

# PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC PEDAGOGY

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A TEACHER'S MANUAL

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Ramzy Ajem  
Nadeem Memon



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful*

*The pedagogical principles presented in this manual are formulated from the main body of Islam's sacred texts. These principles have a variety of authentic and creative implications that show teachers precisely where and how teaching can yield the unique results and objectives as articulated in an Islamic Philosophy of Education. Each principle is established and explained in a manner that resembles the methodology of juristic derivation in Islamic Law.*



PRINCIPLES  
OF ISLAMIC  
PEDAGOGY

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## TRANSLITERATION KEY

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آ/أ	ā
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	ʿ
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w/ū
ي	y/ī
ة	a
ء	ʾ
أ	a
إ	i



## HONORIFIC EXPRESSIONS

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(*Ṣalla-llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) an invocation of God's blessings and peace upon the Prophet Muḥammad: "God's blessings and peace be upon him."



(*'Alayhis-salām*) an invocation of God's blessings and peace upon a Prophet or an Angel: "May peace be upon him."



(*'Alayhimus-salām*) an invocation of God's blessings and peace upon three or more Prophets: "May peace be upon them."



(*Raḍiyallāhu 'anhū*) an invocation of God's pleasure with a male Companion of the Prophet: "May God be pleased with him."



(*Raḍiyallāhu 'anhā*) an invocation of God's pleasure with a female Companion of the Prophet: "May God be pleased with her."



(*Raḍiyallāhu 'anhū*) an invocation of God's pleasure with the Companions of the Prophet: "May God be pleased with them."



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## INTRODUCTION

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There are arguably three overarching aspects to schooling: school administration, school curriculum, and instructional approaches. In the establishment of Islamic schools in North America most of the attention has been placed on the first two aspects with little on the third. This manual seeks to correct the imbalance.

Muslims in North America have attempted to develop institutions that adhere to and are guided by school policies and administrative practices that exhibit a uniquely Islamic approach. Although there are certainly distinctions and varying interpretations on how schools should be administered, the vast majority of Islamic schools have policies in place relating to an Islamic dress code, student behavior, and administrative practices such as “*shūra*” or taking counsel as a way of making school wide decisions. Similarly, there have been numerous attempts to develop curriculum frameworks for Islamic schools either to advance the Islamic Studies curriculum, Islamize existing curricula, or to create holistic, character based curricula founded on Islamic principles. The one area that has been relatively untouched, and is arguably most if not equally important, is the training of teachers toward an Islamically nuanced instructional approach.

For most Islamic schools today, teachers who have attained conventional qualifications for the profession (i.e. Bachelors in Education or its equivalents) are deemed qualified for teaching in an Islamic school. The common assumption is that the conventional state mandated curriculum is inadequate but the conventional state mandated requirements to teach are sufficient. This is disconcerting in many ways knowing that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ provided a teaching model that has thus far been unharnessed. The oft quoted hadith from Ibn Majah’s collection reinforces this when the Prophet ﷺ said: “Verily I was sent as a teacher.” The Prophet Muhammad’s example ﷺ provides a methodology of teaching. His approach in every interaction and moment of his life exhibits a particular rationale. Teaching in all cases implies a particular procedure and approach even if not articulated. Every

aspect of teaching, from tone of voice to classroom set up and from instructional approach to method of responding to student inquiries, is based on an underlying approach that is nonarbitrary.

What is most important to recognize is that every approach to teaching is influenced by a worldview or an orientation, perspective, or philosophy of education. Sometimes conventional teacher practices are rooted in educational philosophies antithetical to an Islamic epistemology or metaphysical cosmology, and yet are unknowingly adopted by Muslim teachers and Islamic schools. This is not intended to imply that modern teaching approaches ought to be abandoned in Islamic schools. The point being made is the need to acknowledge that teaching approaches are rooted in philosophies of education within which are principles of teaching and learning that reflect a particular philosophy.

The challenge for Islamic schooling globally is that Islamic principles have not been articulated, developed, revised, standardized, and implemented. Once such principles of teaching are established, teachers, administrators, and school boards can then use these principles for consistency in teacher training and in establishing approaches to instruction that are grounded in a particularly Islamic vision of education.







## WHAT IS ISLAMIC PEDAGOGY

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Muslim scholars, theologians and jurists have a saying among themselves: “Let there be no disputing about terminology.”<sup>1</sup> It is vital at the beginning of any new study or investigation to define the terms before employing them so as to avoid unnecessary dispute.

The word pedagogy, before the seventeenth century, had a meaning closely related to its etymological connotation and has only achieved a common definition in the past hundred years of mass public schooling. In the classic *The History of Pedagogy*, the nineteenth century scholar Gabriel Compayre states that older dictionaries define pedagogy as the “moral education of children” and that “today not only in language but in facts and institutions the fate of pedagogy is settled.”<sup>2</sup> From that point onwards to this very day the term pedagogy has been commonly understood as “the knowledge or art of teaching.” Although it is sometimes used to refer to the field of study that deals with the method and practice of teaching, it is more commonly used to refer to the very method and practice of teaching. As an example in this sense, one could say: “The instructor’s pedagogy reflects our principles and aims of education.” Pedagogy then is the method and practice of teaching:

1. The method of teaching is the particular procedure, theory or approach of an educator.
2. The practice of teaching is the actual application of that approach and theoretical procedure.

Taking these two meanings into consideration we can establish that:

- a. Pedagogy is coherent when a teacher’s practice is consistent with his or her theory and approach to teaching. This is the *How*.

- b. Pedagogy is effective when a teacher’s practice facilitates the aims and objectives of education, which includes curriculum. This is the *What*.
- c. Pedagogy has purpose when a teacher’s practice is rooted in a philosophy or belief or reflects a particular ethos or worldview. This is the *Why*.

A comprehensive pedagogy must take into careful consideration each of the above three aspects. The challenge is that in the absence of a well articulated and agreed upon “why” or Islamic worldview related to education, the instructional method is left inconsistent across schools. Schools then rely on individual “lead” or “exceptional” teachers but often have no professional development strategy to ensure all teachers within a school have a consistent, and more importantly, coherent purposeful approach in teaching.

