

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## **Importance of Deeni Education and the Maktab System**

### **Coolness to our Eyes:**

Every person wishes to have children who are coolness to his eyes. The perception that most people have is that if I educate my children in secular sciences and they acquire a degree, they will earn 'big' money, and when they earn that type of money, I will be relaxed and have an enjoyable life. Hence the entire focus becomes secular studies and Islamic education is given very little or no importance.

However, in most cases the result is totally contrary. When the emphasis is only on material and secular studies, those children grow up into becoming 'money making machines' who have no feelings and values. Hence they feel that they can substitute the time and service they owe to their parents with wealth. We may enjoy a lot of wealth, but we will not enjoy the company and service of our children when we need it the most - in our old age.

### **Children are your Business:**

Someone so beautifully said: "Your children are your business, the more effort you put in to them the greater the returns."

One is the returns that we are desirous off in this world. We have already explained that this will be secured by imparting the necessary deeni education to them. Then, as those who believe in the Hereafter, we need returns there as well. Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) has advised us that imparting deeni education to our children and making them righteous, will serve as an 'off-shore investment' for us when we are in the qabr.

عن أبي هريرة أن رسول الله ﷺ قال : « إذا مات الإنسان انقطع عنه عمله إلا من ثلاثة إلا من صدقة جارية أو علم ينتفع به أو ولد صالح يدعو له . » ( « صحيح مسلم » ٤١/١ )

### **Salvation from Punishment:**

Imaam Raazi (rahimahullah) writes: "Once Sayyiduna 'Isaa ('alaihi salaam) passed by the grave of a person who was being punished by the angels. After completing his errand, on his return, he sees the angels of mercy at the grave with large quantities of noor. He was amazed at this and performed salaah and asked Allah Ta'ala (the reason for this). Allah Ta'ala revealed to him thus: 'This servant was a sinner and was suffering my punishment. However, at the time of his death his wife was expecting a child and she gave birth to a son who has now grown up and has been admitted into the maktab. The teacher taught him Bismillahir Rahmaanir Raheem - In the name of Allah Ta'ala the Most Beneficent the Most Merciful. Hence I feel ashamed that I punish him in the earth (in his grave) when his son is taking my name on the earth<sup>1</sup>."

Apart from this, the scholars say that the young children who are learning the Quraan Majeed are a means of preventing the punishment of Allah Ta'ala from coming on to the people of the earth.

عن ثابت بن عجلان الأنصاري قال : كان يقال : إن الله ليبريد العذاب بأهل الأرض ، فإذا سمع تعليم الصبيان الحكمة صرف ذلك عنهم . قال مروان : يعني بالحكمة القرآن . ( « سنن الدارمي » ٥٣٠/٢ )

### **The Best for my Children:**

We generally say: "I want to give my children the best" and we take it in the material sense, but Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) explains that the best that we can offer to them is good manners.

قال رسول الله ﷺ : « ما نحل والد ولدا من نحل أفضل من أدب حسن . » ( « سنن الترمذي » ١٦/٢ )

---

<sup>1</sup> مر عيسى ابن مريم ﷺ على قبر ، فرأى ملائكة العذاب يعذبون ميتا ، فلما انصرف من حاجته مر على القبر ، فرأى ملائكة الرحمة معهم أطباق من نور ، فتعجب من ذلك ، فصلى ودعا الله تعالى ، فأوحى الله تعالى إليه : يا عيسى ! كان هذا العبد عاصيا ، ومذمات كان محبوبا في عذابي ، وكان قد ترك امرأة حبلى فولدت ولدا وربته حتى كبر ، فسلمته إلى الكُتَّاب ، فلقنه المعلم بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ، فاستحييت من عبدي أن أعذبه بناري في بطن الأرض وولده يذكر اسمي على وجه الأرض . ( « التفسير الكبير » ١٤٣/١ )

## Importance of Primary Education:

The importance of primary deeni education can be understood from the fact that whenever any person or any group accepted Islam, one of the main concerns of Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) and the new Muslim/s was deeni education. The following two famous incidents, among many others, support this:

1. We understand from the famous incident of 'Umar (radhiyallahu 'anhu)'s accepting Islam<sup>2</sup> that Khabbaab bin Aratt (radhiyallahu 'anhu) would frequent the house of his brother-in-law and sister to teach them the Quraan Majeed. This then became the means of 'Umar (radhiyallahu 'anhu) accepting Islam. Hence, perhaps we may not be wrong if we say that to a certain extent 'Umar (radhiyallahu 'anhu) was a product of the primary madrasah as well.
2. When 12 members of the Ansaar accepted Islam at the first 'Aqabah and returned to Madeenah Munawwarah, they sent a request to Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) that he should send to them someone who would teach them the Quraan Majeed and the basic masaail of deen. Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) sent Mus'ab bin 'Umair (radhiyallahu 'anhu) to them as a teacher<sup>3</sup>.

