

How Should the Teacher be in Islam?

As a result of the intellectual invasion by the Kuffar on Muslim lands, the Islamic morals were destroyed, moral decay became rampant under the name of freedom and democracy and other high-sounding names that seem superficially compassionate but carries torment in its interior, its goal is to corrupt the youth, directing and wasting energies in matters that have no benefit. Therefore, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is a duty on every individual Muslim, each according to his work and his role and ability to contribute to the revival of his Ummah, to rise as it used to be and lead the world. Of these roles, one of the most important one is the role of the teacher, the inheritor of the call of the Prophets, the mentor, and the builder of the future generation, the one with great influence in our lives and the lives of our children and their attitudes, behavior and even their interests and aspirations, and the holder of the great trust, which if he carried to the satisfaction of Allah (swt), it will be a light for him, otherwise, it will lead him to Hellfire, what an honourable message and what a great role! Wasn't our Prophet (saw) the first teacher? Allah (saw) says:

﴿كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“Just as We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves reciting to you Our verses and purifying you and teaching you the Book and wisdom and teaching you that which you did not know” [Al-Baqara: 151]

Al-Ghazali highly valued the teaching profession, he said, "The one who learns and teaches, he will be called the great one, in the kingdom of heaven"... This role was targeted by the enemies of Islam in many and malicious ways, due to the importance and its impact on entire generations in building their personalities and preferences on the basis of the Islamic creed, and to leave this generation empty, distorted, without a specific personality, averse to the history of its Ummah, believing that Islam is the reason for the failure, weaknesses, and humiliation of the Ummah.

O teacher, did you ever ask yourself why you became a teacher? Why did you choose this route for your life? Knowing this honestly and openly reflects your character and style of dealings and your approach in this way. If we look around us, we find spectrums of teachers:

The teacher that views education as the only job available to him, it was not his desire or interest, but it is only a job and a reason to earn and make a living, if he could have had another job with greater or similar gains, without withstanding the rigors of education, he would take it. And there is the second type of teacher that complains about life and laments over his luck, because of the burdens of teaching, the tiredness and low salary, compared with peers who have chosen to work in another field than education. The third type is only concerned in completing the curriculum and finish teaching it, he does not link it to reality and creed, belief and morals or deepen their understanding in his students in their behavior and perceptions, he does not pay attention to what is going on outside the classroom even what he sees of corruption. He does not even think of condemning it in front of his students, he is actually completely separate from the reality of his students, his society, and his Ummah... And the fourth and the fifth and sixth of the negative images that crowd our education lives and have a bad and profound impact in the various institutions of society. What excellence, creativity, and any sincerity will be expected from those of such reality and aspirations?!

So, what are the qualities of a teacher that deserves the praising Hadeeth of the Messenger of Allah (saw):

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ وَأَهْلَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ حَتَّى الثَّمَلَةَ فِي جُجْرِهَا وَحَتَّى الْحُوتِ لِيُصَلُّوا عَلَى مُعَلِّمِي النَّاسِ الْخَيْرِ﴾

“Allah and His angels and the people of the heavens and the earth, even the ant in its hole and even the whale are praying to the one who teaches people the good.”
(Tirmidhi)

What are the qualities of the teacher, the holder of the message that is nearly like the Prophets, that the Messenger of Allah (saw) described: On the authority of Ibn Mas'ood (ra);

« لا حَسَدَ إِلاَّ فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالاً فَسَلَّطَهُ عَلَى هَلَكْتِهِ فِي الْحَقِّ وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْحِكْمَةَ فَهُوَ يَقْضِي بِهَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا »

“No envy except in two: a man whom Allah blessed with money who spends it on the Haq, and a man whom Allah bestowed with wisdom which he judges by and teaches it.”

The first of these qualities is Taqwa (piety) and sincerity to Allah (swt), the teacher must make the intention of gaining the knowledge and mastery of teaching for the sake of Allah and the Hereafter, not just for the salary and praise from his superiors, fame and promotion, and the like. Abu Hurayrah (ra) said: The Messenger of Allah (saw) said:

« مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ عِلْمًا مِمَّا يُبْتَغَى بِهِ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَا يَتَعَلَّمُهُ إِلاَّ لِيُصِيبَ بِهِ عَرَضًا مِنَ الدُّنْيَا لَمْ يَجِدْ عَرَفَ الْجَنَّةَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، يَغْنِي رِيحَهَا »

“Whoever gained knowledge, which is intended to be for the sake of Allah, he only learns it to achieve a goal in the world, he will not find ‘Arf (scent) of Jannah on the Day of Resurrection, that is its scent”.

