

Themes 3: Youth, The Pedagogical Responsibility

Characteristics of the Islamic Educator

From the Islamic perspective, what are the characteristics of the tutor or teacher? What are his responsibilities?

The first vital characteristic is that the teacher should be, from the aspect of professional competence, wellgrounded in the field of knowledge which he wishes to impart to others. If he is unqualified, then teaching will be an exercise in misinformation and ignorance, for he will eventually find himself in situations where he will not have the necessary education to properly present the subject of study, and will, in trying to save face present an unclear view in an effort to conceal his own deficiency.

It is essential then that he have a solid foundation in the subject he is teaching, for that is the basis of education. Perhaps we can deduce this from understanding a verse which, while relating to debate rather than teaching, nonetheless provides us with the ideational criterion:

Lo! You are of those who argued about what you had some knowledge; why do you dispute concerning that which you have no knowledge. (Al-Imran, 3:66)

Islam does not accept that someone should speak on a subject if he does not have the knowledge. For this reason, those who entered into debate on something they know nothing were rejected. How then is it possible to accept that those who do not have knowledge should teach? From this vantage point too, we do not believe that the matter is restricted to education only, but in fact pertains to all responsibility, where one does not possess the requisite experience and knowledge.

Therefore, whenever an issue like that of guardianship of the jurist (*wilayat al-faqih*), or any other subject which is founded on mutual consultation or any other basis, is propounded it is improper for the authoritative bodies to issue any ruling on a matter in which it does not have adequate information.

In the same manner, the jurist is not allowed to pronounce himself on, say, an economic, political, social, or military issue, except after having discussed every aspect of investigation with the specialists at a level equal to any subsequent ruling. Adherence to this precept is absolutely indispensable as far as the teacher is concerned.

The educator's character has to be at such a level that it qualifies him to instruct those who are under his tutelage. This is because the aspect of his personal example is what will underline his credibility. As such, in some *hadiths*, it states that: "He who appoints himself as an imam of the people must start with disciplining himself, before disciplining the people; he who disciplines himself is more worthy of honor and respect than he who disciplines others."

Indeed, education is related to example far more than it is related to the actual material being taught or any other aspect of communication. This is because example gives power, dynamism, life, meaning, and effectiveness to what is being taught.

Repertoire of Methodologies

From another perspective, it is necessary that each teacher or educator be capable of a repertoire of methodologies, so that the student may perceive the subject matter in the best way possible, or that the value of what is being taught will penetrate the innermost consciousness of the person who is being taught. For when the objective is to teach an idea, it is on the strength of methodology that this is effected.

We feel that in education many people have erred in the modes of instruction they used to impart knowledge or value to others. This is in spite of possessing ample knowledge and having great value. Unfortunately, they do not know how to reach the minds of others. Consider these words attributed to the Prophet: "We are the community of prophets, and are wont to speak to people at their level of understanding."

We may construe them to mean that the propagator, teacher, or educator must reflect on the intellectual capacity of the people to whom he directs his teachings, so that an appropriate intellectual standard may be decided. Also to be decided is the manner and atmosphere by which to make their minds receptive to his instructions and ideas.

This is what we may understand from the word "wisdom" in the Qur'an, which means "the placement of a thing in its proper place." This indicates that the Word must be taken in its proper setting, and the methods be conducive to learning, inter alia. This is what eloquence dictates—the appropriateness of speech to the situation. The situation here covers the level of intellect, the atmosphere, the milieu and every other factor that can have an effect.

Kindness to the Student and the Learners

There is another point, namely, that the teacher or educator must display compassion and understanding for those under their tutelage. To reach his goal, he must know that he must be open-minded and solicitous, patient concerning the student's weak points and outbursts. He must not be pessimistic and unfocused in a way that makes him digress in his teaching and instruction, using harsh methods. We can understand this from the method of the Prophet:

"As part of the mercy of God, you deal with them gently; if you were severe and hard-hearted, they would have broken away from you" (Al-Imran, 3:159),

and in the words of God:

"A Messenger has come to you from amongst yourselves, he is deeply concerned about you, and to the believers he is kind and merciful" (al-Tauba, 9:128).

The basic characteristic of the Messenger was that of a teacher and nurturer, and as such, God says to him:

"He it is who has sent among the unlettered ones a messenger from amongst them, reciting to them His signs and purifies them, and teaches them the Scripture and Wisdom" (al-Jumuah, 62:2).

