

The Makaatib

The glimmer of hope for the
Ummah

**A GIFT TO ALL PARENTS AND EVERY PERSON WHO HAS
THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE MUSLIM UMMAH AT
HEART**

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May Allah Ta'ala accept this weak effort on behalf of myself, my parents, my spouse and children, my brothers, my teachers, my Shaykh (mentor), my mashaayikh, the cover designer, the sponsors and all those who assisted in this publication with their ideas and du'as.

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The Makaatib

Maktab (singular)/ Makaatib (plural) - The Primary level religious institutions which dedicatedly serves the Muslim community by imparting Islamic knowledge to Muslim children.

The Maktab is the backbone of the Ummah and establishes a strong faith in Allah Ta'ala within the heart of every Muslim child. Tauheed (belief in the Oneness of Allah and His unique Qualities) Risaalat (belief in the Messenger-ship of all the Messengers, especially Nabi Muhammad ﷺ) and Aakhirah (belief in the Hereafter, Resurrection, Jannah and Jahannam), which are the principles of Deen, are well-grounded in our children through these institutes. This is what assists in making them firm Believers in Allah Ta'ala. Wherever, in the world, there is no establishment of the Maktab system, the people there easily lose their direction in Deen.

History of the Makaatib in our Ummah

Islam has placed great emphasis on the education, nurturing and moral upbringing of children. Rasulullah (ﷺ) has said: "Teach your children the kalimah (Laa ilaaha illallah) as soon as they are able to speak clearly, and make talqeen of it (remind the dying person) at the time of death." It was also the common practice of the Sahaabah and the Tabi'een to make a child repeat the kalimah seven times as soon as he is able to speak. They also used to focus so much attention on teaching the child Qur'an and du'as between the ages of seven and ten that the child was able to actually perform Salaah at this age. Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: "Command your children to perform Salaah at the age of seven

and hit them for not performing by the age of ten.” During the era of Rasulullah (ﷺ) there was no separate Maktab where children used to learn Deen. The Sahaabah used to teach Qur’an and other basics of Deen to the little boys and girls at their homes. This is proven from a question which Ziyaad ibn Labeed (رضي الله عنه) once posed to Rasulullah (ﷺ): “How will the knowledge of Deen be lifted when we ourselves read and study Qur’an, we teach our children, who in turn teach their children, and this chain will continue till the day of Qiyaamah?” Furthermore children from the different Arab tribes and delegations used to accompany the adults when they used to come to Madinah. Many of them showed greater keenness than adults to learn Qur’an and Deeni knowledge from Rasulullah (ﷺ).

Establishment of the maktab system during the Era of Umar (رضي الله عنه) and the Appointment of Teachers

Umar (رضي الله عنه) was the first person who established primary Madrasahs for children and appointed teachers for this purpose. During his Khilafah, Umar (رضي الله عنه) noticed the expansion of the Islamic territories, and the large numbers of non-Arabs and Bedouins who had entered into the fold of Islam, he realized and apprehended the great need to establish a formal maktab system under the supervision of the government. He began erecting buildings specifically for the purpose of serving as a Maktab, and would then appoint capable teachers who would teach the children and inculcate within them Islamic ethos. Therefore, Umar (رضي الله عنه) was the first to gather children at a Maktab to learn Qur’an. There were three teachers in Madinah who used to teach the children and Umar (رضي الله عنه) stipulated for each of them

fifteen dirhams monthly which was given to them as a stipend.¹ The three teachers in Madinah were most probably the following three persons: Nabaatah Waalibi (who was originally from Kufah in Iraq), Aamir ibn Abdillah Khuza'i and Abu Sufyan (who was other than the Sahabi who had the honour of being the father-in-law of Rasulullah ﷺ).² It is recorded in the book 'Al-Fawaakihud Dawaani' that Umar (رضي الله عنه) was the first person to establish the Maktab system and he ordered Aamir ibn Abdillah Khuza'i to teach the children. Umar (رضي الله عنه) also stipulated a stipend (and not a salary) for him from the public treasury. Umar (رضي الله عنه) also instructed him that he should write on a slate for the weaker learners and the brighter learners should be taught verbally. According to his instruction, Aamir ibn Abdillah Khuza'i used to teach in the Maktab from morning to evening. The children then spoke to Umar (رضي الله عنه) to shorten their time. He then instructed him to teach from after Fajr Salaah till mid-morning (approximately 10–11 AM) and from Zuhr to Asr. The children could take a break and rest after class in the morning till Zuhr and after Asr in the evening.