Most Islamic schools generally share a common belief, vision of identity, and sense of religious responsibility. Most would agree that for pedagogy to be “Islamic” it should:

- a. Not contradict the aims, objectives, and ethics contained in revelation (Quran)
- b. Closely reflect an Islamic ethos based on
  - revelation
  - the teachings and practices of the Messenger of God ﷺ
  - the intellectual and spiritual heritage of his followers
- c. Prove effective in developing the student’s
  - intelligence (*‘aql*)
  - faith (*īmān*)
  - morality and character (*khuluq*)
  - knowledge and practice of personal religious obligations (*farḍ ‘ain*)
  - knowledge, skills, and physical abilities warranted by worldly responsibilities and duties

However, based on our research, most Islamic school educators and administrators would agree that their schools do not have access to an Islamic philosophy of education that sufficiently expounds on, and contextualizes the pedagogical matrix mentioned above. Furthermore, even if there was access to it, there still remains a great challenge for school administrators to implement mechanisms and strategies that aim to reeducate their teachers and restructure their schools towards embracing a new consciousness and towards implementing a new pedagogy.



## DERIVING PRINCIPLES OF PEDAGOGY FROM THE ISLAMIC TRADITION

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A principle is generally defined as: “a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning.”<sup>3</sup> In connection with the word pedagogy, as in ‘principles of pedagogy’, the meaning intended is the propositions that serve as foundations for a system of instruction. When qualified by the word Islamic, as in ‘principles of Islamic pedagogy’, the scope of the principles are delineated by the general body of knowledge and guidance emerging from an intellectual and spiritual heritage whose roots are established in divine revelation and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Principles of Islamic pedagogy presuppose three underlying characteristics:

1. Each principle is sufficiently comprehensive to govern specific aspects of an entire system related to instruction.
2. Each principle is able to give rise to relevant implications and the ‘lineage’ of each implication is genuine and can be traced back to its root.
3. Each principle is an accurate articulation of understandings that are founded and substantiated by what is henceforth referred to as the sources of Prophetic pedagogy
  - a. revelation (Quran);
  - b. the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ (Sunna);
  - c. the custom of the early community of Muslims (*Salaf*) or;
  - d. the counsel, experience, and works of later scholars (*‘Ulamā’*) on a, b, and c above.

Muslims are in a unique position among all other faith communities in that the profound and discerning history of Islamic law has yielded exceptional developments

in legal theory that govern the way the sacred texts are viewed and interpreted. The study of such a system, termed *usūl al-fiqh* (the principles of legal rulings), documents those principles that together inform a sophisticated legal method a jurist must use when exercising expert legal reasoning (*ijtihād*). Just as a jurist would need these principles to ensure the accuracy of his judgments, it can be argued that, Muslim teachers need principles in pedagogy in order to ensure they are teaching Islamically. What would clearly be beneficial is a reexamination of the sources of Prophetic pedagogy as seen through the eyes of an *usuli* (practitioner of *usūl al-fiqh*) in an attempt to unveil the hidden universals that could serve as the foundations for a system of educational instruction—a lucid, relevant, Islamic pedagogy for twenty-first century educators.

The main task of an *usūlī* is to research, investigate, and analyze the primary textual evidences in order to discover, define, and formulate universals which become part of the foundations of a system through which specific legal rulings can be known and established by the jurist (*faqīh*) or *Mufti*.<sup>4</sup>

A similar effort is needed to research, investigate, and analyze the sources of Prophetic pedagogy. Such an analysis would assist in discovering, defining, and formulating universals which can become part of the foundations of a system of Islamic pedagogy. The direct result of an Islamic pedagogy would provide specific pedagogical implications to aid Muslim teachers in classroom instruction.

The following chart is an example of how a single, straightforward principle might be cognitively demonstrated by a practitioner of *usūl al-fiqh*:

#### PRINCIPLE

**A Command Following a Prohibition Means that the Prohibition is Lifted.**

#### EXPLANATION

Whenever there is a text in the Quran or hadith that commands someone to do something, it is generally an indication of the obligation to perform the command. However, if the command follows a prohibition then the command does not signify an obligation to perform the act but rather it indicates the lifting of the prohibition to do that thing.

#### EVIDENCE

When one enters a state of pilgrim sanctity, God prohibits hunting among other things. *He then said: "But when you have quit your pilgrim sanctity, then hunt for game."* (Quran 5:2) No one from among the scholars holds that hunting is obligatory despite the command to hunt.

#### IMPLICATIONS

When the jurist examines the primary text and finds a command he or she must:

- not immediately deem the command as an obligation
- consider the context of the command
- declare the original ruling of the commanded act whenever it is preceded by a prohibition since the command in this case merely indicates that the prohibition has been lifted

The parallel between *usūl al-fiqh* and principles of pedagogy is that both these sciences entail the careful study of primary texts to derive, establish, and formulate principles. As such, the presentation of each pedagogical principle and its various implications will resemble the format above.

Prior to laying down the foundations of an Islamic pedagogy and articulating its principles, there are some assumptions that ought to be recognized and clarified.

Firstly, there is an unspoken pedagogy underlying the teaching practices of the Prophet ﷺ because he was, as he said, “sent as a teacher” and every notable teacher has an approach and methodology—even if unarticulated.

Secondly, God’s Messengers ﷺ are necessarily, by definition, capable of demonstrating their message and teachings with the utmost effectiveness. Also, they are intellectually equipped to defend their claims with unequivocal evidences.<sup>5</sup> The Prophet ﷺ forever changed the course of history and, despite his being unlettered, he set in motion what was to become the most literate of civilizations which the world has ever known. Sufficient is this as evidence indicating the effectiveness of his pedagogy ﷺ.

Thirdly, his being God’s last Messenger ﷺ to mankind entails that his unspoken pedagogy contains within it a spiritual *baraka*, lasting relevance, and universality. Additionally, because his deed and speech is inspired by God, he ﷺ is therefore the highest example ever exhibited for teachers and seekers of knowledge, understanding, and guidance.

Lastly, there are tremendous amounts of reports and accounts of the Prophet’s message, teachings, and behavior ﷺ which include a level of detail unparalleled by any other faith based community. Furthermore, the credibility of these reports has been established by a rigorous method of veracity which exceeds modern academic standards commonly employed by historians.