## Formal Teaching:

During the time of Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) and Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu), this teaching was done more informally. Whenever there was a need for a teacher, Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi

<sup>2</sup> قال ابن اسحاق : وكان اسلام عمر فيما بلغني أن اخته فاطمة بنت الخطاب ، وكانت عند سعيد بن زيد بن عمرو بن نفيل ، وكانت قد اسلمت وأسلم بعلمها سعيد بن زيد وهما مستخفيان بإسلامهما من عمر ، وكان نعيم بن عبد الله النحام رجل من قومه من بني عدي بن كعب قد أسلم ، وكان أيضا يستخفي بإسلامه فرقا من قومه ، وكان خباب بن الأرت يختلف إلى فاطمة بنت الخطاب يقرئها القرآن . فخرج عمر يوما متوشحا سيفه يريد رسول الله ﷺ ورهطا من أصحابه قد ذكروا له أنهم قد اجتمعوا في بيت عند الصفا ، وهم قريب من أربعين ما بين رجال ونساء ، ومع رسول الله ﷺ عمه حمزة بن عبد المطلب ، وأبو بكر بن أبي قحافة الصديق ، وعلي بن أبي طالب في رجال من المسلمين ﷺ ممن كان أقام مع رسول الله ﷺ بمكة ، ولم يخرج فيمن خرج إلى أرض الحبشة . فلقبه نعيم بن عبد الله فقال له : أين تريد يا عمر ؟ فقال : أريد محمدا هذا الصابي ، الذي فرق أمر قريش وسفه أحلامها وعاب دينها وسب آلهتها ، فأقتله ، فقال له نعيم : والله لقد غرتك نفسك من نفسك يا عمر ، أتري بني عبد مناف تاركيك تمشي على الأرض وقد قتلت محمدا ! أفلا ترجع إلى أهل بيتك فتقيم أمرهم ؟ قال : وأي أهل بيتي ؟ قال : خنتك وابن عمك سعيد بن زيد بن عمرو ، وأختك فاطمة بنت الخطاب ، فقد والله أسلما وتابعا محمدا على دينه ، فعليك بهما . قال : فرجع عمر عامدا إلى أخته وختته ، وعندهما خباب بن الأرت معه صحيفة فيها طه يقرئهما إياها ، فلما سمعوا حس عمر تعيب خباب في مخدع لهم أو في بعض البيت ، وأخذت فاطمة بنت الخطاب الصحيفة فجعلتها تحت فخذها ، وقد سمع عمر حين دنا إلى البيت قراءة خباب عليهما ، فلما دخل قال : ما هذه الهينة التي سمعت ؟ قال له : ما سمعت شيئا ، قال : بلى والله لقد أخبرت أنكما تابعتما محمدا على دينه ، وبطش بختنه سعيد بن زيد ، فقامت إليه أخته فاطمة بنت الخطاب لتكفه عن زوجها ففرضها ففجها ، فلما فعل ذلك قالت له أخته وختته : نعم ، قد أسلمنا وآمنا بالله ورسوله ، فاصنع ما بدا لك . فلما رأى عمر ما بأخته من الدم ندم على ما صنع فارعوى ، وقال لأخته : أعطيني هذه الصحيفة التي سمعتمكم تقرءون أنفا أنظر ما هذا الذي جاء به محمد ، وكان عمر كاتبها ، فلما قال ذلك ، قالت له أخته : إنا نخشاك عليها ، قال : لا تخافي وحلف لها بألته ليردنها إذا قرأها إليها ، فلما قال ذلك طمعت في إسلامه ، فقالت له : يا أخي ، إنك نجس على شركك ، وإنه لا يمسه إلا الطاهر ، فقام عمر فاغتسل فأعطته الصحيفة ، وفيها طه . فلما قرأ منها صدرا ، قال : ما أحسن هذا الكلام وأكرمه ، فلما سمع ذلك خباب ، خرج عليه فقال له : يا عمر ! والله إني لأرجو أن يكون الله قد خصك بدعوة نبيه ، فإني سمعته أمس وهو يقول : « اللهم أيد الإسلام بأبي الحكم بن هشام أو بعمر بن الخطاب » فالله الله يا عمر . فقال له عند ذلك عمر : فدليني يا خباب على محمد حتى آتية فأسلم ، فقال له خباب : هو في بيت عند الصفا ، معه فيه نفر من أصحابه ، فأخذ عمر سيفه فتوشحه ، ثم عمد إلى رسول الله ﷺ وأصحابه فضرب عليهم الباب ، فلما سمعوا صوته ، قام رجل من أصحاب رسول الله ﷺ فنظر من خلل الباب فرآه متوشحا بالسيف ، فرجع إلى رسول الله ﷺ وهو فرح ، فقال : يا رسول الله ، هذا عمر بن الخطاب متوشحا بالسيف ، فقال حمزة بن عبد المطلب : فأذن له ، فإن كان جاء يريد خيرا بلذناه له ، وإن كان ( جاء ) يريد شرا قتلناه بسيفه ، فقال رسول الله ﷺ : « ائذن له » فأذن له الرجل ، ونهض إليه رسول الله ﷺ حتى لقيه في الحجرة ، فأخذ حجزه أو بمجمع رداءه ، ثم جذب ( به ) جبذة شديدة ، وقال : ما جاء بك يا ابن الخطاب ؟ فوالله ما أرى أن تنتهي حتى ينزل الله بك قارعة ، فقال عمر : يا رسول الله ، جئتك لأؤمن بالله وبرسوله وما جاء من عند الله ، قال : فكبر رسول الله ﷺ تكبيرة عرف أهل البيت من أصحاب رسول الله ﷺ أن عمر قد أسلم . ( « السيرة النبوية لابن هشام » ٣٤٣/١ - ٣٤٦ )