Umar (رضي الله عنه) established Makaatib in all the regions under his rule and ordered his governors to make arrangements for the writing of Qur'an. He arranged for the writing of many copies of the Qur'an and widely distributed it. Ibn Hazm (رحمته الله) writes that after the demise of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), when Umar (رضي الله عنه) became the Khalifah, many countries including Persia, Shaam, Egypt etc. were conquered. Masaajid were then established in every city and town of those conquered countries. Copies of the Qur'an

¹ Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, Al-Muhalla 8/195

² Khayrul Quroon ki Darsgaah pg.338

were written for those regions. From East to West, the Imams recited Qur'an for the people in the masaajid and taught the children Qur'an in the makaatib. This continued for the ten year period of his rule. After that came the era of Uthman (رضي الله عنه), when even more countries came under Muslim rule.³ Uthman (رضي الله عنه) also showed the same importance to the teaching of the Qur'an in the Makaatib and towards the appointment of teachers. He continued stipulating a stipend from the public treasury for the teachers, as well as for the Imams and Muazzins.

Weekly Holiday for the Makaatib

During the era of Umar (رضي الله عنه), the learners of the Maktab would be off from their studies on a Thursday and Friday. It is narrated that when Umar (رضي الله عنه) returned from Shaam, after spending quite a few months there, to Madinah, the people of Madinah who had sorely missed him went out of the town to welcome him back, taking along with them their children. This was on a Thursday. All the people spent the night with Umar (رضي الله عنه) outside Madinah and entered Madinah on Friday. As the people and the children were tired, the children did not attend maktab on that day. On that occasion, Umar (رضي الله عنه) decided to allow the children to take rest for the two days (Thursday and Friday) on a weekly basis, which he thereafter implemented across the Muslim world. From that time onwards, this came into vogue. (Thus, Friday being the holiday came into vogue from the time of the Sahaabah and Tabi'een)⁴ Ayyub ibn Hasan Raafi'i says: We used to go out every Friday with the Maktab children of Madinah. We then used to stand at a particular place and watch the children of

³ Al-Milal wan Nihal, pg.80, Khayrul Quroon ki Darsgaah pg.341

⁴ Al-Fawaakihud Dawaani alaa Risaalati Ibn Abi Zayd Al-Qayrawani

Mus'ab ibn Zubair who used to come out from a place near Mount Uhud and leap onto their horses.⁵ Ibn Mujaahid Muqri, who would teach children Qur'an in the maktab, once saw a hefty heavily built man. He commented, "He would be heavier on a scale than even Saturday on the children."⁶ He referred here to the fact that the children would regard Saturday as heavy and burdensome, as they had to return back to classes on a Saturday.

It is undoubtedly the need of the time that we, as a global Ummah, once again focus on this very important branch of Deen to see how we can empower our children with the knowledge of Qur'an and Deen. Therein lays their success, progress and safety. If we fail in our duty, Allah forbid, we can lose generations. These innocent children are like booty. Either we be quick in gathering and looking after the booty, otherwise it can be snatched away from us. Hence, it is the duty of every Muslim to see what part he can play in establishing, strengthening or supporting a Maktab wherever possible. In particular, Muslims living in those countries where there is no proper structured Maktab system or where there is shortage of Makaatib should seriously take on this responsibility to initiate Makaatib in their regions.⁷ May Allah assist us and keep ⁸ our children steadfast on Deen. Aamin ⁸

⁵ Jamharatu Nasabi Quraish wa Akhbaariha pg.340

⁶ Khaassul Khaas of Tha'aalibi pg.65

⁷ Adapted from: Ulama-e-Deoband ki Yaadgaar Tahrire vl. 1 p.219-223 (which was translated and condensed in An-Nasiha vl.126), Al-Fawaakihud Dawaani, At-Taraateebul Idaariyyah