These traits are the characteristics of a teacher and a nurturer, for sanctification is a function of education and nurturing.

Between Seminarian and Academic Education

There are those who hold that the methods of instruction by imitation, followed in such seminaries as in Najaf and al-Azhar, are superior because they have produced great scholars. But there are also those who point to the need for new methods of education, arguing that university and academic methods are better. Our position on these two viewpoints is as follows.

It is a mistake to assume absolutely that the methods of the seminary are the best, as it is a mistake to assume this for the academic approach. Seminary methods have their positive and negative points, as does the academic approach. We may find that the method of instruction in the seminary is conducive to using the mind and contemplation more than the academic method.

But we find that in the academic approach better structure of ideas than in the seminary. We note that seminary methods inculcate several sanctified principles. I do not mean religious here, but rather the educational "sanctified ideas" which cause some jurists to reject certain ideas in modern education. Failing to use them, they have in their minds that some old or famous scholars are hallowed. We do not find such glorification in the university approach.

We encourage the integration of the two approaches, the seminarian and the university, in order to take the good points from each, resulting in a method which is enriching for its depth and application.

The ulama who are brought up through the seminary approach cannot be posited as proof for the superiority of the approach considering that they have attained this level by dedicating themselves and sparing no effort in their studies. Had there been another approach for more research, they could have reached their level in shorter time than currently under the seminarian approach.

Between the Home and School

How may the home and the school be mutual supporting aids in the nurturing?

The school perhaps may not give a person anything else but knowledge, since it is an educational institution and may not attend to conduct as a major consideration in its curriculum. It is possible that the schools differ so much in their environments, and their teachers concentrate entirely on the issue of knowledge, that they create a confusion in the education of the child—this being the result of differences among the students, with their diverse backgrounds, conduct, and mores. This makes it necessary that the home give the child a friendly atmosphere and a haven from the negative influences of school. This means that the home must concentrate more attention on nurturing and assisting in the development, which are reflected in the child's character and conduct.

This is only one facet. There is also the other fact that the home must monitor the activities of the pupil in his approach to his school curriculum, because (at home) when the student is removed from his learning environment, he may not realize the importance of study, with all its obligations or examination preparation, etc.

The home, then, must develop itself anew in the education milieu, be it in respect of knowledge acquisition for the student or of moral and ethical nurturing.

The Role of the Two Institutions in Adolescent Care

Can we delineate the role of these two institutions (the home and the school) in the tutelage of the adolescent boy or girl?

An analysis of the personality of the adolescent shows a person in a state of confusion and worry which may lead to spiritual and mental malaise. This is because the awakening of the instincts at this age causes the adolescent to react to his instincts. When there is no proper monitoring and specific form of nurturing, this stage can lead to the loss of that adolescent and the loss of his future.

During adolescence, therefore, we must direct the interests of this child, monitoring the negative influences at that age on his character, his associates, and his activities. We must not resort to harsh and oppressive means, but rather caution and care, nurturing in a manner which helps him to get safely

through this difficult stage.

Since the girl has a particular social standing, stemming from the fact that society is a man's edifice, this can make her lose her self-confidence and be quite naive, lead in turn to exploitation by others when she does not have the same social experience as the boy. Because of this, we need to pay more attention to the upbringing of our girls, until we are able to unite self-confidence, which prevents them from being exploited by others, with a commitment that make them conduct themselves properly.

Punishment and Reward

How does Islam view punishment as a means of discipline, and reward or allowance as a means of encouragement? How do we correct the mistakes of our sons and daughters?

Nurturing aims at creating mental and moral confidence, spiritual concepts, or conduct which must be deeply rooted in the nature of the person, thereby attracting ideas, feelings, and perceptions which are in line with the Islamic *Weltanschauung*.

We cannot impose on anyone aspects of nurturing that are outside of the personal mentality and feelings. Therefore, as a created, living, and active being, with needs and views on life, joys and sorrows, likes and fears, man must deal with every issue in life with this in mind. He will find himself naturally drawn towards dealing with his spiritual or material needs in a receptive manner, until he is no longer conscious of any attraction due to influences, but finds himself in a position where he does nothing else but follow that which he likes.