The methodology in discovering and unpacking these pedagogical principles consists of seven phases conducted by researchers, scholars, teachers, and academics:

1. Compilation of relevant sources
  - a. Quranic verses
  - b. Quranic commentaries
  - c. Hadith from the six books<sup>6</sup> and beyond
  - d. Selected known commentaries of the six books
  - e. Account of the Prophet's character, life, and deeds ﷺ
  - f. Works related to the inner spiritual tradition of Islam (*taṣawwuf*)
  - g. Works by the Muslim scholars related to pedagogy and learning
  - h. Later works and contemporary papers on pedagogy and education
  - i. Interviews with Muslim thinkers and educators
2. Research, analysis, and selection of materials from the above listed sources
3. Categorization of selected materials into topics and sub-topics that relate to pedagogy
4. Prioritization of topics and supporting material according to a North American context
5. General derivation of pedagogical principles
6. Refinement of each principle to ensure comprehensiveness and accuracy
7. Unpacking of the principle into
  - a. Explanation
  - b. Evidence
  - c. Implications

The principles are expressed in comprehensive yet concise ways that do not explicitly refer to particular practices or teaching strategies. Although they are intended for the teacher, they are nevertheless central in guiding the development of goals, initiatives, and policies within the school.

The explanations provided for the principles are meant to clarify and expand on the significance of the principle as it relates to the Muslim faith, to the worldview, and to the classroom. The evidences provided for the principles are not exhaustive. They are meant to provide Muslim teachers with a sense of confidence and certainty, in the hopes that higher levels of consciousness and intention be obtained and reflected in the practice and application of the principle. Each principle may have a variety of implications that may look different in practice depending on the circumstances relating to the students, subject, classroom, and school.





## PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE: IMPLICATIONS OF ISLAMIC PEDAGOGY

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Every principle of Islamic pedagogy has a direct implication on classroom practice. These implications are open to interpretation, reinterpretation, context, and student needs. Generally, however, educators are able to agree upon a set of implications that are relevant to a particular principle.

Such principles and their implications are also relevant to all forms of schooling including public institutions. In many ways, the principles of an Islamic pedagogy can assist non-Muslim teachers to understand the educational needs and perspectives of Muslim students and acknowledge the relevance of an Islamic pedagogy as an alternative educational framework applicable to all schools. Aspects of an Islamic pedagogy are adoptable and adaptable to various settings and for varying needs.

Thirdly, once the teaching approach in Islamic schools or institutions is grounded in pedagogical principles that are rooted in the Islamic tradition, an educator will have gained a rubric for assessing the congruence of contemporary educational methods. What is crucial in determining congruency between principles and approaches is establishing a strong sense of principles first, and then considering, adapting, and adopting from existing educational trends.

What follows is the presentation and unpacking of seven key principles.



SEVEN  
ISLAMIC PEDAGOGICAL  
PRINCIPLES





## CONVICTION OF THE PRIMAL PURPOSE AND UNIVERSAL TRUST ASSIGNED TO MANKIND

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People have many reasons for becoming teachers—some philosophical and some practical. Whatever the reason may be, the search for meaning in what we do is critical.

At the root of an Islamic pedagogy is the conviction of purpose. It emanates from a firm belief in God and a clear understanding of one's place in existence.

The Muslim teacher believes that learning began with Adam ﷺ, the first human to receive teachings directly from God.<sup>7</sup> As a result of these teachings, humans were granted a privileged position in the earth as His representatives or vicegerents<sup>8</sup> (*khulafā* pl. of *khalīfah*). As *khulafā*, God subjugated the earth and its creatures to humanity and assigned to mankind the trust (*al-amāna*) to live and teach according to God's ordinances. Every legally responsible<sup>9</sup> human being, past, present, and future, is thus individually accountable.

A human being's primal purpose is therefore to become God's vicegerent by actualizing his or her servitude to God. The nature of this servitude necessitates having knowledge of Him, learning His ordinances, and living by them so as to guard human authority from abuse and corruption. It also necessitates becoming agents of mercy, justice, peace, and development.

Muslim educators who live by this principle have purpose, and understand the value of knowledge, learning, and teaching in relation to their laudable professions, and above all in relation to their roles as God's vicegerents. They understand their special place in the grand framework of human existence and strive to make their profession serve this higher purpose.

This principle also gives a sense of the universal concern Muslims must have for all human beings. We are responsible to God for each other, for the earth, and for its creatures. The universality of this principle refutes such factors as differences in gender, class, color, culture, religious tradition, and language in preventing teachers from being equitable, just, and compassionate.

God says: (O mankind, We have created you male and female, and appointed you races and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most God-fearing of you. God is All-knowing, All-aware.) (Quran 49:13)

Unfortunately, it is common to find students in faith based schools feeling isolated and disconnected from the wider community and from humanity. To counteract this, classroom environments and schools would do well to enact this principle by promoting a culture of universal concern and civic engagement rooted in the Islamic tradition yet not limited to the Muslim community.

This principle is the basis of all action and ensures that teacher instruction is never severed from the religious duty and privilege of service to God, to humanity, and to all creation—specifically, to students, staff, community, and environment. Every concern, duty, and right is rooted in the conviction that one is first and foremost God’s servant and *khalīfa*.

## Supporting Evidences and Examples

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Verily, actions are only by intention. And for every person is what he has intended.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

*I have not created jinn and mankind except to serve Me.* (Quran 51:56)

*And when thy Lord said to the angel: ‘I am setting in the earth a vicegerent.’ They said: ‘Whilst You set therein one who will do corruption there, and shed blood,*

*while We proclaim Your praise and glorify You?’ He said: ‘Assuredly I know what you know not.’*

*And He taught Adam the names, all of them; then He presented them unto the angels and said: ‘Now tell Me the names of these, if you speak truly.’*

*They said: ‘Glory be to Thee! We know not save what You hast taught us. Surely You are the All-knowing, the All-wise.’*

*He said: ‘Adam, tell them their names.’ And when he had told them their names*

*He said: ‘Did I not tell you I know the unseen things of the heavens and earth? And I know what things you reveal, and what you were hiding.’ (Quran 2:30–33)*

*It is He who has appointed you vicegerents in the earth (Quran 6:165)*

The Prophet ﷺ said: “The world is sweet and green and verily God has set you in it as vicegerents observing your behavior.” (Muslim)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “The creation is God’s family and the most beloved of creation to God is the one who is most excellent to His family.” (Al-Bayhaqi, *Shu‘ba al-Imān*)

*It belongs not to any mortal that God should give him the Book, the Judgment, the Prophethood, then he should say to men: ‘Be you servants to me apart from God.’ Rather, ‘Be you rabbāniyīn [educators] because of what you teach of the Book, and in what you study.’ (Quran 3:79)*