⁸ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ التَّمِيمِيِّ ، قَالَ : كَانُوا يَسْتَحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُلَقِّنُوا الصَّبِيَّ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُعْرَبُ أَوَّلَ مَا يَتَكَلَّمُ يَقُولُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ سَمِعَ مَرَاتٍ فَيَكُونُ ذَلِكَ أَوَّلَ شَيْءٍ يَتَكَلَّمُ بِهِ. (مصنف ابن أبي شيبة)

إذا أفصح أولادكم فعلموهم لا إله إلا الله ثم لا تبالوا متى ماتوا وإذا أنفروا فمروهم بالصلاة (رواه ابن السنن عن ابن عمرو مرفوعاً)

افتحوا على صبيانكم أول كلمة بلا إله إلا الله ولقنوههم عند الموت لا إله إلا الله فإنه من كان أول كلامه لا إله إلا الله وآخر كلامه لا إله إلا الله ثم عاش ألف سنة ما سئل عن ذنب واحد (رواه الحاكم في تاريخه ، والبيهقي في شعب الإيمان عن ابن عباس مرفوعاً، وقال البيهقي : غريب واورده الحافظ ابن حجر في اماليه ولم يقدح فيه بشئ الا انه قال : ابراهيم (بن مهاجر) فيه لين. وقد اخرج له مسلم في المتابعات كذا في اللألي)

عن عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص - رضي الله عنهما - : قال : قال رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم- : «مُرُوا أولادكم بالصلاة وهم أبناء سبع ، واضربوهم عليها وهم أبناء عشر ، وفرقوا بينهم في المضاجع». (أخرجه أبو داود واحمد)

قال أبو داود: سَمِعْتُ النَّوْرِيَّ، يَقُولُ: "يَتَّبِعِي لِلرَّجُلِ أَنْ يُكْرِهَ وَلَدَهُ عَلَى طَلَبِ الْحَدِيثِ، يَقُولُ: فَإِنَّهُ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُ" قال ابن عُمرَ لِرَجُلٍ: "أَدَّبَ ابْنُكَ، فَإِنَّكَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ وَلَدِكَ، مَاذَا أَدَّبْتَهُ؟ وَمَاذَا عَلَّمْتَهُ، وَإِنَّهُ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ بَرِّكَ وَطَوَاعِيَّتِهِ لَكَ" (شعب الإيمان)

عَنِ الْوُضِيِّ بْنِ عَطَاءٍ ، قَالَ : كَانَ بِالْمَدِينَةِ ثَلَاثَةٌ مُعَلِّمِينَ يُعَلِّمُونَ الصَّبِيَّانَ . فَكَانَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ يَرْزُقُ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمُ خُمُسَةَ عَشَرَ كُلَّ شَهْرٍ (مصنف ابن ابي شيبة)

الفاقي: أول من جمع الأولاد في المكتب عمر بن الخطاب وأمر عمر بن عبد الله الخزاعي أن يلازمهم للتعليم وجعل رزقه من بيت المال وكان منهم البليد والفهيم فأمره أن يكتب للبليد في اللوح ويلقن الفهيم من غير كتب، وكان عمر رضي الله عنه يشهدهم على الأمور التي يخاف عليها الانقطاع بطول الزمان كالنسب والجنس والولاء.

فسألته الأولاد أن يشرع لهم التخفيف فأمر المعلم بالجلوس بعد صلاة الصبح إلى الضحى العاليي، ومن صلاة الظهر إلى صلاة العصر، ويستريحون بقية النهار، إلى أن خرج إلى الشام عام فتحها فمكث شهراً، ثم إنه رجع إلى المدينة وقد استوحش الناس منه فخرجوا للقائه فتلقاه الصغار على مسيرة يوم وكان ذلك يوم الخميس فباتوا معه ورجع بهم يوم الجمعة فبعوا في خروجهم ورجوعهم فشرع لهم الاستراحة في اليومين المذكورين، فصار ذلك سنة إلى يوم القيامة، ودعا بالخير لمن أحيا هذه السنة ودعا بضيق الرزق لمن أماتها. (الفواكه الدواني على رسالة ابن أبي زيد القيرواني لأحمد بن غنيم بن سالم النفراوي (المتوفى : 1126هـ))