He has to teach his students and give them manners for the good of the Ummah and Islam. Imam Al-Nawawi says, "...and the teacher's intention to teach should be for the sake of Allah for the reasons mentioned before, and not to use it as a way to reach a worldly goal, the teacher must have in mind the fact that education is one of the important worships, this should be his motivation to correct his intention, and the instigator to protect from its burdens and dislikes, in fear of losing this great and bountiful virtue and goodness." In the absence of sincerity and piety, then hypocrisy, inaction, and neglect sets in, this produces youth that are weak in culture, with a shallow belief, and are not aware of their Ummah's issues, forming a burden instead of being the tools in the construction of its revival. The concept that a teacher will take a salary at the end of the month, whether sincere or not to Allah is a serious blow at the heart of education, where is the sincerity? Where is Allah and piety to Him? And of course the teacher must be proficient in the subject he teaches, and clever in using teaching methods to connect it to his students.

Among the most important qualities of the teacher: patience, forbearance and tolerance, the teacher who is a mentor who wants to produce a generation that follows the method and doctrine of “there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah”, must be patient, forbearing, to be able to endure the role. The characteristics of patience and endurance are awarded greatly by Allah (swt):

﴿وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾

“Allah loves the patient ones” [Al-i-Imran: 146]

The Prophet (saw) used to order people to be patient even in the most difficult situations. Tolerance and forbearance is necessary and important, especially whenever the teacher remembers that his reward will be protected by Allah, and that these young ones are a trust upon one's shoulders. He should realize that students have different abilities and people have different temperaments, and with special needs and interests and different problems and concerns. He is their teacher and mentor and father, and should open his heart to them, and have leniency and mercy on them, and have compassion, and perseverance during the struggle to educate them, and in explaining the ideas according to their different abilities, needs, dispositions and minds, some of them understand the words and the lesson from the

first explanation, and some of them need repeating and more explaining and detailing. The Prophet (saw) said:

«إن الله لم يبعثني معتاً ولا متعتاً ولكن بعثني معلماً وميسراً»

“Allah did not send me to be an oppressor or to be obstinate, but He sent me a teacher and facilitator”

But some teachers we see may Allah guide them, do not have the patience and compassion, if the student angers a teacher or does not understand something or asks him a question, he becomes angry and enraged rather than being patient and forbearing. Sometimes, he might get exposed to harmful action or words by some of the students or something like this, there is also a need to be patient, and wait for the reward from Allah, and absorb their anger and their questions and sometimes even their boredom. When Muawiyah Ibn Al-Hakam (ra) joined the group in prayer, he did not know that speaking in prayer is forbidden, one companion sneezed so Muawiyah returned the dua to him that may Allah bless him loudly. Some companions signed to him to remain silent, but he did not understand and continued speaking, and when the prayer ended, the Messenger of Allah (saw) called him, he approached the Prophet in fear, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said to him with courtesy and leniency:

«أن هذه الصلاة لا يصلح فيها شيء من كلام الناس، إنما هو التسبيح والتحميد وقراءة القرآن»

“In this prayer, nothing from the people’s speech is accepted, only praise, glorification of Allah, and reciting of the Quran is accepted.”

Muawiyah said commenting on the Prophet’s action: I would sacrifice my father and mother for him, I have not witnessed a better and more merciful educator than him (saw), this patience and gentleness of the Messenger of Allah (saw), our role model, the teacher, and all his uttered words, deeds and actions are all education for us.

From the qualities that must be displayed by the teacher: honesty and fulfilling of promises as what Allah calls for:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾

“O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?” [As-Saff: 2]

If a teacher promises the students, he must keep his promise or apologize to them in order to be honest in front of them, in what he asks of them to do or to leave, and so on. As well as being humble as, Ibn Abd al-Barr narrated in "Jami' Bayan Al-'Ilm Wa Fadluhu" from Omar bin Khattab (ra) he said: "Acquire knowledge, and teach it to the people, and learn to have dignity and serenity, and be humble towards those whom you learned from, and those whom you taught, and do not be the tyrants of the scholars, so that your ignorance is built on your Knowledge." The teacher is a learner and educator at the same time, it is no wonder and not surprising that the teacher learns of his students in some academic issues, he must retract the error that he has committed, or say to them: "I do not know," and "Allah knows" in matters that he does not know or not clear on. This makes him great in their eyes, and they will learn humility from him, and not to give opinions without knowledge.

