

Teacher Training in Islām: its importance and practicalities

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INTRODUCTION

“Valueless is the Muslim who is not a student or a teacher” (Ḥadīth)

The above pronouncement of a value judgement comes from a man who himself never attended a school and never became literate. When he was forty, he was honoured, while meditating at night, with the visitation of a celestial being, the archangel Jibrā’īl (Gabriel) who, with an overpowering authority from Almighty *Allāh*, commanded him to read. Overawed with this unexpected and impossible demand the man, Muḥammad ﷺ, managed only to mutter, “What shall I read? I cannot read.” Three times Jibrā’īl overwhelmed him and pressed his body hard to infuse into his breast the majesty and light that was the Divine Word and then encouraged him again to read. And, lo, Muḥammad found himself reciting what Jibrā’īl read out to him. Thus began the revelation to Muḥammad of the Divine Guidance, the Book, *Al-Qur’ān*, and Muḥammad was chosen to be the prophet of *Allāh*. The two embodiments of *Allāh*’s commandment, the Divine Logos and its recipient, the Prophet, then became the ideal archetypes for Islāmic education. In the process of comprehending and complying with the Divine Will, and following the Prophet, the Muslims then evolved a magnificent Islāmic civilisation and a universalistic culture.

Civilisations predating that have left legacies of splendid cultures, towering achievements and lofty monuments but the hallmark of the Islāmic civilisation must remain its uncompromising commitment to monotheism, its insistence on primacy of the revealed knowledge and its success in involving people from all sections and classes of society in the pursuit of learning and gaining of social distinction. By using the power of Divine Knowledge, Islām liberated mankind from the shackles of ignorance and subservience at a crucial period in world history. Feudalism everywhere had nearly crushed the human spirit, restricting access to knowledge to a selected few who were then required to render the benefits of their knowledge to serve their feudal masters and to enslave their fellow human beings. Islām brought knowledge within the reach of all and sundry and exalted those who acquired and practised it higher in rank than even the rulers, so that in the Islāmic domains it was the prince who stood respectfully in front of the scholar instead of the reverse, as was practised in previous civilisations.

IDEAL TYPES OF TEACHERS

Civilisations are raised and preserved by teachers. Every civilisation defines for itself the image of its ideal teacher whom the young are instructed to emulate. The ancient Greeks, for example, had traditionally regarded poets to be their ideal teachers. But Plato attacked poetry as a misleading and unreliable source of knowledge. Instead, he held the philosopher as a model for his citizens’ education and character training.

“Through the study of dialectic, knowledge of ethics and metaphysics, the philosopher is able”, argued Plato, “to concoct suitable myths which instil in the young the qualities of self-control and obedience to their rulers.”

Later, another Greek philosopher, Isocrates, proposed the figure of a rhetor to be the ideal teacher whose command over the techniques of style and diction enabled him to

prepare his students to state their case in the democratic institutions of Athens.²

For the Romans, education meant the faithful preservation and transmission of ancestral mores and virtues which were codified into laws as the Twelve Tables. These laws idealised 'pater familias' or the father as head of the family, to be the ideal teacher. A father's duties towards the education of his son were described in Table Four. He had the authority to imprison, scourge, sell and even slay an offending son. He was responsible for initiating his son into the traditions of Rome and for teaching him all that he would require to pursue his vocation and participate in the business of the state. When, under Greek influence, the Roman schools subsequently became differentiated into elementary and grammar schools, the 'grammaticus' or rhetor was stipulated as the ideal teacher.³

The classical Chinese ideal of a teacher was derived from the great sage K'ung Fu Tse (Confucius). The deep-rooted feudalistic traditions of China restricted education to the princely class, the 'lords' who were believed to have perfect minds and perfect characters. The commoners were excluded. The lords had to be trained to emulate the 'grand master', to cultivate traditional wisdom and practise the traditional etiquette, codes and rules of conduct. They were not to be imparted any technical skill for they were not required to engage in any job.⁴

The ancient Hindu society was also strictly hierarchical and education was based on the caste system. Only the top priestly caste of Brahmins were to acquire intellectual and spiritual knowledge. The Kshatriyah caste of warriors and administrators were trained in the skills of warfare while the workers, or Vaishyas, acquired from their families service skills; but the vast majority of people, the Sudras, or menials, were considered unworthy of education. The highest ideal in education was search for the Divine and the Guru teacher trained the Brahmin boys in 'mantras' or rules of religion. Similarly, the Buddhist monks trained novices in their custody into lifelong disciplines and rituals considered necessary for their journey to nirvana.