“In summary, knowledge, teaching, and studying necessitates that their possessor be *rabbānī* ... being *rabbānī* is a matter distinguished from [merely] being a scholar, a teacher or a researcher. This matter is not attainable unless one’s learning is for God and one’s teaching and studying are for God ... Whoever is occupied by learning and teaching for other than this objective his efforts are wasted and his works are in loss. Their example is that of one who plants a beautiful tree that flowers in appearance while having no benefit in fruit. This is why he ﷺ said: “I seek refuge in God from knowledge that does not benefit and a heart that is not humbled.” (Rāzī, *Mafāth al-Ghayb*, Commentary on Quran 3:79)

## Implications

- 1.1 Teachers are cognizant of their professional role, religious responsibility, and spiritual significance to students, staff and school.
- 1.2 Teachers employ strategies that provide the direction and framework students need in their learning, curriculum, and civic engagement to connect with a transcendent purpose.
- 1.3 Teachers support and encourage students to take responsibility for their learning, application of knowledge, and career choices within the matrix of sacred law.
- 1.4 Teachers demonstrate the coherence and link between religious accountability (*taklīf*) and human welfare; between curriculum and tenets of faith; and between citizenship and religious identity.
- 1.5 Teachers employ strategies that allow for students to critically analyze their environment and societies from the perspective of being God’s representatives and servants.





## THE PRIMACY OF KNOWLEDGE AND OF SEEKING IT

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The “primacy of knowledge” means that knowledge is superior to ignorance (*jahl*), conjecture (*dhan*), doubt (*shakk*), or unsubstantiated belief (*taqlīd*). “The primacy of seeking it” means that there is nothing more virtuous than travelling a path that leads to attaining it.

“Knowing” is to apprehend the object of knowledge as it really is. It is the souls’ recognition of truth. Since belief in Truth is central to religion, “knowing” must take precedence in all matters—even in the declaration of faith about which one is commanded by God to ‘*know*’ (Quran 19:47).

Knowledge must precede action; for every human act is either in fulfillment of the Divine command or not. Every act has an associated ruling, virtue, and merit in sacred law. Hence, we are instructed not to act until we attain knowledge<sup>10</sup> and that “seeking knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim.” (Muslim)

The Islamic classroom promotes curiosity, investigation, and independent thought through guided questions that awaken the desire within mature students to seek answers and develop personal convictions. Inquiry and knowledge are forever connected in an Islamic pedagogy.

It is common to find teachers of a religious persuasion falling into a totalitarian approach to education whose aim “has never been to instill convictions but to destroy the capacity to form any.”<sup>11</sup> The Islamic faith does not fear inquiry, rather it promotes it, as it leads to fulfilling the religious obligation of holding convictions that are founded and substantiated.

According to a recent study, researchers concluded that children are innately motivated to seek explanations and that they use specific conversational strategies

to obtain information. The study states: “When preschoolers ask ‘why’ questions, they’re not merely trying to prolong conversation, they’re trying to get to the bottom of things.”<sup>12</sup>

“Getting to the bottom of things” is inexhaustible, as the Prophet ﷺ said, “Two insatiable types will never be satisfied; the seeker of knowledge and the seeker of worldly matters.” (Musnad of Shihāb)

Seeking answers therefore requires direction and prioritization. Consequently, seeking knowledge has conditions without which its attainment is not possible. Imam al-Shāfi‘ī has gathered six conditions into a short poem:<sup>13</sup>

My brother you will never attain knowledge except through six:

[1] *intelligence*, [2] *vigilance*, [3] *hard work*, and [4] *sustenance*—*I shall inform you more of its details with clarity*—[5] *the companionship of a teacher* and [6] *a long stretch of time*

Seeking knowledge requires inquiry and assumes a qualified educator to guide and provide correct answers; otherwise the path of inquiry can lead to error and misguidance.

## Supporting Evidences and Examples

*And pursue not that thou hast no knowledge of; the hearing, the sight, the heart — all of those shall be questioned of.* (Quran 17:36)

*... Say: ‘Are they equal—those who know and those who know not? ...’* (Quran 39:9)

*... God will raise up those of you who believe and who have been given knowledge many ranks. And God is aware of the things you do.* (Quran 58:11)

*Ask the people of knowledge if you know not.* (Quran 16:43)



*There is no compulsion in matters of faith* (Quran 2:256)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Seeking knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim.” (Muslim)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever travels a path in search of knowledge, God, Mighty and Majestic, will take him on a path to Paradise.” (Muslim)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Knowledge is in treasure chests and its keys are in questions. Shall you not ask? Verily, four will be rewarded for asking: the inquirer, the scholar, the listener, and the one that adores them.” (Abu Nu‘aym, *Riyāḍat al-Muta‘allimīn*)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “The one who knows not must not keep silent about his ignorance and the one who knows must not keep silent about his knowledge.” (Al-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Awsat*)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “What is the matter with a people who do not educate their neighbors and teach them ... ! And what is the matter with a people who do not learn from their neighbors and gain understanding!” (*Al-targhīb wa al-tarhīb* and *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*)

Abu Dardā’ reported that the Prophet ﷺ said to him: “O ‘Uwaymir, what will you say on the Day of Resurrection when it is said to you: ‘Do you know or are you ignorant?’ If you respond ‘I know,’ then it is said: ‘What have you done with what you know?’ And if you respond: ‘I am ignorant,’ then it is said: ‘What is your excuse of your ignorance that you did not seek and learn?’” (Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī, *Iqtīḍa al-‘Ilm al-‘Amal*)

Imam Muslim narrates an authenticated report known as the Hadith of Jibrīl wherein the Prophet ﷺ is asked a series of questions before his companions pertaining to the nature of Islam, Imān, Iḥsan, and the signs of the Hour.

“One may argue that since God Most High says: *Ask the people of knowledge if you know not*, asking questions is a divine injunction. Indeed it is such, but only about which the teacher has permitted. For asking questions about matters relating to a level that one’s understanding has not yet reached is blameworthy. And this is why Khidr ؑ prohibited the prophet *Musa* ؑ from asking questions (Quran 18:70). In other words, his requirement was that questions not be asked before their time since the teacher knows better in regards to what one is capable of and the appropriate time for something to be revealed.” (Al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm Al-Dīn*)

## Implications

- 2.1 Teachers are cognizant of the various ways human knowledge is possible and of what each way may include or exclude.
- 2.2 Teachers prioritize learning according to religious accountability.
- 2.3 Teachers encourage and support students to take responsibility for their learning inside the classroom and beyond.
- 2.4 Teachers promote diligent research, deep thinking, and civil discussion prior to formulating opinions and convictions.
- 2.5 Teachers promote a culture which welcomes questions, commits to knowing realities, and considers the consequences.





