

# **ETHICS AND MORALS AS A PANACEA IN SCHOOL PUPILS' ATTITUDE: ISLAMIC STUDIES TEACHERS AS A MODEL**

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## **Abstract**

Ethics enjoys a place of crucial importance in the structure in the structure of Islamic teaching. The negligence of moral teaching caused serious consequence of social vices that become rampant among the young ones in schools. This paper focuses on how exemplary lives of Islamic teachers can go a long way in fostering morals, characters and sound attitude of pupils, and also it gives a limelight on the role of Islamic studies teacher in the social value. Also, many Qura'nic and Prophetic injunctions would be showcased for rebreeding the moral, ethics and attitudes of the individuals in the world over especially the Islamic studies teacher.

## **Introduction**

A teacher moulds people and the society in accordance with design of his educational code. In other word, education is considered the first step in building a society and civilization. The Muslim teacher's challenge is to construct peoples personalities according to a set of aspired norms. Basically, most people agree that the level of indiscipline contribute seriously to poor performance and examination malpractice by students' right from the primary to the tertiary level of education.

The Islamic studies teachers should understand his role by example. He should understand that the young children and society in general under his care look at him as a model to be admired, respected and imitated. An Islamic studies teacher who does not observe Islamic injunctions and avoid the major sins can not help the society to be good Muslims.

## **The Role of Islamic Teachers in the Society**

### **Morality**

It is a known fact that our society today is seriously lagging behind in terms of morality. It is therefore an understatement, if we say that the Muslim Ummah (society) today is in need of radical change. It is also very well known that there is no messenger or prophet to come after Prophet Muhammad (SAW) of Islam.

However, the Prophet, before he died, made it clear that those who inherit the Prophet and messengers of Allah are the people of knowledge who are directly or indirectly the teachers. There is no person who is more important that the teachers that should transform the present morally and spiritually bankrupt society into an ideal Islamic society.

The position of the teacher in modern society is virtually different from the place accorded to him in Islam. The teacher today is looked down upon as a mere functionary who draws a salary either from the state or from a private organization and has certain specific responsibilities to discharge, his duties and with these responsibilities, he is seldom expected to go beyond them. The teacher in Islamic society was more than a mere functionary. He is a model to be emulate and who is to be disciplined in himself, but as impressionable human beings whose character. For all the above reasons, the teacher is required not only to be a man of learning but also to be a person of virtue, a pious man whose conduct by itself could have an impact upon the minds of the young ones.

### **Teaching by Example**

The most important duty of the Islamic teacher is teaching by example. The Islamic studies teacher has to, in any situation, behave in accordance with his sayings. Of course, whatever he says has to correspond with the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) as it is stated in the Holy Qur'an

*“If they were to get the better of you, they would behave to you as enemies and stretched for their hands and their tongues against you for evil, and they desire that ye should reject the truth” (Q 61:2-3)*

Allah also stated in the Holy Qur'an that:

*ولا تقف ما ليس لك به علم إن السمع والبصر والفؤاد كل أولئك كان منه مسئولا  
“And pursue not that of which thou hast no knowledge, for every act of hearing or of feeling in the heart will be enquired into on the day of judgment” (Q17:36)*

In any school, it is only the Islamic studies teacher that is always being critically observed by the students, teachers and the society. The smallest mistake he makes the greater it reflects on the society. That is why, if he misbehaves even unintentionally, he is often criticized in his presence by the people in the society. Thus, when an Islamic studies teacher performs any immoral act, some people who are ignorant of the religion tend to criticize the whole Muslims and even Islam itself. That is why today, the students who know the mischievous act of their teacher tend to mock him/her and copy him/her at the same time.

The teacher who preaches and teaches the religious acts but do not show it with deeds, is surely to find his student with that attitudes. Such thing as Salat, Fasting and Worships organized, for Islamic studies teachers symposium and others which should be observed thoroughly by him and if possible should serve as good example to the students.

He should be attending local and international seminars, conferences and should join National Association of the teacher of Arabic and Islamic Studies

of Nigeria (NATAIS). This will enable him widen his horizon of knowledge in his field and others will help them to current in the global affairs.