THE PROPHET TEACHER

It was in the tradition of the revealed religions, Judaism, Christianity and others, before Islām, that monotheism became the central principle of belief and the prophet the ideal teacher. Education was the means of building the Kingdom of God on Earth and the priest or the rabbi became the agent of the church. Both religions have, for centuries, in their own conception of their respective missions, attempted to disseminate the teachings of their prophets Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them). In the Holy *Qur'ān Allāh* has described the educational role of the prophet thus:

*We sent not an apostle
except (to teach) in the language of his (own) people
in order to make things clear to them.
Now Allāh leaves straying those whom He pleases
and guides whom He pleases.
And He is Exalted in Power, full of Wisdom.*⁵

*We send the apostles only to give good news
and to warn:
so those who believe and mend (their ways),
upon them shall be no fear,
nor shall they grieve.*⁶

As is manifest in these verses, the prophet teacher had a comprehensive programme of God-centred education for the welfare of man in this world and the next. Prophets have been sent by *Allāh* throughout history and to all nations and tribes to raise peoples' gaze

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from narrow, immediate and selfish pursuits to universal ideals. They have the responsibility to translate *Allāh's* revelation into programmes of action leading man to a life of eternal peace and harmony. They implement codes of law and morality to civilise people. This is the true meaning of the worship of *Allāh*. Whereas the previous prophets had been sent to a certain people or tribe, the final Prophet of *Allāh*, Muḥammad ﷺ was sent to be the ideal teacher for all mankind. About him, *Allāh* says in the Holy *Qur'ān*:

*We have truly sent thee as a witness,
a bringer of glad tidings and a warner...⁷*

*We have sent thee (O Muhammad)
but as a universal teacher to all mankind,
to give glad tidings and warn (mankind) against sin.
But most men understand not.⁸*

FIRST MUSLIM TEACHERS

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ immediately set about teaching his people the principles of Islām soon after receiving Divine revelation in Makkah in the year 610 CE. The first teachers of Islām were trained by the Prophet himself through the *Qur'ān* which revolutionised their lives. Above all, he trained them to love and obey *Allāh* and to live righteous lives. He disciplined them and taught them to invite people to *Allāh's* message in a good manner and with wisdom. The first Muslim teachers began to teach new Muslims how to read and recite the verses of the *Qur'ān*. It is recorded that there were only seventeen literate Muslims in Makkah at that time and most of the teaching took place orally. As their demand grew, Muslim teachers began to teach in different localities and tribes in and around Makkah. When a delegation of the tribes of 'Aws and Khazraj from Yathrib (later known as Madīnah) came to meet the Prophet and accept Islām, they asked him to send a teacher who could teach the new Muslims the fundamentals of Islām.

During the reigns of *Al-Khulafā' Ur-Rāshidūn* (the Rightly-guided Caliphs), 632-661 CE, when the Islāmic domain expanded to all adjoining regions and the need for teachers of Islām increased sharply, *Qur'ān* readers were despatched from Madīnah. The second *Khalīfah*, 'Umar, sent his special officers 'Abdullāh bin Ma'sūd and Abū Mūsā Al-Ashāri to Kūfah and al-Baṣrah respectively to organise the teaching of Islām in these regions. Large central mosques were built in these and other provincial cities and *Halaqas* of scholars began teaching and training teachers.

MUSLIM TEACHERS IN THE GOLDEN AGE

Throughout the Umayyad *Khilāfah* (661-750 CE) and early parts of the Abbasid *Khilāfah* (750-1258 CE), the training of teachers was carried out in *Halaqah* (circle) schools. Later, in 815 CE, the Abbasids established their celebrated academy, the *Bait al-Ḥikmah* (the House of Wisdom), in Baghdād where the teaching of secular sciences began to be carried out and researched. By this time, educational activity had proliferated all over the Islāmic world and *maktabs* for elementary and preparatory schooling had been set up in increasing numbers. These were within the mosques for mainly Islāmic subjects and outside, in special places such as bookshops, salons and scholars' homes for other subjects. Large numbers of Greek, Syriac, Christian and Jewish teachers were available for teaching in these schools. Meanwhile, in Egypt, the Ismailis established the celebrated Al-Azhar University where they also began to train teachers in an organised manner. However, great impetus was given to the training of teachers of all levels when the famous *Madrasah al-Nizamiyyah* was opened in Baghdād in 1055 CE as the model Islāmic university for

the Sunni parts of the Islāmic world. It was there that the learned scholars of Islām undertook to organise a systematic teaching and training programme for teachers from all parts of the Muslim world.⁹