### 3·

## THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IS SACRED, DISCIPLINED, CARING, AND FUNCTIONAL

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A learning environment is nuanced primarily by the instructor's behavior which is comprised of the instructor's physical appearance, demeanor, character, speech, action, tone, emotion, and spiritual state (*ḥāl*).

The classroom aesthetics, student appearance, and student conduct should agree with the learning environment and not contradict it.

In an Islamic pedagogy the classroom is viewed as a sacred space because learning is one of the greatest acts of worship. Imam Mālik ibn Anas رحمته الله said: “Verily gatherings of learning are impregnated with humility, tranquility, and dignity.”<sup>14</sup>

The teacher's consciousness of God, humility, serenity, pleasantness, and intention brings a unique energy to the classroom which subtly reminds students of the special place and time they are in. The classroom set up and its visual aesthetics should impart a warm simplicity and a respectful ambiance.

Sacredness should not be interpreted as “anti-fun.” It does not mean that students must always act with the decorum worthy of a place of prayer. Classrooms need to be enjoyable places where learning is loved and lived, which in many ways also means that learning must be exciting and engaging for students.

Discipline is required for excellence in learning and is manifested differently in accordance to the maturity of the students and to the subject of study. Teachers need to instill in their students an awareness of the virtues and etiquettes of seeking knowledge and to set realistic expectations that meet academic and religious standards. Students who openly misbehave should not be disciplined openly except

when necessary. The disciplined classroom has rules and boundaries yet is relaxed, welcoming, and inclusive.

Caring is an expression of love and is central to faith, as is enunciated in a common Arab proverb, “he who has no love has no faith.” Love in general must be nurtured in the hearts by those who have faith, in particular love of God and His Messenger ﷺ. Love is manifested by teachers in the compassion, concern, and forbearance they show their students. Although the instructor is an elder, a guide, and classroom authority, he or she must promote a classroom culture of care never neglecting the emotional and spiritual needs of students.

Functionality means that the classroom has all that it needs to operate with ease whether it relates to lecturing, group learning, or ritual worship. This may require changing the set up of the furniture or providing tools and other materials needed for learning. More importantly, it also means for the teacher to strengthen the bond of trust and fealty between the students.

A classroom environment where students are courteous to one another, concerned about the teacher’s opinion of them, and comfortable to pursue enquiries and express themselves can only be achieved through teacher modeling and classroom strategies based on etiquette (*adab*), brother/sisterhood, cooperation, respect, and mutual support. In such an environment, students begin to take responsibility for their learning and feel motivated to pursue classroom expectations together and individually.

### Supporting Evidences and Examples

*It was by some mercy of God that thou were gentle to them; had thou been harsh and hard of heart, they would have scattered from about thee. So pardon them, and pray forgiveness for them, and take counsel with them in the affair; and when thou art resolved, put thy trust in God; surely God loves those who put their trust.*  
(Quran 3:159)

*Now there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves; grievous to him is your suffering; anxious is he over you, gentle to the believers, compassionate.*  
(Quran 9:128)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Verily I am to you as a father is to his children, I teach you.”  
(Muslim)

*The believers indeed are brothers; so set things right between your two brothers, and fear God; haply so you will find mercy.* (Quran 49:10)

“The Messenger of God ﷺ was always pleasant, good-natured, and easygoing. He was neither callous nor harsh, nor abrasive, nor offensive, nor insulting, nor flattering. He overlooked what did not please him. One who desired something from him did not lose hope, nor was he disappointed ...  
When he spoke the gazes of those sitting in his presence were lowered [so still and attentive] it was as if there were birds standing on their heads.  
If he went silent they would speak but would not quarrel in his presence. Whenever one spoke in his presence everyone else would keep silent until he finished ...  
He would laugh due to what made them laugh and marvel at what made them marvel.” (Al-Tirmidhī, *Al-Shamā'il Al-Muḥammadiyyah*)

“We came to the Messenger of God ﷺ as young men; similar in age. We stayed with him twenty nights and the Messenger of God was so caring and kind. When it appeared to him that we missed our families, he asked us about those whom we left behind. After informing him he said: ‘Return to your families and reside among them. Teach and instruct them; and perform the prayer as you have seen me perform it ... ’”  
(Al-Bukhari)

“The first duty of the teacher is to be sympathetic to his or her students and to treat them as his or her own children.” (Al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn*)

## Implications

- 3.1 Teachers promote a culture of care, value, and respect for individuals based on the religious etiquettes of brother/sisterhood.
- 3.2 Teachers set a classroom ambiance that reminds students of the sacredness of knowledge and the virtue of learning in the sight of God.
- 3.3 Teachers employ strategies to promote students' humility to ask, confidence to discover, and willingness to take risks with their learning.
- 3.4 Teachers facilitate classroom conversations and communicate in a manner that is inclusive.
- 3.5 Classroom discipline is guided by equity, compassion, and mutual respect.
- 3.6 Teachers ensure the classroom set up reflects age appropriate learning needs.
- 3.7 Teachers are actively involved in grouping students and designing collaborative work to facilitate cooperation and camaraderie.







## 4

# THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT UPON WHAT ONE LEARNS AND TEACHES

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This principle comes from the general religious imperative for one to speak and act in accordance with what one learns and teaches. Putting into practice what one learns, results in an increase of knowledge, a transformation of behavior, and benefit to others.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Learn what you wish to learn; for God Mighty and Majestic will never grant you benefit until you act on what you know.”<sup>15</sup>

That benefit, which is not attainable except through acting on what one learns, transforms one, bringing one closer to the ideal human being. As the great educational theorist and contemporary Muslim philosopher Dr. Syed Naquib al-Attas stated: “The end of education in Islam is to produce a good man, and not—as in the case of Western civilization—to produce a good citizen.”<sup>16</sup> Such is the case, because a ‘good citizen’ does not solely indicate a ‘good man’ as understood within the framework of our purpose, namely, the vicegerency of humans (*khilāfah*) explained in the first principle.

The educational process, according to Dr. al-Attas, necessitates action that is founded on knowledge which in turn benefits society.