### **Promotion of Religious Spirit**

It is also the duty of an Islamic studies teacher to promote the religious spirit among the youths and other people within his organization. He can do this by encouraging the constant Dhikr, Ibadat (Salat daily) voluntary actions or services rendered to others for the sake of Allah and His Messenger and encourage brotherhood, love and tranquility among the society. By doing this, he is tending towards a questionable character. Allah said:

ومن أحسن قولا ممن دعا إلى الله وعمل صالحا وقال إنني من المسلمين  
"Who is better in his words than one who calls (men) to Allah, works righteousness. And says I am of those who bow in Islam" (Q41:33)

Above all, the Islamic studies teacher himself must be knowledgeable to promote competence in his attempts to impart knowledge to others who knew little or nothing at all. Because it is stated in a tradition of the Holy Prophet (SAW) that, be one who seek knowledge or one who teach one who likes listening to it or one who loves knowledges but do not be the fifth for you are doom" (Bukhari)

Likewise in another tradition the Prophet (SAW) says:

"Allah does not give a learned man any knowledge until he takes form him a covenant as He took, for a covenant from the Prophet, thus to make it known to the people and not to conceal it" (Bukhari)

Therefore, the Islamic studies teacher can play a vital role in transforming the society to an ideal ummah, if he stands to teach what he possesses as well as practicing it. With holding the practice or knowledge because of fear or any other circumstance, within the society may lead to his destruction. As Allah Ta'ala said:

إن الذين يكتُمون أن أنزل الله من الكتاب ويسترون به ثمنا قليلا أولئك ما يأكلون في بطونهم إلا النار ولا يكلمهم الله يوم القيامة ولا يزكيهم ولهم عذاب أليم

"those who conceal what Allah has revealed of the book and they bargain with it for a small price, these do not eat in their stomach except fire and Allah will not talk to them in the doom day and He will purified them. For them is a terrible punishment" (Q 2:174).

Thus, this shows that if the Islamic studies teacher does not teach by swing the guidance of Allah and Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW), he is ruined and likely to ruin the society instead of transforming it.

### **Counseling**

Again, the Islamic studies teacher could serve as a counselor to both the society and his students by advising them on matters affecting their lives. Doing this will help to eradicate power-seeking and materialistic life in the society and there will be the tendency for the youth to avoid evil way of life. Also, through the counseling, the teacher can admonish the society at large on the consequence of their way of life. To achieve these counseling goals, the teacher should understand the society and its level of perception of ideas, so that he cannot exceed the power of their understanding and level of endurance to practical situations. Condemnation should also be avoided so often.

Also in the Holy Qur'an, Allah says:

ادع إلى السبيل ربك بالحكمة والموعظة الحسنة وجادلهم بالتي هي أحسن إن ربك هو أعلم بمن ضلّ عن سبيله وهو أعلم بالمهتدين

“Call in the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching and argue with them that is best, indeed to your Lord, He knows better so him who goes astray from his way, and He is the best aware of those who are guided” (Q 16:125)

### **Self-Controlled**

An Islamic studies teacher should also be pious and self-controlled. Therefore, he should try as much as possible to be a man of endurance and should know his students and their problems and know how to solve, at least, the major and the reasonable ones. So his sense of responsibilities for the well being and care of his students should be very high. Also in terms of cleanliness, the teacher should show the best example and be clean and tidy. As in the Holy Qur'an, Allah states categorically that: “And thy garment keep free from stain; and all abomination shun” (Q74:405). The Islamic studies teacher should identify his aims and device interesting and effective methods and activities to stain them. Some teachers teach their subjects by the method they were taught without even thinking of their aims or whether there might be different ways of approaching and presenting the subject.

The teacher should therefore study and consider carefully the aims of teaching Islamic studies. He needs to communicate to the students a sense of purpose in living as a Muslim. He should also relate worship and the moral and social teaching of Islam to the pupils' daily lives, at home, at school and as members of the community. A good Muslim is automatically a good citizen of every society he/she belongs to and the teacher should emphasis on Islamic moral conduct in everyday life so as to set the younger generation on road to a better society.