TRAINING OF MUSLIM TEACHERS

Education then was a life-long commitment and students continued to study until they mastered knowledge in all Islāmic sciences and then specialised in a certain field. They were then issued with a *Shahādah* (certificate) which enabled them to teach in any school or college. Students travelled widely in search of renowned teachers in their particular subject and gained access to the most excellent standards of teaching. They were free to teach anywhere as the curriculum was uniform throughout the Islāmic world .

The most common methodology of teacher-training consisted of an initial thorough education of the trainees in all available sciences at graduation and master levels, followed by qualified status conferred at different stages depending on the level they were to teach. In the later stages trainees were required to teach the younger groups in the presence of members of the community and supervised by their own teachers who acted as their mentors and guardians not only for their academic performance but also for their moral character and piety.¹⁰

MASS EDUCATION AND STATUS OF TEACHERS

As mass education spread far and wide, three levels and categories of teachers emerged, namely: elementary teachers for maktabas; tutors for the children of the elite and princely classes; teachers of advanced studies and scholarship at the *madrasahs*. Although the social status and respectability of teachers on the whole was held high, there are anecdotes which indicate that the post of elementary school (*kuttab*) teacher was not considered high in esteem. This is because the economic position of residents in big cities such as Baghdād, Damascus, Cairo, Basra, Isfahan, etc. had improved while the ordinary kuttab teacher was not paid highly. It is also said that the traditions of criticism and caricaturing of teachers had come from Greek literature which was freely available to the educated gentry in Muslim cities. However, as Aḥmad Shalaby has argued, this view should not be taken to apply to the teaching profession as a whole as there were teachers of unequalled knowledge and piety who commanded the greatest respect and prestige in society.¹¹

Teachers who acted as tutors to the sons of the *Khulafā'* and the ruling classes were held in high esteem and rewarded handsomely by the families as well as the students when they, in turn, came to power. Most *Khulafā'* and nobility, when appointing a tutor for their sons, gave specific instructions as to the main qualities expected of both of them. A typical set of instructions is reproduced here:

“I will reward you, sir, as well as I can for the task for which I have chosen you. Receive him (my son) with a frown and a smile. Teach him to sit with gravity and to stand erect. Do not bore him with long lessons but do not grant him too much leisure should he ask for it. Accustom him to perform his religious duties and teach him to perform the ablutions thoroughly... Teach him the Book of *Allāh* for it is the strong rope and do not let him forget it for that is a dead loss...”¹²

STATUS OF MASTER SCHOLARS

The history of Islāmic education is full of records which throw light on the prestige and honour in which learned scholars were held. It is said of many scholars that when they passed through the street men stood in rows to salute them and kiss their hands. Men would often dismount to stand and walk in front of the great teachers out of respect. It is

also recorded that not only was this respect shown to the learned scholars by Muslims but also by Christian and Jewish citizens. A certain Abbasid *Khalīfah* was asked if, having reached the highest position in the world, he would still covet any other position. He replied that there was one position that surpassed all that he had acquired and to the status of which there was no equal; it was to sit in a learned man's place to teach people and enrich them. Similarly, it is recorded that once *Khalīfah* Hārūn al-Rashīd happened to be visiting the town of Rakkah when the population had invited a great contemporary scholar to a public meeting. Such was the size of the crowd gathered to pay homage to the scholar that Hārūn's freed slave, who watched the scene, exclaimed "People are forced to come out to receive the *Khalīfah*, but to greet the *Shaikh* they come out in great numbers of their own free will!"¹³

Clearly, such honour was shown to Muslim teachers because they followed in the footsteps of the ideal teacher, the Prophet of Islām. They were devoted to the cause of Islām and were pious and upright. They acted as the guardians of the faith and public good. They saw their role, in those days of monarchic rule, as being to promote good and to ward off evil and they stood firm in defence of Islām, safeguarding the rights of their people. That is why good Muslim rulers took pride in hosting scholars and sought their advice, whereas despotic rulers dreaded them. It was indeed due, in the main, to the quality and character of the Muslim teachers that those centuries became known as the glorious prime of the Islāmic civilisation. Teaching was considered to be the most noble calling and an act of *'ibādah* (worship). This is why a typical Muslim teacher spent his days in the classroom, lecture hall, library or laboratory and his nights on the prayer mat seeking guidance and strength from *Allāh*.