باب في المكاتب لقراءة الصبيان : في كتاب الدييات من صحيح البخاري أن أم سلمة بعثت الى معلم الكتاب أن ابعث الي غلمانا وترجم البخاري في الادب المفرد باب السلام على الصبيان فأسند الي ابن عمر أنه كان يسلم على الصبيان في المكتب وسئل الاستاذ الكبير الشيخ المختار الكنتي عن الاصل في ترك المعلم للصبي قراءة الخميس والاربعاء والجمعة فأجاب بان الصحابة كانوا قبل ولاية عمر انما يقرني الرجل ابنته واخاه الصغير وياخذ الكبير عن الكبير مفاهمة لسيلان اذهانهم فلما كثرت الفتوحات وأسلمت الاعاجم واهل البوادي وكثر الولدان أمر عمر ببناء بيوت المكاتب ونصب الرجال لتعليم الصبيان وتاديبهم وكانوا يسرمدون القراءة في الاسبوع كله فلما فتح عمر الشام ورجع قافلاً للمدينة تلقاه اهلهما ومعهم الصبيان وكان اليوم الذي لاقوه فيه يوم الاربعاء فظلوا معه

The importance of the Makaatib

Allamah Suyuti رحمه الله wrote: “Teaching children the Qur’an is a fundamental duty from the fundamentals of Islam. As a result, they will grow up with fitrah (a pure nature which is not influenced by unnatural factors). Added to that, the anwaar (spiritual light) of wisdom will reach their hearts before desires overcome it and it becomes tainted with the stains of sin and deviation.”

Ibn Khaldun رحمه الله wrote: Understand very well that to teach children the Qur’an is a special trait and hallmark of Deen. The Muslims held firmly onto this. They structured its teaching in all Muslim cities in such a manner that Imaan and Islamic beliefs would be entrenched in the children’s hearts through the medium of the verses of the Qur’an. The Qur’an became the foundation of their education, upon which the skills and talents which they later acquired were based... It is common practice amongst the Muslims to first learn the Qur’an, for the sake of blessings and in the fear that he may lose out on learning the Qur’an when he is faced with difficulties and distractions from acquiring knowledge during his teenage years. This was the condition and situation of all Muslims in every era.” The Ulama have even stated: “The learning and teaching of the Qur’an is

عشية الاربعاء ويوم الخميس وصدر يوم الجمعة فجعل ذلك لصبين المكاتب وأوجب لهم سنة للاستراحة ودعا على من عطل هذه السنة ثم اقتدى به السلف في الاستراحات المشروعة الى يومنا هذا... (الترايب الادارية)

إن عمر رضى الله عنه لما شجع الكتائب لتحفيظ القرآن ومدارسته بإنشاء أول كُتَّاب بجوار الحرم النبوى كلف عامر بن عبد الله الخزاعى بتعليم الأولاد، على أن يكون ذلك بدرس بعد صلاة الصبح إلى الضحى ، ودرس بعد صلاة الظهر إلى العصر، ولما خرج إلى الشام وغاب شهرا خرج المسلمون على مسيرة يوم للقائه ومعهم الصبيان ، فكان يوم الخميس ، فتأخر عنهم إلى الغروب ، ثم تعبوا يوم الجمعة ولم يحضروا إلى الكُتَّاب فلما علم عمر بذلك أجازهم هذين اليومين من كل أسبوع (ص 2 من كتاب : نظام التعليم العربى ، لآدم الألورى)

fardh (compulsory). Similarly, understanding its subject matter (its commands, prohibitions, laws and instructions) is also fardh, because that is the main purpose and the greatest objective.” Some Ulama have stated that if any locality refuses to build a Masjid and to hire a teacher to teach the Qur’an to their children, it is waajib (obligatory) upon the Muslim state to force them to do so. (At-Taraateebul-Idaariyyah)