We find him like this in his likes and dislikes, and thus spontaneously rejecting that which he hates or fears, without being asked to do so. This means that the issue of desire and fear, love and hate are among those things which dictate the judgment of a person. When we study the human reality, we see that people differ in their definitions of this love or hate, like or fear. But they will not differ in the principle in that love spurs on, and that fear repels—so to speak. And likewise hate.

We find, therefore, that every civilization with respect to the real issues stands on these two elements, desire and fear. On these two foundations, approaches are structured for defining the desires or fears from which a person wants to distance himself. This is what makes the matter of reward and punishment a human issue which dominates every aspect of his existence.

As for punishment and reward in respect to the child or youth, these must be decided in light of the elements that are harmonious with their different mentalities, stages of development, factors that surround them, and the influences—such as the strong and weak points that are part of the personality. If not, it is probable that reward may change into a negative element, for it does not associate itself with the elements in the inner workings of the child's personality which vouchsafe a particular reward. Or if we punish something, it may yield a positive result. This is a matter requiring wisdom into what methods are

to be used for reward and punishment.

On this principle, we hold that the method which an educator uses, with respect to harsh words, beating, or similar behavior, must be very closely monitored, on the premise that the issue may cause trouble if one administers corporal punishment whenever words provide a means to discipline. This precludes any example of kindness and compassion in the personality. The youth then loses confidence in himself or is unable to communicate with the people who are around him as a result of their behavior.

The Shariah Position

The Messenger of God prohibited discipline at a moment of anger. When a person is angry, he cannot judge well which situations calls for discipline and instruction for the child. Likewise, too, we find that Islam forbids negative actions by the nurturer which are not absolutely necessary for imposing discipline. We are not permitted to use harsh words—words of abuse, vilification, and ridicule against the child. All of these have negative effects on his mentality and conduct.

This is because the child is a human being to be respected. It is our duty to respect his feelings, sensibilities, and esteem as it can affect his self-esteem. We are not permitted to humble him by any methods mentioned above, except where such practices must be resorted to for his own good.

By the same token, we are not permitted to beat him where the situation dictates instead that we use sharp words, or that we deny him some wants. If we see that beating is the only means, then we must do so lightly, without inflicting red marks on his body. If redness results in this situation, there is compensation (*diya*) involved as stipulated by the *Shariah*. This must be paid to the child, because God (Exalted) does not wish the child to be the object of personal stress, ill-temper, or outlet for hatred which the parents or the teacher may have. Punishment and reward could be mental, psychological, or material in any of the various forms.

Nurturing: Threat and Encouragement

Education has the following two elements. We inspire the child or youth to move forward through encouragement, and push him back through threats. Reward and punishment then become the main issue. It is extremely difficult to encourage anyone to do anything by himself solely by examining if the results are positive or negative for him. Indeed, some philosophers state that when a person likes something and works towards it on his own, he operates from self-interest relative to what he loves in this thing. Moreover, he acts on the love by responding to the inner conditions which make him yearn for the things he likes.

When we affirm that there are those who worship God out of love or fear, and that there are those who worship without love or fear, certainly a deeper look at this idea helps us realize that worship on the first form stems from the elements of profound love in the self. This is because, if the person's love of God

has all the elements of love which make him be receptive to this love, then he is responding to a deep love within himself. He does so also on account of the bliss he attains through the elements of this love which take shape around him.

Love or desire, then, is not something separate from the self. In fact, it may be that the desire for blessing lives in the senses of the person; we must ensure education on the basis of this understanding. That is, we must link the mental makeup of the child or youth with the principle and values, conduct, and the idea which he leans towards at the beginning, with respect to the results which stand out in his mind. Moreover, he must believe in them or love them enough to feel a new joy or new desire.

The Qur'an Supports the Two Methods

This is an issue which the Qur'an elucidated in dealing with heaven and hell, and with good and evil as the elements which propel a person to accept or reject something. This is the natural way to which a human being is inclined—even in matters of *kufr* (non-belief) and *iman* (faith) which are related to the negative or positive ways that a person chooses. Negatively or positively, in that a person relies on faith to endure the errors of non-belief, thereby opening up more to faith.

The gist of what we wish to state here is that the issues of reward and punishment are fundamental. But we have to improve our methods of dealing with them so that we do not make the issue a purely material one. Rather, we must give these methods an air which suggests the humanness of the person, the same way it works in inculcating personal desire.