DECLINE OF SCHOLARSHIP AND THE TEACHER

With the passage of time, Islāmic scholarship began to stagnate and decline. Just as the rulers became indifferent in their duty to promote education and scholarship, so did scholars lose their zeal for research and innovation in the pursuit of knowledge. Islāmic education then became repetitive and a faithful preservation and following of the well-trodden path. To be sure, *madrasahs* and *maktabs* continued to function for a long time, financed as they were from the income derived from large scale *waqf* funds which had come down through the ages and still remained in force. However, it was more *taqlīd* (traditionalism) than originality and innovation which characterised their curricula and methodologies. The teacher and the scholar then began to seek nominal recognition and unearned rewards by writing panegyric poems for the rulers instead of deserved recognition for achievements in the advancement of learning.

A case in point is the well-known censure delivered by the last great Mughal emperor, Muḥiuddīn Aurangzeb, to his own tutor when, after the emperor's crowning, the latter came to pay homage in the hope of obtaining some high reward:

"Pray, what is your pleasure with me, Mullahji," exclaimed the emperor. "Do you pretend that I ought to exalt you to the first honours of the state? Let us examine your title to any mark of distinction. Show me a well-educated youth and I will say that it is doubtful who has the stronger claim to his gratitude, his father or his tutor. But what was the knowledge that I derived under your tuition? You taught me that the whole of Farangistan (Europe) was no more than some inconsiderable island, of which the most powerful monarch was formerly the king of Portugal, then of Holland and afterwards the king of England... you taught me that they resembled our petty rajas, and that the potentates of Hindustan (India) eclipsed the glory of all other kings. What an admirable geographer and how well read a

historian you have proved yourself to be.

“Was it not incumbent upon my preceptor to make me acquainted with the distinguishing features of every nation of the earth; its resources and strength, its modes of welfare, its manners, religion and form of government, and wherein its interests principally consist; and by a regular course of historical reading to render me familiar with the origin of states, their progress and decline; the events, accidents or errors owing to which such great changes and mighty revolutions have been effected?

“You caused me to devote the most valuable years of my life to your favourite hypotheses or systems and when I left you I could boast of no greater attainment in the sciences than the use of many obscure and uncouth terms, calculated to discourage, confound and appal a youth of the most masculine understanding.”¹⁴

Little did Emperor Aurangzeb know, when he was meting out this diatribe to his teacher, that his empire was soon to crumble and the Europeans were already making inroads within his domain. Did he not realise the superiority of the European discipline, knowledge and technology? It did not take very long for the great Mughal empire rule in India to fall before a European trading corporation, the East India Company; and within the span of a hundred years the whole sub-continent found itself glittering as a jewel in the British crown. But it was not merely the collapse of just one Muslim empire, it was the beginning of a far greater defeat and humiliation of the entire Muslim world at the hands of the expanding European colonial powers. For better or worse, the Muslims of the sub-continent were to endure more than two hundred years of colonial rule thanks to the stagnation of their education and the backwardness of Muslim teachers. It was, essentially, a defeat of the latter.

COLONIALISM, DIARCHY AND THE MUSLIM TEACHER

The colonial rulers had, naturally, no love for Muslim education and no desire to resuscitate the Muslim teacher. On the contrary, in order to launch their colonial system of education they had first to liquidate the entire antiquated Muslim education system. They dismissed Muslim teachers and forfeited their *waqf* incomes because their expertise and linguistic and pedagogic skills were of no use. Modern Western education was introduced, not to help uphold the traditional Islāmic culture, but to enable Muslims to obtain white-collar jobs in the new administration. The new educational system was introduced to run parallel to and in competition with the old which had already lost its vigour. Thus a diarchy of education appeared whereby the teachers of Islām were to be maintained by the charitable funds of the impoverished Muslim communities while the modern secular teacher was trained at governmental institutions which operated to promote rudiments of European culture and languages. The two rival classes of Muslim teachers carried unequal status, remuneration and opportunities of employment. A trained Muslim teacher of English or French with a few years' education and training had more opportunities of employment, received a better salary and enjoyed higher status than a teacher of Islām with more years of education and a deeper insight into the Islāmic culture and religion. The latter was often made a target of ridicule and abuse and yet, it was he who still chose to follow the 'ideal teacher' and to serve Islām and Muslims, even under adverse conditions. What makes it frustrating for the Islāmic teachers today is the fact that even after independence from the colonial rule the diarchy still exists in most Muslim countries where their status still remains low.