Ibn Abi Zayd writes in his ‘Risaalah’: “Understand well that the best hearts are those that have the greatest capacity to store and contain goodness. The most likely hearts which can store goodness are those hearts to which evil has never yet reached. Therefore, the best task towards which the well-wishers of the Ummah turned their attention to and those who aspire to earn good desire its great rewards is; to convey good knowledge to the hearts of Mu’min children so that it may be entrenched in their hearts, to inform them of the symbols of Deen and the limits of the Shari’ah so that they may be satisfied regarding it, and to inform them of those beliefs of Islam which their hearts must believe in and those actions which they must carry out with their limbs. Teaching children the Book of Allah extinguishes the anger of Allah. Teaching anything to child in his early years is like embedding an inscription on a rock. (Al-Madkhal)⁹

⁹ وفي الاجوبة المهمة عن الحافظ السيوطي " تعليم الصبيان القرآن اصل من أصول الاسلام فينشأون على الفطرة ويسبق الى قلوبهم انوار الحكمة قبل تمكن الاهواء منها وسوادها باكدار المعصية والضلال" ... وقال الولي ابن خلدون في مقدمة العبر في فصل تعليم الولدان اعلم أن تعليم الولدان القرآن شعار من شعار الدين أخذ به اهل الملة ودرجوا عليه في جميع امصارهم بما يسبق فيه الى القلوب من رسوخ الايمان وعقائده من آيات القرآن وصار القرآن اصل التعليم الذي يبني عليه ما يحصل بعد من الملكات ثم قال اختصت العوائد الاسلامية بتقدم دراسة القرآن ايثارا للتبرك وخشية ما يعرض للولد في جنون الصبا من الآفات والقواطع عن العلم فيفوته القرآن هو على

In the list of entities to which we attach value, perhaps the greatest value is attached to our children. The love that Allah puts in the heart of the parents for their children has no equivalent in the relationships of our worldly life. The natural effect of this love is that we vigorously desire the very best for our children. In fact the parents' love is such that they desire a better life for their children than they have themselves. In the fulfilment of this desire we aspire to give to our children all the tools, aids and implements which we feel would allow them to live a life of peace, happiness and contentment, and become successful individuals.

All this is within its place when conducted in the proper manner. However, when we look into the Hadith a different picture emerges as to the tools a parent ought to equip his child with. Allah's Beloved ﷺ states: *"No father has given his son a gift better than excellent moral values and conduct."* This Hadith points out the priorities of the parent in the upbringing of the child. If we value the words of Rasulullah ﷺ, then we ought to realize that raising our children as proper Muslims is the first demand of parenthood.

ذلك جرى حال اهل ملة الاسلام في كل عصر وزمان حتى قال الائمة ان تعليم القرآن وتعلمه فرض وكذا معرفة معانيه لانها المقصود الاعم والمطلوب الاعظم وفي المجاجي نقلا عن الغريبي انه سئل عن اهل قرية امتنع بعضهم من بناء مسجد للصلاة واخذ المؤدب لقراءة اولادهم هل يجبرون على ذلك فقال جبرهم على بناء المسجد واجب وكذا جبرهم على تعليم اولادهم ونحوه للعقباني ايضا (التراتب الادارية)

وَقَدْ قَالَ الشَّيْخُ أَبُو مُحَمَّدٍ بْنُ أَبِي زَيْدٍ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فِي كِتَابِ الرَّسَالَةِ لَهُ : *وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ خَيْرَ الْقُلُوبِ أَوْعَاها لِلْخَيْرِ وَأَرْجَى الْقُلُوبِ لِلْخَيْرِ مَا لَمْ يَسْبِقِ الشَّرُّ إِلَيْهِ وَأَوْلَى مَا عَنِيَ بِهِ النَّاصِحُونَ وَرَعَبَ فِي أَجْرِهِ الرَّاعِبُونَ يَصَالُ الْخَيْرِ إِلَى قُلُوبِ أَوْلَادِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيُرْسَخَ فِيهَا وَتَنْبِيَهُهُمْ عَلَى مَعَالِمِ الدِّينَانَةِ وَخُدُودِ الشَّرِيعَةِ لِيُرَاضُوا عَلَيْهَا وَمَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ تَعْتِقِدَهُ مِنَ الدِّينِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَتَعْمَلَ بِهِ جَوَارِحُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُ رُوي أَنَّ تَغْلِيمَ الصَّغَارِ لِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ يُطْفِئُ غَضَبَ اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ تَغْلِيمَ الشَّيْءِ فِي الصَّغَرِ كَالنَّقْشِ فِي الْحَجَرِ انْتَهَى . (المدخل لابن الحاج العبدري)*