“When we say that the purpose of knowledge is to produce a good man, we do not mean that to produce a good society is not its purpose, for since society is composed of people, making everyone or most of them good produces a good society. Education is the fabric of society. The emphasis on *adab* [etiquette] which includes ‘*amal* [action] in education and the educational process is to ensure that ‘*ilm* [knowledge] is being put to good use in society. For this reason the sages,

men of discernment and the learned scholars among the Muslims of earlier times combined *‘ilm* with *‘amal* and *adab*, and conceived their harmonious combination as education. Education is in fact *ta’dīb*, for *adab* as here defined already involves both *‘ilm* and *‘amal*.”<sup>17</sup>

Teachers must therefore, personify and preach the value of ‘deed over word’. If the teacher represents the ‘accomplished student’, he or she exemplifies such teachings and encourages students to put into practice what they learn. His or her integrity, trust, humility, and respect are realities experienced by others and conveyed to students in ways verbal instruction cannot convey.

For teachers to lead by example they are given a professional framework to demonstrate their values, knowledge, and skills to the classroom and school. For students to do this, it requires educators to create opportunities that allow students to apply what they have learned and to demonstrate their convictions, virtues, and talents within the classroom and beyond.

### Supporting Evidences & Examples

*Those who give ear to the Word and follow the fairest of it. Those are they whom God has guided; those—they are ones possessed of intellect. (Quran 39:18)*

*Very hateful is it to God that you say what you do not do. (Quran 61:3)*

*Verily in the Messenger of God there is a beautiful model. (Quran 33:21)*

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever acts upon what they know God gives them knowledge of that which they know not.” (Abu Nu‘aym, *Al-Hilya*)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Learn what you wish to learn; for God Mighty and Majestic will never grant you benefit until you act on what you know.” (Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Iqtida al-‘Ilm al-‘Amal*)

Aisha ؓ was asked about the character of the Prophet ﷺ, she replied: “His character was the Quran.” (Al-Bukhari, *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*)

Fudayl ibn Iyad<sup>18</sup> said: “The scholar continues in ignorance of what he knows until he practices it. And only when he practices he becomes a scholar.” (Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Iqtida al-‘Ilm al-‘Amal*)

Umar ibn al ‘As ؓ said: “This unlettered Prophet has shown me that he only instructs others to do good whilst being the first to do it himself. And he only forbids evil whilst being the first to refrain from it. His speech is not coarse and his promise is not broken ...” (Ibn Ishaq, *Sīratu Rasūlu l-Lāh*)

A man once asked the Prophet ﷺ about the times of prayer and he said: “Pray with us these two days.” (Muslim)

An authenticated transmission reports that the Prophet ﷺ performed the prayer on top of the pulpit before many people and then proclaimed that he did so only “so that you can learn how to perform my prayer.” (Al-Bukhari)

Fudayl ibn Iyad said: “Knowledge is only sought for action and knowledge is the proof of action.”

He also said: “Knowledge without action is like a tree without fruit.”

He also said: “The knowledge of the hypocrite is in his words and the knowledge of the believer is in his deed.” (Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Iqtida al-‘Ilm al-‘Amal*)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “The metaphor of the guidance and knowledge with which God has sent me is the abundant rain which strikes the earth. Some of it is fertile and accepts the water and brings forth plants and grass in abundance. Some of it is hard and holds the water enabling God to let people make use of it. They drink from it, water their animals, and irrigate.

Some of the land it strikes is level and barren and does not retain the water nor produce plants.

The first is a metaphor for someone who understands the religion of God and benefits from that with which God has sent me and learns and teaches.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

## Implications

- 4.1 Teachers design learning activities that encourage acting upon or encourage experiencing what is learned.
- 4.2 Teachers use instructional resources that draw students toward societal relevance and civic engagement.
- 4.3 Teachers create opportunities for students to teach one another and to share learning.
- 4.4 Teachers model the seamless combination of *‘ilm* and *‘amal* in their personal lives outside of school.
- 4.5 Teachers interact with fellow colleagues, parents, administrators, and students in a manner that exemplifies integrity and professionalism.







## THE RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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It is reported that ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ, one of the greatest students of the Messenger of God ﷺ, said: “Take account of yourself before you are taken account of. Evaluate yourselves before you are evaluated.” (Muṣannaf ibn Abi Shayba)

Assessment and evaluation practices in a Prophetic pedagogy reflect Islamic virtues rooted in the spiritual exercise of self-assessment (*muḥāsabah*).

In the spiritual sense of the word, *muḥāsabah* is “the way to train the ego in inner self-reproach that will divest the ego of everything standing between it and its progress in the path to purity.”<sup>19</sup> It entails a heightened awareness of oneself at all times and an evaluation of one’s actions, words, and even thoughts in light of the Sacred Law and ethical standard of the Prophet ﷺ.

The goal of *muḥāsabah* primarily relates to spiritual and moral excellence (*iḥsān*), but is not limited to this as excellence is required in all aspects of Muslim life. As the Prophet ﷺ said: “Verily God has prescribed excellence in everything.” (Muslim). Hence, the goal of *muḥāsabah*, pedagogically, can be viewed as a way to divest the student of the obstacles standing between him or her and the attainment of excellence within the context of education. Attaining this excellence is heavily dependent on teacher-lead *muḥāsabah*.

Based on this principle teachers and administrators can explore creative ways to develop assessment tasks and evaluation processes that encourage introspection and are connected with the student’s concern for self-development. A test in an Islamic pedagogy is, first and foremost, a means for the student to become aware of his or her accomplishments and challenges thereby facilitating the goal of *muḥāsabah*.

This dramatic shift in perspective with regards to assessment and evaluation in schools, is primarily set by the teacher through promoting a classroom culture of *muhāsabah* and self-motivated accountability. Students, in this setting, understand the connection between teacher-lead evaluation practices and their own self-improvement. As a result, students view tests and exams not as a threat challenging their performance, but rather as an opportunity to identify their own areas of weakness in order to overcome them.