Yes to Corporal Punishment No to Corporal Punishment

The Western school system assumes that in education corporal punishment, on the whole, is a negative thing. Our views on this are as follows.

We must conduct an empirical study in this area to reveal that words may not work with some people. One may employ every possible method to correct a person in a manner that is not severe and injurious, and which does not lead to redness of the body. Corporal punishment may be a better way than using words, and saves more time.

When we study the severe means of education, we find no difference between this and denying the person some wants, the same way you deny a child his favorite dish or toy, in order to draw his attention to his studies on the principle that you will give him this gift or that gift if he tends to his studies or corrects his conduct. Alternatively, you ground him or speak severely to him. We may find that this is received in a manner that disrupts the psychology of the child. It may be that denying him some things he likes is more severe than other methods.

We are unable to affirm anything categorical about beating as a method. We are no different from the

Western school on the important point that if beating leads to negative results on the child's psychology, making him taciturn, or causing him fall down, or sidetracked from the normal human course of education, then it is not permissible.

However, the question here is: Is corporal punishment absolutely negative? And are quieter methods absolutely positive? The life experience of adults and young people indicates that we must use severe methods to prevent wrongdoing, to strengthen discipline, and to create the atmosphere conducive to general public order.

Islam does not speak of beating, insult, and ridicule, but rather of the essentials of upbringing. Everything, which, if we do not utilize will contravene our goal, is essential to upbringing and is permissible.

Dangers of Coeducation

What is the view of Islam on mixed education?

The basic principle in Islam is against mixed education, despite its proponents' claim that separation may lead to negative mental or social consequences, probably affecting moral development, because it makes man look at woman from afar, and vice-versa.

Supposedly, this mutual glancing from afar may cause many to fantasize and to have unrealistic ideas; both genders may in the process be incapable of communication when later on in their lives they enter into normal social interaction.

I acknowledge that, in this respect, their argument may have certain validity, but life experience in the matter of ethics has proven that every mixing is at the expense of morality. And every time mental issues change, a near emergency results. The reason is that mixing, especially at adolescence, has a great influence on many, since sex underlies the thought of every adolescent boy and girl. This may lead to problematic mental issues if not actual corrupt practices.

Perhaps this is what many sociologists refer to on the subject of friendship between man and woman. They say that it is difficult for there to be pure friendship between the two, because the more friendship deepens, the more the instincts find their way to physical expression between the man and the woman. This is what we have noted in general.

When Western society made sexual liberty one of the issues of freedom and deemed it a natural thing, it did not perceive any moral problem with mixing. In fact, it found that lack of mixing led to negative results. However, in societies that live according to moral ideals, we find that it is difficult in reality to accommodate this value through mixing, since this only leads to greater problems for those who experience this mixing.

A Woman May Work in Every Field

What is the Islamic view regarding the work of the woman in special fields or fields which do not match her nature as a woman?

A woman has the same right as a man to work in any halal work she chooses, and the *Shariah* does not differentiate between the work of a man and the work of a woman. There are, however, some specifics which may concern the woman in her wifely duties and the natural state of motherhood. Her wifely duties may dictate that she not work except with the agreement of her husband.

On the theoretical plane, Islam certainly does not prevent the woman from working, no more than it prevents the man from working. The same ethical obligations apply to the woman in the workplace as to the man. If the work is in a moral environment, then it is as permissible for the woman as it is for the man.

Parental Monitoring of Children's Behaviour

Does the parental monitoring of the behavior of their sons and daughters constitute interference in the latter's private affairs?

There is a form of primitive, retrogressive supervision which causes the person to live in what is like a stifling nightmare that throws his life into confusion, with severe problems, where he finds himself besieged by your inquisitiveness or "spying", if one may use that term.

Supervision is absolutely necessary for knowing about our youth, students, and sons. We must make supervision something good that does not affect youth in such a way as to be a problem, except in certain situations where we wish to exert some pressure on them to let them know they are under supervision; so that they may not go astray or advance too far in what may cause them severe problems in life.

What we mean is monitoring of the youth's studies and associates, and trying to find out his weak points in order to draw attention to them afterwards. It is necessary that this monitoring be psychologically sound, not one that afflicts his mentality or presents a problem. You may find some children looking at their parents or their teachers with dislike or hatred, benefit little afterwards from any advice that these parents or teachers may have given them.

We must make our children and students like us. This may be done by astute methods which do not adversely affect them in their developmental stages of life.