Decades back, the Ulama of South Africa, many of whom have already left this world, (and may Allah be pleased with all of them) had understood the importance of Islamically educating our children and embarked on a project of Islamic education in this country, a non-Muslim country, that is perhaps unparalleled in the world today. That project we refer to as the Maktab or Madrasah. It ensured that almost every Muslim child that goes to school will devote a few hours of his day under the guidance of an Aalim or an Apa/Muallimah where he will learn at the very least the basics of Islam. He will learn the Kalimah, the Shahadah (the declaration of faith), he will learn who is Allah, who is Rasulullah Sallallaahu Alayhi Wa Sallam and how to read the Quran. He will learn how to make Wudhu, how to read Salaah and the conduct expected from a proper Muslim. Today, the system that was established decades ago in this country is only taking root in other countries across the globe.

It takes only a trip to another country and some conversation with the youth and even adults who passed through life without the Maktab phase to realize the value of the system we have in our country. When you meet adult Muslims who are advanced in age and are professionals in their fields, yet cannot recite the Kalimah/Shahadah nor read the Arabic text of the Quran, nor even make Wudhu correctly, then tears of gratitude will flow from your eyes in tribute to the instruction of your teachers in the years of your childhood.

Rasulullah ﷺ has stated: “When a person dies his deeds come to an end except from three sources: Sadaqah-Jaariyah (perpetually recurring Sadaqah), Knowledge (passed on) from which benefit is derived, or a pious child who makes Dua.” If we wish to have

those children who will make Dua for us when we leave this world, then the first step in that direction is to ensure a proper Islamic upbringing for our children and the Maktab is undoubtedly a step in the right direction.¹⁰

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (radhiAllahu anhu) said: There are three people who people cannot do without; a) People need a ruler who can establish justice between them. If it were not for such rulers, some people would have oppressed others. b) People need such traders who sell copies of the Qur'an. If such people were not available, the book of Allah would be scarce. c) People need a teacher who will teach their children, and will receive a wage. If it were not for such teachers, people would have remained ignorant and illiterate.¹¹

Significance of the makaatib

The place where tomorrow's leaders will be prepared

Whenever the great Imaam Saeed ibnul Musayyab رضي الله عنه passed by a Maktab, he would remark:

هؤلاء الناس بعدنا

“These are the leaders of tomorrow” (Tabaqaat Ibn Sa'd 5/141)

The imaan of our children will be protected

من تعلم القرآن في شببته اختلط القرآن بلحمه ودمه

¹⁰ Excerpts from an article which Jamiatul Ulama KZN had prepared on this subject.

¹¹ Aadaabul Mu'allimeen of Muhammad Ibn Sahnoon (d.256) pg.82

عن عبد الله بن مسعود أنه قال: "لابد للناس من معلم يعلم أولادهم، ويأخذ على ذلك أجرا، ولولا ذلك لكان الناس أميين"

Rasulullah ﷺ said: “Whoever learns the Quran when he is young, the Qur’an will mix with his flesh and blood. (Shu’abul Imaan of Baihaqi, Haakim authenticated one chain by declaring it Mahfuz)

The effect of the makaatib in warding off the punishment of Allah ﷻ from our areas

ثابت بن عجلان الأنصاري، قال: " كان يقال: إن الله ليريد العذاب بأهل الأرض، فإذا سمع تعليم الصبيان الحكمة، صرف ذلك عنهم " قال مروان: يعني بالحكمة: القرآن (سنن الدارمي)
Thaabit bin Ajlaan Ansaari ؓ says: “It used to be said (in the era of the Sahaabah ؓ) that (sometimes) Allah Ta’ala intends to punish the people of a certain area, but when He hears the children being taught the Quran, He diverts that punishment.” (Sunan Daarimi no.3345)