We know that Islam is a Deen of justice and equality, Allah (swt) says:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ﴾

“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct” [Al-Nahl: 90]

There is no class system in Islam, the rich is not honoured for his riches, and the poor is not humiliated because he is poor. The students are like a flock and the one responsible for them firstly is the teacher due to the saying of the Messenger of Allah (saw):

“Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock”

They are equal, none of them gets a special treatment, according to the status of their parents or lineage or wealth. Justice in treatment was not absent from our first scholars, they passed on their care of the teachers following the Prophet's advice and His warning otherwise. Mujahid bin Jabr, the great Tabi'i and student of Abdullah bin Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them, he said: "If the teacher of the young was not just between them, he will come on the Day of Judgment with the oppressors." Ibn Sahnoun said in "Ma Ja'a Fi Al-A'dl Bain As-Sibyan": "He should equate between them in Education, the noble one and the low in status, otherwise he is a traitor". This is in contrast to what we see today, the discrimination in treatment of some of the students, the teachers overlook the errors and corruption of some students whose parents are in a position of power, or wealth and give them rights that are not rightfully theirs, but others deserve. While in Islam the Khalifs were careful that the teachers treat their children as they treat others, the example of this, is Harun Al-Rashid's recommendation sent to Al-Kasa'i, his son's mentor, in it he said: "... and stop him from laughing inappropriately, and teach him to respect the elders of Bani Hashim when they enter, and appreciate the leaders if they attend his council, and correct him with leniency and closeness as much as you can, if he disobeys then be firm and harsh."

The serious sincere teacher's mission and role does not end in the classroom, but his most important role is the strength of influence he has on his students and his society, in telling the truth and stand with it. Look at the history of our teachers and our scholars and imams who carried knowledge and taught it: the doctrine, knowledge, actions, method, and the call. Imam Ahmed, the teacher is the finest examples in the consistency and patience holding on to the ideology against the temptations, he was harmed and imprisoned, beaten and insulted, but he did not waver, and was firm on the truth, that he saw, even if it cost him his life, and these lessons of scholars, teachers and Dawah carriers are found in every time and place. Another example is the scholar and teacher Umm Ad-Darda As-Sughra, which was summoned by Abdul Malik bin Marwan to teach his women relatives, she heard him curse a servant once because he was slow in undertaking a duty, she said to him: I heard Abu Darda say, I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) says:

«لا يكون اللعانون شفعاء ولا شهداء، يوم القيامة»

“Those who curse will not be intercessors or witnesses on the Day of Judgment”

She said his not fearing any one in telling the truth, being a Khalifah did not stop her from saying the truth, she did not have the attitude to dissociate from the incident or say that it is none of her business as many scholars and teachers do in this age.

She did not stand and watch as a spectator, like the teachers who stand with negative attitude towards what they see now from Westernization in education policy and a change in the curriculum, even if they cannot change the education systems and curricula - those toxins that are put to our sons and daughters in the books - but that does not relieve them of their duty to condemn and reduce the harm by giving the correct idea that denounces it fundamentally. It is their duty as Muslims' mentors, especially since we live under the capitalist system with all its concepts that are far from the rules of Islam, that target the demolition of the Islamic creed and spreading of corruption and secular freedoms and democracy and other rotten capitalist concepts in the souls of our children, they must expose this corruption and fight against those ideas and demonstrate their falsity and danger. Abdullah Ibn Masoud may Allah be pleased with him, said: "Knowledge is not measured by the quantity of speeches but by fear (of Allah)." The teachers should teach them the correct method of Islamic thought and dissatisfaction with what does not satisfy the Shar', and to proclaim truth and not to compromise it or show hypocrisy in it, and they should plant in them

that livelihood (Rizq) is in Allah's hands alone, to fear Allah alone in telling the truth, and to not learn fear and cowardice.

But unfortunately and under corrupt regimes that control education and teachers, day after day after day they are working to appoint teachers with secular thoughts, who consider Western civilization and its concepts their ideals, and that benefit and interest are the basis of relations, so they become committed to that policy in education and curriculum as their devisers want. Some teachers strive for the introduction of these ideas in the minds of the students by all ways and means, as if they will take a medal of honour for their dedication, forgetting or pretending to forget the dangers of this matter and punishment by the Lord of mankind, not only the teacher failed to show that corruption but also encouraged it, by encouraging the teaching of the poisoned curriculum and ideas... and does not undertake his real role in proclaiming the truth.