However, it must also be stressed that the colonial period may not be remembered solely for its failings and in purely negative terms. The role of the colonial period in the modernisation of education and culture in the Islāmic world must also be appreciated. In teacher training, for example, it was during this period that Muslim teachers began, for the first time, to be educated in modern theories and practices of effective teaching through pedagogic research. For the first time, educational psychology with its concepts of child development, heredity, environment, nature and nurture; discipline, reward and punishment; methodologies of teaching such as lesson planning, illustrations and pictorial representation of facts and figures; and the use of teaching aids, school visits, data collection techniques, surveys and interviews and extra-curricular activities, sports, social clubs, scouting etc. that had never been known in teacher training programmes in the traditional Muslim education system became essential parts of the modern education in Muslim countries. Teacher training had now become a science instead of the antiquated and pedantic methods of the traditional Muslim education.

MUSLIM TEACHERS IN BRITAIN

A great deal has changed in the field of education in Britain since the 1950s and 60s when the majority of Muslims from different Commonwealth countries came to live and work in this country. At that time, few thought that they would make Britain their permanent home. Only later, when their families came to join them, did they find themselves faced with the problem of the education of their children. At their local, maintained schools, Muslim children received compulsory general education for the statutory period (between the ages of 5 and 16) and their religious education in the supplementary evening and weekend mosque school. Thus, in the school, they were under the influence of the non-Muslim teachers who were trained in the educational traditions of the country, and, in the mosque school they were taught by the *Imām*, who was not a trained teacher but was experienced in the teaching of Islamic studies. Both differed enormously in their background, training, approaches and attitudes. The non-Muslim teacher, with professional commitment, did his best – in spite of his inexperience of multifaith education and in spite of entrenched racism in society – to make the Muslim children feel at home and learn basic skills. The *Imām*, with no teacher training and with his understanding of and affinity with the community, and with the conventional wisdom he had so acquired, nurtured them into Islāmic values and culture. Between such diverse influences, the Muslim children began to develop conflicts of values.

A whole generation of young Muslims have now grown up with this educational background and suffered from its disadvantages. How do they now consider the question of an integrated and balanced education for their own children? How do they propose to prepare the new Muslim teachers who would have a better education and more appropriate professional training to be able to deliver to their children the best general and Islāmic education? How committed are they to join the teaching profession and so to fulfil the dictates of the Prophet's teaching mentioned earlier, if they are to love and follow him? These are difficult but apt questions to be posed to the second generation of Muslims in this country upon whom now falls the responsibility of promoting the Islāmic educational traditions which their parents managed to uphold under most difficult circumstances they had to face. It is on their commitment towards the Islāmic education in this country that the progress and welfare of the future generation of Muslims here will depend.

It is estimated that there are 250,000 to 400,000 Muslim children receiving education up to university level in Britain and yet the number of Muslim teachers in the country may be less than one thousands. Indeed, the number of trained Muslim teachers of religious education could be less than a dozen in the whole country! The common professional trend among the young seems to suggest that teaching ranks as the lowest in their order

of career aspirations. More financially lucrative professions, like accountancy, law, business studies and medicine attract them most. However, slowly this trend seems to be changing. Recent evidence shows that some qualified accountants and other commercial and business professionals are turning to teaching, mainly for its association with people – children, parents and the community – and the challenges it offers. Hopefully, this message will not be lost to the Muslim youth because the need for trained Muslim teachers in all disciplines (and especially for religious education) has never been greater than in today's Britain and tomorrow's Europe.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUSLIM TEACHERS