<sup>3</sup> لما انصرف أهل العقبة الأولى الإثنا عشر وفشا الإسلام في دور الأنصار ، أرسلت الأنصار رجلا إلى رسول الله ﷺ وكتبت إليه كتابا : ابعث إلينا رجلا يفقهنا في الدين ويقرئنا القرآن . فبعث إليهم رسول الله ﷺ مصعب بن عمير ، فقدم فنزل على أسعد بن زرارة . وكان يأتي الأنصار في دورهم ويقابلهم فيدعوهم إلى الإسلام ويقرأ عليهم القرآن ، فيسلم الرجل والرجلان حتى ظهر الإسلام وفشا في دور الأنصار ... وكان مصعب يقرئهم القرآن ويعلمهم . ( « ابن سعد »

wasallam) would send a Sahaabi or some Sahaabah (radhiyallahu ‘anhum). However in the time ‘Umar (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) this primary education became more formal and took the shape of a maktab.

Some narrations and books have even mentioned these finer details of the maktab system which ‘Umar (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) had implemented:

1. ‘Umar (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) was the first to establish the maktab system and he ordered ‘Aamir bin Abdullah Al-Khuzaa’iee to teach the children. He also stipulated a stipend for him from the public treasury. ‘Umar (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) instructed him that he should write on a slate for the weaker learners and the brighter learners should be taught verbally. Initially he used to teach for the entire day, but then on the request of the children, the times were shortened to Fajr till mid-morning and Zuhr till ‘Asr. They were allowed to take a break after that<sup>4</sup>.
  2. There were three teachers who used to teach the children and ‘Umar (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) would pay each of them fifteen dirhams monthly<sup>5</sup>.
  3. ‘Umar (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) brought into vogue the system of Friday being a holiday in the maktab<sup>6</sup>.
- (For more details, see ‘Ulama e Deoband ki Yaadgaar Tahreere vol. 1, pgs. 219-223)

### Imaam Bukhaari (rahimahullah):

Imaam Bukhaari (rahimahullah) also attended a maktab.