One of the most important roles of the teacher is to build students personalities, those who view him as a role model... That is why the teacher must be a good example for his students, a good example is one of the most successful means of influencing the composition of the learners' personality, a role model in essence and appearance, in his character and the strength of influence, in morals and politeness. Imam Malik's mother advised her son to ask his mentor to teach him morals before taking knowledge from him, because of the importance of morals to the student, in his behavior with himself and with the Lord and with people... When Imam Malik decided to gain Knowledge he told his mother, she dressed him in the best clothes, and helped him put on a turbine, and then said: Go, and write now (knowledge). He, Allah's mercy be on him, said: my mother used to help me put on the turbine and tell me, "Go to Rabi'a, learning from him the morals before his knowledge." There will be a teacher, who speaks to his students about the effects of smoking, for example, while holding a cigarette in his hand! Or the one who urges his students to be honest, punctual, and to fulfill the promises, but then lies or arrives late to class, or break his promise, or keep silent and become a coward and hypocrite at a time that requires courage to say the truth, by one action he erases tens of statements he taught them.

So, the teacher is not a treasurer of knowledge that students gain that knowledge and information from, but he is a role model and an example. The role model is an important factor in reforming the learner or in his corruption, if the mentor is honest, trustworthy, generous, brave, chaste characterized by good morals, then the learner will be raised with honesty, trustworthiness, morals, generosity, courage and chastity. If the mentor is a liar, traitor, coward, hypocrite, and lowly, then the learner will be raised with these qualities and ethics. Indeed the responsibility of the teacher and his role is very serious, so let every teacher review how many people did he reform and how many he corrupted! How positive or negative is his effect on people! Education if given by example will have the greatest impact and the strongest argument than abstract theory, what if the action violates the speech and behavior goes against the directive?! The Quran rebuked the children of Israel for this:

﴿تَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ﴾

“Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?” [Al-Baqara: 44]

We conclude from this that the role and status of a teacher is of great importance... He must not be in isolation from the Ummah and society, he must be effective, as we said previously, he is a worker a scholar, Mujahid, Qari', enjoining what is good forbidding the evil, proclaiming the truth... I will mention here a story about a woman, a scholar and teacher, to show the strength of the influence of the scholar and teacher, who is respected and feared, even by the rulers, a story of Nafeesa Bint Al- Hassan (ra) she had a great influence on two

great Muslim scholars, in terms of jurisprudence: Ash-Shafi'i, and Ahmad ibn Hanbal. One day, when she was in Egypt, where she lived, one of the leaders' aides arrested a man from the public to torture him, while he was walking with them, he passed by the house of Nafeesa (ra), he shouted crying for her help, so she did du'a for his salvation, saying: "May Allah blind the eyes of the oppressors from seeing you." When they arrived with the man to the leader, they mentioned to him what took place when they passed by Nafeesa's house (ra), he said: "Is my oppression this much, O Lord, I repent to you and ask forgiveness." The leader set the man free, then collected from his money and gave it in charity to the poor and needy.

It was said that when Ahmad Ibn Tulun oppressed the people, the people sought salvation from his oppression, and went to Nafeesa (ra) to complain. She said to them: When does he go riding? They said: 'Tomorrow.' She wrote on piece of cloth and stood in the way, and called him: 'O Ahmad Ibn Tulun.' When he saw her, he recognized her and got off his horse, and took the piece of writing and read it: "You were given authority and you held captives, you were given status so you oppressed, you were empowered and you transgressed, the wealth returned to you and you gave it away (to those who do not deserve it). You know that the arrows of the dawn are accurate, especially from the hearts that you harmed, and livers that you starved, and the bodies that are uncovered due to poverty. It is impossible that the oppressed perishes and the oppressor prevails, do what you like, we complain to Allah, and those who do wrong will know to what end they shall return!" Al-Qurmani said: from then onwards Ibn Tulun changed until his death! He removed the oppression from the people... and this is what everyone should know, that the teacher have a great influence, role, and prestige which was lost as we lost many things when the prestige of Islam was lost after the demolition of its state, and they will not return except by its return and the return of Islam, as it was strong and feared, and that is easy for Allah to accomplish.

I conclude with this advice by Ali may Allah be pleased with him for Cameel ibn Ziyad An-Nakha'i who said: "Ali Ibn Abi Talib took me by the hand towards Al-Jubban, so when we reached the desert, he sat down and took a breath and then said, O Cameel ibn Ziyad, hearts are like containers; the best are those who have awareness, so learn what I will tell you, people are three: the scholar who is God fearing and obedient (Rabbani), and an educated one for his survival, and the barbarian mob, followers of all croaked ones, leaning with every wind, they did not take from the light of knowledge and did not resort to a safe corner. Knowledge is better than money, knowledge protects you and you guard the money, knowledge increases the work, but money is reduced by spending, knowledge is the governor, and the money is being governed, and the creation of money disappears when money disappears, and the love of the scholar is worship. Those who hoard money are dead while being alive, and scholars remain till the end of time, their type is missing, but their likes exist in the hearts.

O Allah, give us victory by Islam and make Islam victorious by us

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