### Supporting Evidences and Examples

*O believers, fear God. Let every soul consider what it has forwarded for the morrow ... (Quran 59:18)*

*Blessed be He in whose hand is the Kingdom—He is powerful over everything—who created death and life, that He might test which of you is most excellent in works ... (Quran 67:1–2)*

The Prophet ﷺ said: “The intelligent person is he who takes his self to account, and acts in preparation for what comes after death.” (Al-Tirmidhī)

Shaykh Ahmad al-Zarrūq said: “Being remiss in taking the self to account brings about crudeness and coarseness with what it is involved in. Being neglectful in its criticism and reproach invites one to be pleased with it. On the other hand, being unduly harsh with it drives it away and being gentle with it aids it in its idleness.”<sup>20</sup>

There are reports that the Prophet ﷺ used to assess and evaluate the knowledge and independent reasoning of his companions, and also authorize them after testing:

Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal ؓ said: “When the Messenger of God ﷺ sent me to Yemen he said to me: ‘How will you judge when a judicial matter is presented to you?’ I said: ‘I shall judge by the Book of God.’ He said: ‘And if you find it not in the Book of God?’ I said: ‘I shall judge by the Sunna of God’s Messenger.’ He said: ‘And if you find it

not in the Sunna of God's Messenger?' I said: 'Then I shall exert myself in reasoning without fail.'

Then the Messenger of God struck my chest with his hand and said: 'Praise be to God Who has given success to the messenger of God's Messenger in that which pleases God's Messenger.' (Abu Dawūd, al-Tirmidhī and al-Dāramī)

Ubay ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه said: "The Messenger of God صلى الله عليه وسلم said to me: 'O Father of al-Mundhir! Which verse in the book of God of which you have memorized is greatest?' I said: 'God and His Messenger know best.' Then he said: 'O Father of al-Mundhir! *Do you know* which verse in the book of God of which you have memorized is greatest?' I said: 'God, there is no divinity but He, the Living the Self-Subsisting [i.e. Quran 2:255].'  
He then struck my chest and said: 'May knowledge be of benefit to you Father of al-Mundhir!'" (Muslim)

## Implications

- 5.1 Teachers design assessment tools that facilitate self-assessment and reflective practice.
- 5.2 Teachers provide feedback on assessments and evaluations in a way that encourages ongoing intellectual growth.
- 5.3 Teachers model self-reflection in their own professional practice to improve teaching effectiveness.
- 5.4 Teachers provide multiple opportunities for students to perfect their understanding of curriculum content.
- 5.5 Teachers make planning, goal-setting, reflection, and self-assessment part of the school and classroom environment.



## 6.

### INSTRUCTION IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STUDENTS' APTITUDE, PACE, AND LEARNING STYLE

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‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib ؓ, another of the greatest students of the Prophet ﷺ who referred to him as the gate of knowledge said: “Address people with what they are familiar. Do you desire that they reject God and His Messenger!?” (Al-Bukhari)

There are many variables that make each student unique. This principle, however, focuses on three chief variables: aptitude, pace, and learning style. The teacher should be aware of these differences so as to facilitate successful communication and learning. The pedagogy of the Prophet ﷺ demonstrated his profound and intimate understanding of his students and audience. “He used to address each person according to the capacity of his or her understanding and in a way befitting his or her circumstances. He used to be very cautious with the hearts of beginners; for he would not teach them what he taught the more advanced. He used to answer every question of the inquirer with what concerned him or her in the most appropriate manner.”<sup>21</sup>

In regards to aptitude, some students may be lacking certain knowledge or skills required for a particular subject due to a variety of reasons. A good teacher identifies the knowledge or skills that are missing, and then subtly addresses those areas through careful lesson planning and personalized instruction. In some cases, extra curricula material is needed to corroborate learning.

As for pace, some students require more time than others in comprehending ideas or completing assignments. This could be due to external factors, such as social distractions or to internal factors such as varying cognitive abilities or emotional distress etc. Emotional distress is a highly sensitive factor, and if not dealt with properly, can easily lead a student to have detrimental self-impressions, a lack

of confidence, or permanent disinterest. In such circumstances, it is paramount for teachers to “speak to people according to their ability”; to understand their circumstances and the various ways they may process information and ideas; and then to deliver instruction in a way that can be easily comprehended.

There exists a great deal of research in the field of learning styles and a multitude of hypothesized theories. Still, much of the research lacks depth and cannot capture all of the innumerable variables, seen and unseen, that accurately informs us about the ways human beings learn. As a great Muslim sage once put it: “There are as many ways to the truth as there are souls.”

Nevertheless, teachers must consider and explore a variety of differentiated teaching strategies and methods that do not simply suit their audience but, more importantly, help them meet the desired learning outcomes and expectations without hampering the confidence and spirit of the student.

### Supporting Evidences and Examples

*And We have sent no Messenger save with the tongue of his people, that he might make all clear to them ... (Quran 14:4)*

*God is not ashamed to strike a similitude even of a gnat, or aught above it ... (Quran 2:26)*

The Prophet ﷺ said: “I have been commanded to speak to people according to their intellectual capacity.” (Al-‘Ajlūnī, *Kashf al-Khafā’*)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Speak to people with which they are familiar.” (*Jāmi‘ al-Şaghīr*)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Verily God has not sent me as one who is strict and disparaging. Rather, He has sent me as a teacher who brings ease.” (Muslim)

“The Messenger of God ﷺ fulfilled the right of each individual in his gatherings and among his companions, giving each person due consideration and concern.” (Al-Tirmidhī, *Al-Shamā'il Al-Muḥammadiyyah*)

“The Messenger of God ﷺ never used to speak the way you do. Rather, he would speak lucidly with such clarity that the audience could memorize his words.” (Al-Tirmidhī, *Al-Shamā'il Al-Muḥammadiyyah*)

“Among the responsibilities of the teacher is to stay within the capacity of the students' understanding. He must not give them material that is intellectually out of reach causing them to be discouraged or confused ... As for the student who is having difficulty learning, only things clear and suitable should be presented to him or her and the more subtle matters should be withheld.” (Al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn*)

“The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Make things easy and do not make things difficult.’ ... Thus, learning knowledge ought to be gradual. If a subject matter is easy from the outset, it becomes appealing to the one going into it and it also causes him to receive it with delight.” (Al-ʿAsqalāni Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bari*)

## Implications

- 6.1 Teachers employ strategies that are dynamic and receptive to the values, social and emotional needs, and interests of individual students.
- 6.2 Teachers adapt and diversify instructional methods to suit multiple learning styles.
- 6.3 Teachers respond to student inquiries in a manner that encourages further exploration.

6.4 Teachers provide adequate instructional time for each student to progress at their own pace.

6.5 Teachers consider the input of students in planning instruction.







## FORMAL INSTRUCTION IS OCCASIONAL, NURTURES REFLECTION, AND EVOKES A SENSE OF AWE AND WONDER

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Amid all the accounts of students complaining to each other about how bored they are with many of their classes, teachers cannot continue to make light of this phenomena and not consider new ways to improve student interest.