قال محمد بن أبي حاتم وراق البخاري : سمعت البخاري يقول : أُلِّمْتُ حفظ الحديث وأنا في الكُتَّاب . قلت : وكم أتى عليك إذ ذاك ؟ فقال : عشر سنين أو أقل . ثم خرجت من الكتاب فجعلت اختلف إلى الداخلي وغيره . ( « هدي الساري » ١ / ٦٦٣ )

### Solution to the Crisis of the Ummah:

Hazrat Shaikhul Hind, Moulana Mahmoodul Hasan Saahib (rahmatullahi ‘alaih) was a great scholar of India. Most of our Akaabir were either his direct or indirect students. Towards the end of his life he spent four years in prison in Malta due to his struggle to establish the khilaafat. Upon his return from prison, one night after Esha Salaah, a large number of ‘Ulama gathered around him in Darul ‘Uloom Deoband. Hazrat (rahmatullahi ‘alaih) addressed them saying: “I learnt two lessons during my stay in Malta.” On hearing this, the entire congregation became very attentive to hear what this great buzurg, the ustaaz of all the ‘Ulama, had learnt at the age of eighty and after lecturing the ‘Ulama for so many years. What lesson could he have learnt now? Hazrat (rahmatullahi ‘alaih) then mentioned: “Whilst sitting in the confines of the jail I kept pondering over the reason for the downfall of the Muslims all over the world in their deen and in their dunya. After much contemplation I concluded that there are two reasons for this: (1) Their leaving the Quraan Majeed and (2) Their differences and fighting among themselves. Thus I made a firm resolve whilst in the prison that I will spend the rest of my life in spreading the words and the meanings of the Quraan to the Ummah. In order to learn the words of the Quraan Majeed, makaatib for the children must be established in every village and to learn the meanings of the Quraan Majeed, lessons of tafseer should be conducted. People should be encouraged to practice on the Quraanic teachings. Furthermore at no cost should fighting and arguing with one another be tolerated. (Akaabir e Deoband kya the pg. 17)

### Great Favour:

Alhamdulillah, Allah Ta‘ala has blessed the Muslims with such a great bounty where children from as young as five learn the Quraan Majeed, hadeeth, fiqh, Islamic history, manners and etiquettes, and much more. How many of the followers of other religions can read their respective books in their original text? Today more than 80% of Muslims can read the Quraan Majeed in its original Arabic text. This is all through the blessings of the madrasah and maktab.

Let everyone of us try to imagine what deen we would have known, and how much of Quraan Majeed we would have been able to read had it not been for the maktab that we attended at the hands of some apa or ustaaz. It is this that has equipped us to continue our lives as Muslims. Hence it is imperative for us to pass on the same to our children as well.

Another great favour of Allah Ta‘ala upon us specifically is that we in South Africa have such a maktab system which is perhaps unparalleled in the world today. The South African syllabuses are used in many

<sup>4</sup> « الفواكه الدواني على رسالة ابن أبي زيد القيرواني » ص ٥٠ .

<sup>5</sup> ثلاثة كانوا بالمدينة يعلمون الصبيان ، وكان عمر بن الخطاب يرزق كل واحد منهم خمسة عشر درهما كل شهر . ( « كنز العمال » ٣ / ٩٢٤ )

<sup>6</sup> « الفواكه الدواني على رسالة ابن أبي زيد القيرواني » ص ٥١ .

parts of the world and 'Ulama from other countries, even Muslim and Arab countries come over to learn our system and go back and implement it in their countries. It takes only a trip to another country and some conversation with the youth and even adults who passed through life without the maktab system to realize the value of the system we have here. Unfortunately even in countries like Palestine, there are Arab children who cannot recite the Quraan Majeed.

**Value it:**

Unfortunately, nowadays we don't value the maktab as much as our elders did. Islamic education is being disregarded. Instead of sending our children to the madrasah to gain the necessary Islamic knowledge and practice, which would protect their imaan and deen, we would rather send them for tuition, sports practice, or some other extra-curricular activities. The end result is that we have children who attend Christian schools, don't attend maktab, and no nothing regarding the basics of deen, not even how to recite the Quraan Majeed. It is no wonder if these children turn towards Christianity or become homosexuals etc. If we do send them to maktab, we remove them from the maktab at the age of twelve or thirteen when they just begin to understand the important issues of deen.

**Cannot be Substituted:**

In everything we look at production. The maktab has been a tried and tested and absolutely productive model which does not need to be re-invented. Unfortunately, many of us feel that sending our child to a Muslim school substitutes the maktab. This is incorrect. Let us check their timetables and work out whether the time given to Islamic subjects is sufficient. This system has not proven to be as productive in other Muslim countries. What a South African child receives in one afternoon in the maktab, a Palestinian child may receive in one or two weeks in the Islamic school. Hence, together with sending our children to the Muslim school, we must ensure that they attend the maktab as well.