamic model of *tarbiyah* focuses on cultivating intellectual and value systems that align with this ultimate reality. It seeks to harmonize a person's thoughts and emotions with the divine order of the universe, which is founded on the principle of monotheism. This paradigm views *tarbiyah* and teaching as tools for transforming a person's cognition and emotions, ultimately leading to a positive change in behavior. The Holy Quran, a book dedicated to purification, consistently links purification with education, dedicating a significant portion of its teachings to explaining the core tenets of monotheism, divine guardianship, and resurrection.

Contemporary Challenges to Islamic *Tarbiyah*

In today's world, with the constant barrage of misinformation, many teenagers and young people lack the foundational knowledge to resist attacks on their beliefs. This leaves them vulnerable to social and digital media influences, often leading them astray from their spiritual path.

Right now, the purveyors of falsehood have greater access to Muslim youth than those who seek to guide them. The only viable solution is to empower young people with a deep, conscious education that enables them to stand firm against these attacks and navigate their own intellectual and spiritual development.

Therefore, providing Islamic knowledge to the younger generation is not just important—it's essential. We are living at the peak of an intellectual and cultural war, where doubts and fallacies are raining down on young minds from all directions. This battle between truth and falsehood makes it critical to provide a correct, divinely-guided intellectual system and make it accessible. This urgent need calls for new content and formats to transmit this knowledge, a task for which religious scholars bear the primary responsibility.

The challenges we face today are unlike those encountered by scholars of the past. False ideas are now spread not only through mass media like TV and the internet but also through artistic and cinematic methods. Huge sums are spent globally on expensive films and art that subtly implant or remove ideas from people's minds. A key target of these campaigns is religious thought, especially Islamic thought. If you speak with young people, you'll find that even those with good intentions sometimes harbor doubts. This is not a flaw; an active mind will inevitably raise questions. It is the duty of scholars to address and resolve these doubts.

An Academic Response to Modern Challenges

In recent decades, a remarkable intellectual movement has emerged from the Shi'i seminary, spearheaded by influential figures like the late 'Allamah Tabataba'i. As a master of traditional Islamic law, he recognized the need for a modern intellectual response to the challenges of his time. When he saw that false ideologies like Marxism were infiltrating minds, he understood that legal arguments alone were insufficient. This led him to author philosophical works such as "The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism."

His student, the late Martyr Mutahhari, built upon this foundation. He meticulously studied the concerns of educated youth and intellectually aligned their questions—on topics ranging from divine justice and free will to materialism and women's rights—with Islamic thought and philosophy. Mutahhari's ability to provide timely, relevant answers made him a powerful spiritual figure, and his approach continues to be emulated by contemporary scholars in Qom.

The "*Bi nihayat*" Course: A New Approach

The "*Bi nihayat*" book series represents a modern solution, grounded in a deep understanding of Islamic monotheism and its system of *tarbiyah*. It aims to provide a comprehensive and accurate view of reality, strengthening students' critical thinking and inspiring them towards self-building. The primary goal is to immunize Muslim youth against the onslaught of doubts by providing an honest, logical framework for their beliefs.

This collection is the result of a collaborative effort by scholars and professors with extensive experience teaching theology to young adults. Unlike many traditional theological texts, which often focus on historical debates not relevant to the average person, "*Bi nihayat*" is entirely need-based. It addresses topics essential for a Muslim's spiritual journey, such as the existence

of the unseen world and the nature of the afterlife, rather than academic subjects like "Divine Speech" or "Rational Goodness and Badness."

The content is specifically curated to tackle current doubts and anti-Islamic narratives. It addresses contemporary issues like the theory of evolution, the Big Bang, and the portrayal of Islam in relation to violence and women's rights. Conversely, it omits discussions on outdated topics like Marxist principles, which were relevant in the past but no longer pose a significant threat.

Methodological Excellence

The "*Bi nihayat*" series stands out for its deep, scholarly approach. It is built upon the profound teachings of the late 'Allamah Tabataba'i, widely regarded as the most knowledgeable scholar of recent times, who skillfully integrated reason, mysticism, and religious tradition. The series also draws from the works of his esteemed students, including Martyr Mutahhari and others, often quoting their exact words to ensure clarity and accuracy.

A key strength of this course is its focus on simplifying complex concepts and using clear, illustrative language. This approach lightens the burden on teachers, making difficult theological ideas more accessible. Furthermore, the book bridges the gap between belief and practice, connecting abstract concepts to real-world actions. This ensures that the material is not just intellectually stimulating but also spiritually transformative, encouraging a heartfelt connection with God.

Finally, the series ensures that its terminology is consistent with religious language and literature. It meticulously links theological concepts to Quranic verses and religious phrases, helping students integrate their beliefs into their daily lives, prayers, and recitations. This connection prevents beliefs from remaining purely academic and ensures they become a living part of one's faith.