Equitability Between the Children

What does Islam want from parents in their interaction with their children, in accordance with equity and justice?

The fundamental principle in Islam is justice, and equity is a manifestation of justice. Such justice may be exemplified in matters of affection with respect to the children. This is what is reported from the Prophet: that he saw a man kissing one of his sons, and so he said to him, "Kiss the other one, so he may not feel anything against his brother or his father."

Equity is a fundamental principle in parents' care of their children, but sometimes we need to stay away from equality in justice, when one child is better in religion than the other; is better in his studies or morals; or is more obedient. In this case, we prefer him to his brother in order to influence that latter brother to be like him, so that he could receive the same treatment. In other words, we create a situation of competition, which needs some wisdom in its application, so the child does not assume that the father loves his brother more.

Actions of the Infallible Leaders (masum) Indicate Legality, not Compulsion

Is the required emulation of the Prophet and the members of his household something absolute, because of their standing, or does the issue of conditions, developments, and needs of the time qualify this emulation?

When we wish to emulate the Prophet and the pure Imams, we must study factors behind their conduct, and whether this conduct was by virtue of their being paragons—whose actions are not linked to time and place. Or was their conduct dictated by the specific conditions which made them act in a specific manner? If other conditions occur, the matter may not be one of emulation, but exactly like a *Shariah* ruling that must be based on lack of precedent, and when a different situation comes up, then the ruling is changed to reflect the relevant circumstances.

Therefore, the actions of the Prophet or the infallible leaders (masum) do not indicate obligatory emulation, because an act may be compulsory, or it may be commendable, and indicate only legality and not compulsory imitation. When we observe that the Prophet did something, or practiced something, we must study whether his action was determined by the circumstances and the issue subject to circumstance, or this issue contains elements which are intrinsic to the action.

Emulation does not mean Deduction

Emulation is not to be taken from any single occurrence as absolute. Rather, the action of the Prophet

must be studied. We hold that this action may take the form of a method for calling to the way of God, without discounting the need for another method. This is because the Prophet had acted in a particular manner relative to circumstances. The need for propagation had called for a specific method. There may be situations with different circumstances which need different methods.

Therefore, Islamic propagation did not need a structured methodology at the beginning of Islam. However, later circumstances may have dictated a structured format. Moreover, the great challenges which others have had to face through a structured format dictate that we, too, must draw up our methodology based on Islamic perspectives.

This does not mean that everything that does not have precedent is to be deemed as innovation [bida], or that the precedent must be absolutely emulated. We must analyze every new occurrence in terms of its concordance with the ideational and functional Islamic principles, and study that which occurred before—was it normal for the time and circumstances? Or was it a *Shariah* action on which time and place have no bearing?

Civilizational/Cultural Showing Off

The dazzling display of advance in civilization, and Western technological advances have undoubtedly greatly affected social life. What are the effects of this—negative or positive—in your eminence's view?

The impressive picture of material life, with all its forms, colors, and vastness, encourages display—especially to the weak who live without the slightest power; nor do they sense any internal power, but dwell on their weak points. This is what makes the weak submit to the strong, and the oppressed submit to the tyrants.

As such, we must understand the issue according to the Qur'an, which focuses on the weak points of the strong, and on the negative elements we now find in Western civilization. Every negative aspect which this civilization has must be compared to the elements of strength found in Islam and the positive elements of the Islamic way of life. By doing this, we will be able to rescue our people, our boys and girls from Western pomp and display; especially since display signifies the degradation of Islamic society and the oppressed. We may use politics to reject the subjugation to Western culture, since it appears savage and wild, and to negate every display of pomp which people have taken from other milieux.

We may understand this from the meaningful words of Imam 'Ali when he spoke of the world: "Whoever perceives it understands, and it blinds whoever looks at it." The world blinds whoever looks at it in its forms. But whoever looks at the world for reflection, perceives its reality in his analysis. When we see things thus, we can recognize that Western civilization is equal to this one (i.e., ours).

Imitation and Copycat Behaviour

Imitation and copycat behavior have a great influence on the life of youth. There are those who imitate heroes, stars, famous, and outstanding people. What are the negative and positive limits in imitation?