Parent saved from punishment by virtue of child attending the maktab

A pious man narrates: In my neighborhood, lived a man who was addicted to liquor. After he passed away, I prayed to Allah I to show him to me in a dream. I saw him after six years, and he was dressed in green clothing. I asked, “How did Allah ﷻ deal with you?” He replied, “When I passed away, I was dispatched to Jahannam (hell), where I was beaten with a whip made of fire, a thousand lashes for every sip of liquor I had taken. However, my wife was pregnant when I passed away, and she gave birth to a boy. When he began to speak and learnt to say ‘Laa ilaaha illAllah’ (There is none worthy of worship except Allah), Allah ﷻ removed me from Jahannam. When the boy reached five, he began to learn at a Madrasah. The teacher taught him to recite ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem’ (In the name of Allah, the Most

Compassionate, the Most Merciful). When the boy recited it, Allah ﷻ admitted me into Jannah (paradise), where I was given that which no eye has seen and no ear has heard.”¹²

Imam Fakhruddin Raazi (رحمۃ اللہ علیہ) has quoted the following incident in his famous *At-Tafseerul-Kabeer*: Nabi Isa ﷺ was once proceeding to a certain place for some task when he passed by a grave. On looking at the grave, Allah ﷻ showed him that angels of punishment were torturing the inmate of the grave. Sometime later, when Nabi Isa ﷺ had completed his task and was returning, he again passed by the grave. However, Allah ﷻ now showed him that instead of angels of punishment, there were angels of mercy at the grave, bearing platters of divine radiance! Nabi Isa ﷺ was surprised at this sudden change in condition. He thus performed salaah and engaged in du‘aa, begging Allah ﷻ to reveal to him what had caused the punishment of the inmate to cease and be replaced with His special mercy.

Allah ﷻ sent revelation to Nabi ‘Isa ﷺ informing him thus: O ‘Isa! This servant led a life of disobedience and sin, and he has thus been engulfed in punishment from the time he passed away. However, when he passed away, he left a wife who was expecting a child. After the child was born, she raised him and saw to his upbringing until he grew into a young boy. She then made him over to the maktab (elementary madrasah) teachers. After entering the madrasah, the teacher made the child recite ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem’ (In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful).

¹² Az Zahrul Fā’ih Fī Dhikri Man Tanazzaha ‘Anidh Dhunūbi Wal Qabā’ih, p 46, Pearls of the Path v.2 pg.45

استحييت من عبدي أن أعذبه بناري في بطن الأرض وولده يذكر اسمي على وجه الأرض
“I am ashamed to punish this slave of Mine with My fire under
the earth, while his son is taking My name (Allah, Ar-Rahmaan
and Ar-Raheem) above the Earth.”¹³

The du’a of the maktab children

Sahnoon (rahimahullah), the famous Waliyy, was once overtaken
by a spiritual condition, when he uttered the following:

فليس لي في سواك حظ فكيف ما شئت فامتحن

I have no feelings for any one besides You, so test me as you please.

He was therefore tested. He suffered urine blockage. In a dream,
he saw a pious man who he complained of his situation to. He
was advised in the dream to ask for du’a from the maktab
children. (عليك بدعاء الكتاتيب) He then went to the makaatib, with his
urine container, requesting the children to make du’a for him.
Her would say, “This occurred due to my tongue. Please make
du’a for your sick uncle.”¹⁴

The consequence of depriving our children of maktab education

Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ has narrated the following
incident: A man who was a resident of the town of Gawaaliya,

¹³ At-Tafseerul Kabeer vol. 1, pg. 143

مر عيسى ابن مريم عليه السلام على قبر فرأى ملائكة العذاب يعذبون ميتا فلما انصرف من حاجته مر على القبر
فرأى ملائكة الرحمة معهم أطباق من نور فتعجب من ذلك فضلى ودعا الله تعالى فأوحى الله تعالى إليه يا عيسى
كان هذا العبد عاصيا ومذمات كان محبوسا في عذابي وكان قد ترك امرأة حبلى فولدت ولدا وربته حتى كبر
فسلمته إلى الكتاب فللقنه المعلم بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم فاستحييت من عبدي أن أعذبه بناري في بطن الأرض
وولده يذكر اسمي على وجه الأرض (مفاتيح الغيب)