The Education Reform Act, 1988 (ERA) has opened up new challenges and opportunities for the evolution of an appropriate education for the British child of the next century. Basic rethinking of the aims and objectives of teaching in various subject areas, as well as the restructuring of curricula and syllabi, the stipulation of achievement targets at various levels and methodologies of teaching are very much on the agenda of educationalists all over the country. For the first time it has become a statutory duty for county schools with Muslim pupils to include the teaching of Islām in their RE programmes. Religious educationists are earnestly engaged in attempts to devise Agreed Syllabuses that fulfil the requirements of the ERA and to reflect the multifaith nature of British society; to cater for the religious and spiritual education of children of all faiths. As the largest non-Christian religious minority in Britain, Muslims have a duty to take part in this effort; *Allāh* enjoins upon them the duty of co-operating in acts of goodness and piety and avoiding wrong-doing and immorality. There seems to be a prospect, through schools, for the creation of better understanding and toleration among the younger generation of future citizens. The need for trained Muslim teachers has suddenly grown more than ever before. This task can not be fulfilled by the Imāms and adequate number of Muslim teachers of religious education will have to be trained. To this end, the University of Birmingham has introduced a four-year programme of education and training at its Westhill College leading to the award of a B.Ed. degree with special reference to the teaching of Islāmic studies. Other universities and training colleges may also initiate similar programmes. This means that, for the first time in this country, opportunities for the training of Muslim teachers and for Muslim participation in the educational services have arisen. It is therefore their responsibility to contribute to the educational, moral and spiritual progress not only of their own young but also of the future generation of the country as a whole.

The following concerns and considerations about the future of the Islāmic faith and Muslims in Britain and Europe warrant priority action on the part of the Muslim community in this country to invest special efforts and resources to prepare large numbers of Muslim teachers, educators and educational scholars:

1. The questions of religious education and promotion of moral and spiritual welfare of the young through education, which always ranked high on Muslim demands in education in this country, have now been given due importance by their inclusion in the law – Education Reform Act 1988 and subsequent laws. There are, however, areas within these laws where Islāmic values and Muslim cultural norms have either been ignored or marginalised. These areas include: (a) statutory compulsion on the predominance of Christianity in school worship and RE syllabuses; (b) insignificant position given to Muslims on the Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) despite the fact that Islām constitutes the largest non-Christian minority faith in this country; (c) Islāmic reservations over the contents, methods and objectives of sex education as delivered in schools; (d) specific Muslim children's needs and Islāmic constraints, e.g. Islāmic objections

to nudity among students in showers, in swimming and physical education, dance, drama and art lessons; the Islāmic requirements in dress and uniforms and wearing of head-cover (*ḥijāb*) by Muslim girls; (e) dilemmas faced by Muslim parents over their right to withdraw their children from RE and collective worship and sex education; anti-Islāmic bias and distortion of the Islāmic faith, culture and history in textbooks, reference books and reading materials that persists despite the presence of Muslims in Europe.

All these questions are matters of serious concern for Muslim parents, the majority of whom are either unaware of their rights or unable to deal with them effectively. Therefore, unless there are sufficient numbers of trained Muslim teachers at all levels and of various specialisations, there is no hope that these questions will be properly understood and satisfactorily tackled.

2. The sheer numbers of Muslim students at schools (estimated as up to 400,000) – in some areas there are over 80 per cent Muslim pupils in schools – warrant a far greater representation of Muslim teachers in the teaching profession, especially to teach subjects like RE and to lead school worship and address school assemblies.
3. The continuing refusal of the Government to grant state funding to Muslim schools by approving them as Voluntary-Aided and Grant Maintained schools requires more Muslim teachers to bring about greater awareness among communities in this country over this glaring discriminatory policy so as to mobilise democratic action.
4. But above all, more qualified and trained Muslim teachers and scholars are required in this country and in Europe in order to present to their peoples, in its true form, the truth of Islām which has, for historical and political reasons, been misrepresented and continues to be stereotyped. Just as in the early history of Islām, it is the duty of Muslim teachers to work hard to remove ignorance and prejudice against Islām by their peaceful, rational and wise manner of discourse and dialogue. People in Britain are by and large mature and open to reason. Therefore, they should be approached by well-read and experienced teachers who are trained in *da'wah* work. Again, as Britain has now virtually become the 'University of the World' where peoples from all over the world flock to gain knowledge, Muslim teachers and scholars must become a part of this great 'university' by training themselves in English and other European languages, to disseminate the knowledge of Islāmic concepts, culture and value systems.

To conclude, it is clear that the first part of Prophet Muḥammad's ﷺ above pronouncement has been fulfilled for the Muslims of Britain, under the law of compulsory education by which every Muslim is, by law, either a student or an ex-student. However, the law cannot force Muslims to enter the teaching profession; it is up to the Muslims themselves to comply with the second part of the Prophet's teaching. To follow in the foot steps of the ideal teacher, the Prophet, Muslim young men and women ought to educate themselves in all disciplines in order to enter into all levels of professional life and to prepare themselves as teachers to teach the principles of Islām to the community at large and to influence the moral spiritual growth of the young.

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