Imitation may have negative effects, since it does not stem from any intellectual premise relating to the merits of the action itself, or of the position imitated. This causes one to follow others and lose charge of himself or his ideas; and this can have an effect on his mental, emotional, functional, and future development. He may thus always look to others rather than rely on his own assessment, which may be gained by having his own mental, emotional, and functional perspectives.

This is what Islam establishes in the approach to taking the parents' example. The sentiments which children have for their parents make them lose confidence in themselves as separate thinking beings, or when questioning other ideas. Therefore, they belittle other ideas, perceptions, or spirituality and stick to their parents' position. This freezes the intellect of the parents and grandparents, and makes the coming generations idolize and sanctify their parents' ideas without allowing themselves or others to question them, let alone reject them.

Imitating Actors

What we see now is the coming generation of boys and girls imitating the actors, singers, and other public figures which, in one form or another, attracts youths. This is occurring to the point where, just to imitate their idols, they go against ethical and social values, etc. They do not care about the positive or negative effects of their behavior on their lives; they see no difference between attractive and contradictory points; their sole value is to do the same as their close friends do.

Consequently, we find that many of those who oversee the conditioning of children direct generations in this direction, since these children have lost their strength of character which connects them to their roots and which opens their minds to new horizons.

The Best Example

We may find some good points about imitation when the issue concerns role models that foster good moral, spiritual, political, or *jihad* ideals. This is true when eliciting the admiration of someone also encourages admirers to be like that person—to behave similarly in order to attain positive ideals. On another level, the model incites them to defend certain values by accepting the ideals upon which they are based, or by considering the milieu in which they are expressed etc.

This is what is termed to as 'the best example' or 'the best role-model', and what is referred to in God's words:

"Certainly in the Messenger of God is the best example for you" (*al Ahzab*, 33:21).

A good example attracts a person who then emulates it, after which it becomes ingrained in his being. As the poet has said:

Emulate them, if like they you are not,

Certainly, emulating the honorable will take you to the top.

A *hadith* from Imam 'Ali states: "If you are not patient, then follow those who are, for it is easier for one to follow a group; if not, it is difficult to be one of them." Positive imitation—even if it does not stem from intellectual contemplation—will become a natural trait of the person, as it is said: "The copy may sometimes outdo the original." The important point to remember, however, is that a person must be accustomed to being himself, to think, to believe, and to write; so that his positive or negative image he sends forth is from himself, not the result of imitating another person.

Imitation remains the method on which we rely, in positive situations, to make people realize the beneficial value connected with it—from the outset—and accept the examples relevant to it. If we do this, we should be able to protect our children from the negative qualities and eventually inculcate high moral values to spiritual and mental beings.

On Emulation and Attraction

When imitation, however, assumes a negative dimension, we must work towards rescuing youth from its grasp. This may be done by focusing on its negative points and their results. When imitation is positive, we must encourage it; and then, when such behavior is acceptable to youth, to work towards inculcating it, speaking of its good points and benefits: that we respect such and such a person because he conducts himself in a particular way, and that we do not accept any conduct simply because such and such a person behaves that way.

We may need to encourage emulation of living, exemplary models as a mode of nurturing. This may save us a much time and effort. We must, however, be quite meticulous and cautious in implementing this method, so that the matter does not become one of encouraging blind imitation, but rather the emulation of specific traits which we are unable, at first, to foster except by this means.

An Intellectual Attack against Imitation

In today's society, the youthful urge to imitate is not spontaneous. There is much attention on films, clubs, and competitive sport. Are there, in the face of this focus, alternatives for Islamic workers to direct youth to the proper role models and imitation?

We must undertake an intellectual revolution against imitation as a principle and in its various forms.

This means we must show its negative adverse points which the rising generation have adopted through imitation. Then, we must attempt at the same time to create specific means which grab the interest of our youth in their daily lives and in a positive manner—so that, if there must be imitation, then we will direct them to the proper role models.

The problem of many in the field of education is that they reject a specific form of alternative. When we reject wanton dress, we must not create problems for boys and girls who adopt new wear. We must seek to present alternative clothing that could grab the attention of the men and women, but in a way that agrees with Islamic moral values in this area of human life.

And when we ban pornographic movies, we must not close the doors of production of films altogether, but rather produce films of social, moral, or political value that attracts youths to the fine arts; so that these films do not have less quality than other comparable films and so that youths do not feel a void in this area of interest.

Should imitation of the West be limited to certain conditions only?