Student boredom interferes with performance, diminishes attention, and is a frequent reason for dropping out of high school.<sup>22</sup> It often stems from extremities in scheduling, the lack of spiritual significance or intellectual and practical value of the subject of study.

With regards to extremities in scheduling, the Prophetic pedagogical example promotes occasional formal instruction and change. One of the most influential teachers and disciples of the blessed Prophet ﷺ, ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ, was asked of his students to teach every day. He responded, “The only thing preventing me from speaking to you every day is the fear that I might bore you ... for the Prophet ﷺ used to be selective in bestowing his teachings upon us out of fear that we would become bored.”<sup>23</sup> Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalāni commenting on this tradition says: “... it is recommended to break the continuity of intensity when it comes to acts of righteousness out of fear that it may lead to boredom.”<sup>24</sup>

As for the other main cause of boredom, namely, the lack of spiritual significance or intellectual and practical value, this is primarily due to the teacher’s own lack of spiritual insight, knowledge and reflection. Wonder is initiated by reflection and reflection is encouraged throughout the Quran.

*“Surely in the creation of the heavens and earth and in the alternation of night and day there are signs for those possessed of intellect, who remember God, standing and sitting and on their sides, and reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth: ‘Our Lord, Thou hast not created this for vanity. Glory be to Thee! Guard us against the chastisement of the Fire.’” (Quran 3:190–191)*

The Prophet ﷺ was described as being in a state of perpetual contemplation,<sup>25</sup> reflecting on the wondrous signs that point to the many Beautiful Names of God (al-Asmā’ al-Ḥusnā).

In an Islamic pedagogy teachers should not only be capable of making their subjects relevant and practical but they should also be able to nurture reflection, awe, and wonder through what they teach. This is especially viable when teaching the sciences; attention ought to be directed towards the beauty, majesty, precision, harmony, and complexity of the cosmos. Students should be inspired and guided by teachers to make connections that transcend the world of phenomena and that lead to the non-phenomenal realities related to the Transcendent Reality and the Divine Attributes.

This principle addresses student boredom and challenges the way Muslim teachers think and the way schools administer. Through reflective practices and varied instruction, students develop understandings that are deep and connected to their faith.

### Supporting Evidences and Examples

*It is He who stretched out the earth and set therein firm mountains and rivers, and of every fruit He placed there two pairs, covering the day with the night. Surely in that are signs for a people who reflect. (Quran 13:3)*

*And thereby He brings forth for you crops, and olives, and palms, and vines, and all manner of fruit. Surely in that is a sign for a people who reflect. (Quran 16:11)*

*And of His signs is that He created for you, of yourselves, spouses, that you might repose in them, and He has set between you love and mercy. Surely in that are signs for a people who reflect. (Quran 30:21)*

*What, have they not journeyed in the land and beheld how was the end of those before them? They were stronger than themselves in might, and they ploughed up the earth and cultivated it more than they themselves have cultivated it; and their Messengers came to them with the clear signs; and God would never wrong them, but themselves they wronged. (Quran 30:9)*

*So We were showing Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and earth, that he might be of those having sure faith.*

*When night outspread over him he saw a star and said: ‘This is my Lord.’ But when it set he said: ‘I love not the setters.’*

*When he saw the moon rising, he said: ‘This is my Lord.’ But when it set he said: ‘If my Lord does not guide me I shall surely be of the people gone astray.’*

*When he saw the sun rising, he said: ‘This is my Lord; this is greater!’ But when it set he said: ‘O my people, surely I am quit of that you associate.*

*I have turned my face to Him who originated the heavens and the earth, a man of pure faith; I am not of the idolaters.’ (Quran 6:75–79)*

Commentators on these verses insist that Abraham ﷺ was not proclaiming his belief in saying “This is my Lord”. Rather he was engaging his people through a pedagogical approach that would evoke wonder in them and move them towards reflection. He directed their attention to the greatest signs in the visible heavens to demonstrate that their Originator is unchanging, transcendent, and ineffable.

*They know an outward part of the present life, but of the Hereafter they are heedless. (Quran 30:7)*

## Implications

- 7.1 Lessons vary between formally introducing new content, allowing time for reflection, and learning activities.
- 7.2 Teachers plan instruction with varying degrees of intensity and conceptual complexity in ways that both stimulates new learning and allows for students to grasp new ideas.
- 7.3 Teachers design learning activities that will inspire a sense of awe and wonder in students.
- 7.4 Teachers adapt instruction based on the social and emotional states of students.
- 7.5 Teachers maintain classroom spaces in a manner that motivates student learning.



## ENDNOTES

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3. Oxford Dictionary, *principle*, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/principle>, (February 4, 2011).
4. Dr. Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-Silqīnī, *Al-Muyassir fī Usūl al-Fiqḥ al-Islāmī* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1996).
5. Al-Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Mālikī al-Ṣāwī, *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī ʿalā Jawhara al-Tawḥīd* (Damascus: Dār ibn al-Kathīr, 2005).
6. Otherwise known as “*al-Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah*” (The Authentic Six) namely, the collections of al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Nasāʿī, Abu Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, and Ibn Mājah.
7. *And He taught Adam the nature of all things; then He placed them before the angels, and said: “Tell me the nature of these if ye are right.”* (Quran 2:31)
8. *It is He who has appointed you viceroys in the earth* (Quran 6:165)
9. The legally responsible person in Islamic Sacred Law is every pubescent, sane male or female who has received the message of the Messenger of their age.
10. *And pursue not that thou hast no knowledge of; the hearing, the sight, the heart—all of those shall be questioned of.* (Quran 17:36)
11. Hanna Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), 168.
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وصحبة أستاذ وطول زمان
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23. Al-Bukhari, chapter “On Specifying for the People of Knowledge Certain Days for Learning”.
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25. Al-Bayhaqī, *Shu‘b al-Imān*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1989), 52.





# PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC PEDAGOGY

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A TEACHER'S MANUAL

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*The pedagogical principles presented in this manual are formulated from the main body of Islam's sacred texts. These principles have a variety of authentic and creative implications that show teachers precisely where and how teaching can yield the unique results and objectives as articulated in an Islamic Philosophy of Education. Each principle is established and explained in a manner that resembles the methodology of juristic derivation in Islamic Law.*