### **Exercising of Justice**

The Islamic studies teacher should as much as possible, exercise justice in all his undertakings. This could be among the students, the staff, and the society in general. As regards to students, he should try to maintain equal

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treatment amongst them and should always be honest in treating them. As Allah is saying in the Holy Qur'an:

يا أيها الذين آمنوا كونوا قوامين بالقسط شهداء لله ولو على أنفسكم أو الوالدين والأقربين إن يكن غنياً أو فقيراً أولى بهما فلا تتبعوا الهوى أن تعدلوا وإن تلووا أو تعرضوا فإن الله كان بما تعملون خبيراً.

*“O you who believe stand out firmly for justice as witnesses. To Allah, even as against your selves, or your parents, or your kin, and what it is against rich or poor, for Allah can best protect both, follow not lasts of your, lest ye swerve, and if ye distort justices or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well acquainted with all that ye do” (Q4:135)*

There is also a Quranic verse which says this about justice:

يا أيها الذين آمنوا كونوا قوامين لله شهداء بالقسط ولا يجد منكم شئناً قوم على أن لا تعدلوا اعدلوا هو أقرب للتقوى واتقوا الله إن الله خبير بما تعملون.

*“Oh ye who believe, stand out firmly, for Allah, as witnesses, to fair dealing, and let not then hatred of others, to you make you swerve, to wrong and depart for justice. Be just, that's next to piety, and fear Allah verily Allah is well acquitted with what you do” (Q5:6)*

Another role of the Islamic studies teacher is to install God fearing in the minds of the people. He should always aim at things that will add piety to the students mind. Today, the impression of western education has changed the fear of Allah to that of “man”. The youths always choose to offend Allah and our leaders today. The work of the Muslim teacher is to build in the minds of the students a solid God-fearing. This could be done through example of the early Muslim's life, demonstrations by the younger generation. For Islamic studies teacher to take up that task or change the society, he must refrain himself first from the things he want to preach its abstinence. Therefore, he must be a teacher by examples, what he does, he must be initiative to it and observe perseverance towards the subject he holds and get ready to tackle all the difficulties and some opposition even the administration, parents and the general public. At least he should be pious and self-controlling.

Imamship is another source that Islamic studies can use in transforming a society to an ideal Ummah. Through some preaching, after Salat, although this should not be too much to avoid boredom in the students or the attendants of the prayer. However, the Islamic studies teacher should not solely depend upon the class teaching periods, rather, he should have other times even at this house to organize a mini-school where people will be coming to take lessons. To do this, he must be humorous, pleasant, cheerful, friendly, sympathetic, but should not be too loose and also manifest his daily work to be in line with that of a good Muslim, such as scholarship, observance of Ibadat, respect of other peoples' right and property, courtesy and kindness.

Another role of all Islamic studies teachers in the society is to establish orderliness, human brotherhood, freedom, equality and social justice among the generation, because according to Islamic teaching all human being constitute one single brotherhood. They came from one single source, as it was stated in the Holy Qur'an that:

يأبها الناس اتقوا ربكم الذى خلقكم من نفس واحدة وخلق منها زوجها وبثّ منها رجال ونساء واتقوا الله الذى تساءلون به والأرحام إن الله كان عليكم رقيباً.

“Men, have fear of your Lord, who created you from a single soul, from that should He created his mate, and through them he bestowed the earth with countless men and women. Fear Allah, in whose Name you plead with one another, and honour the mothers who bore you, Allah is ever watching over you” (Q4:1)

### **Conclusion**

Islamic teachers at primary school level occupy the central position in moulding the moral of tomorrows' leaders i.e. the pupils. Ethics inculcation is very important at this level because pupils are still in their formative years. Inculcation of moral, good character in to the pupils are not only by percepts but by example. For us to become morally matured we need to enforce morality in all our spheres of life. This can be achieved only by rejuvenating our conscience with positive moral values. This can bring back the society to the level of morally matured nation.

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