It is normal that when we study other peoples' practices, whether academically, intellectually, or in the workplace, we must separate between these practices and Islamic guidelines. If we see something in the West which does accord with the general Islamic outlook, we must benefit from it—on the basis that it represents the positive values once practiced by our predecessors, but which we do not find in our Islamic world today, the conditions having become too far different.

If, however, these practices corrupt our fundamental Islamic understanding—for example, with respect to the absolute freedom present in the West, or some similar trend—then we must study the factors which distinguish Islamic from Western values. We cannot completely reject the West or the world.

We believe that the world contains things to learn from; we have things the world can learn from us. The world offers many good things for us, and we have many good things for the world. Our Islamic tenet is that we must learn from everyone or from every place: "Seek knowledge, even in China." "Wisdom is the cherished goal of a believer." But we must choose what we learn, in order not to abandon that in which we place our faith.

Addendum of Narrations (3)

On Teaching and Nurturing

- The Messenger of God said: "A loving glance at the face of a learned [*'alim*] is an act of worship [*ibada*]."

- He also said: "Sitting with the people of learning is an honor in this life and the hereafter."
- On the authority of Abu 'Abd Allah, it is reported that the Messenger of God said: "A man will come on the day of resurrection. To his credit will be so many good deeds that they will be heaps, or towering mountains. He will ask: 'O my Lord! All this for me—and what have I done for them?' God will say: 'This is the knowledge you taught to people, and they kept on acting on it after you.'"
- Abu Ja'far said, "Whoever taught the path to guidance will have as much reward as those who acted upon it, without in any way decreasing the reward of the latter. Whoever taught the path to wrongdoing will have as much punishment as those who acted upon such teachings without in any way decreasing the punishment of the latter."
- Imam Zayn al-Abidin said concerning the rights of tutors: "The right of the one who guides you on the path of learning is that you should respect him; be dignified at his gathering; listen well to him and draw near to him; do not raise your voice at him; do not answer anyone who asks him a question, but rather let him respond; do not speak to anyone during his class; do not slander anyone with him, to defend him if something negative is mentioned about him, to conceal his faults, or to manifest his merits; do not sit with any enemy of his; do not make enemies of his friends. If you observe all of this, the angels of God will bear witness that you were his student, and that you learnt his knowledge for God, to honor God, not people."
- And on the rights of students and learners, Imam Zayn al-Abidin said: "As for the right of those who are in your charge for knowledge, if you know that God has made you a leader for them in the knowledge that He has given you, and offered you of His treasures, if you excel in the teaching of people and do not mislead them, and do not get exasperated with them, then God will grant you more of His bounty. If however, you denied people your knowledge, or got angry with them when they seek to learn from you, then it is the right of God, the Powerful, the Mighty, to deny you knowledge and its splendor, and to deprive you of honor in the hearts of the people."

On Happiness

- The Messenger of God said, "The happy one is he who chooses an abode which has permanent delight, above the transitory one, the sufferings of which never cease."
- He also said, "There are four delights of a person: "Righteous companions, a pious child, a giving wife, and that he should have his homestead in his country."
- Imam 'Ali said: "Happiness is that which attains success."
- He also said: "The happy one is he who preaches to others."
- He said: "The happy one is he who fears reproach and yet believes, hopes for reward and does good,

and longs for paradise and stays up the night."

- He said: "The happy one is he who is sincere in his obedience."
- He said, "Act upon knowledge and you will be happy."
- He said, "Whoever checks himself will be granted happiness."
- He said, "Constancy in worship is a clear sign of attaining bliss."
- He said: "Happiness also lies in the bliss of the doer of good deeds."
- He said: "The true essence of happiness is that a person should hide his deeds for it [i.e., which merit it], and the essence of suffering is that a person should hide his deeds for it."
- He said, "The happiness of a person lies in contentment and satisfaction."

The Attentive Ear

- Imam 'Ali said, "If you are not a scholar who teaches, then be a listener who heeds."
- He also said, "A heart that has no heedful ear is a heart damaged."
- He said: "Hearing was made for you to heed what concerns it, and the sight to reveal what is dim."
- He said, "May God bless the person who hears a wise saying; reflects upon it; invites to that which is right; moves towards it, follows the caution of a guide; and is saved."
- Imam Hasan said: "The sharpest of perception is that which puts good things into practice; the most heedful is that which contemplates remembrance and benefits from it."

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