¹⁴ Tarikh Baghdad 9/235, Al-Muntazam 6/108, Khayrul Quroon ki Darsgahe
pg.347

India, engaged his son from childhood in the acquisition of Western and English (secular) education. He expended a considerable sum of money in his son's worldly education. (After reaching the pinnacles of Western (secular) education which the institutions of India could offer,) The father despatched his son to London to obtain the highest qualifications, which he passed. Upon returning to India, he fell seriously ill. His condition deteriorated to the extent that he was on the verge of death. The father, (stricken with grief), sat at the head-side of his dying son and wailed, "O my son, I have spent twenty five thousand rupees for your education, but I have not got a chance to see the fruits of my efforts." The son suddenly opened his eyes and exclaimed, "O my beloved father! Why are you wailing and crying now? When you observe me in the Aakhirah burning in the fire of Jahannam, then you will really cry. By spending those twenty five thousand Rupees, you have made sure arrangements to have me despatched to Jahannam. You have purchased Jahannam for me with this amount. The reason I say this is that you deprived me of Deeni education in the process. Right now, I realize that all that I had studied and learnt is futile and of no benefit. The angels of death are arriving. By spending such a large sum, you have not shown friendship to me, but you have actually displayed your open enmity for me and proved that you are my enemy."¹⁵

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi said: In a Jalsah in Meerut, I stated, "You people regard the Ulama to be dependent on your donations. Why don't you stop supporting them? Hold a meeting and make a resolution to stop supporting them. Alhamdulillah, it

¹⁵ Wa'z-Al-Huda wal Maghfirah, as quoted in Fataawa Rahimiyyah v.3 pg.131

will not bother us in the least. Some will open rice shops, others will open grocery shops and others will open all sorts of other shops. However, in such a situation, you will have to shoulder the worry of your own children. After a period of just fifty years, you will see for yourselves the condition of your children. Some will become Jews, others will become Christians, while yet others will turn Hindu etc. May Allah forbid! It is Islamic education which is preventing all of these calamities. In the above situation, Ulama will not be available for imparting Islamic education.”¹⁶

Importance of the Makaatib in the eyes of our recent scholars and thinkers

Shaykhul Hind Maulana Mahmudul Hasan Deobandi, on being released after four years of imprisonment in Malta, said to a large group of Ulama who had come to meet him in Deoband:

We learnt two lessons during our stay in Malta. The more I pondered over the decline and fall of the Ummah in all aspects, whether deeni or duniyawi (religious or worldly), the more I was convinced that there were two primary causes for it:

- (1) Deserting the Qur’aan
- (2) Fighting over petty issues

Thus, I intend to spend the rest of my life in propagating the words and meanings of the Qur’aan, by establishing makaatib (primary madrasahs for Islamic learning) in every single area to teach children the method of reciting the Qur’aan, and by initiating adult lessons in which the meanings of the Qur’aan will

¹⁶ Kalimatul-Haqq pg.37

be taught to the public and in which they will be encouraged to practice on its teachings. I have also resolved not to allow any internal fights to break out (especially amongst the Ulama).¹⁷

It is also mentioned about Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani رحمہ اللہ that during the last part of his life his health had deteriorated. The doctors had also forbidden him from travelling. However, if any person invited Maulana رحمہ اللہ to officially start a Maktab which they had established, he would immediately accept the invitation and even travel out to start the Maktab.

Maulana Yusuf Motala رحمہ اللہ of England said: If you study and ponder over the history of Muslims who came after Nabi ﷺ, you will no doubt find numerous examples and incidents which will clearly testify that this method of ta'leem i.e. establishment of Maktab, has remained the most vital and effective way of retaining and preserving our Deen in its original pristine purity. This is also the reason why the children of those people who established Makaatib maintained their Islamic identity. A community, who fails to do this, will find it extremely difficult to maintain its Islamic identity.¹⁸

The famous poet, Hakeem Ahmad Shujaa', was a great admirer of Dr. Iqbal, the poet of the East. In his book 'Khun Bahaa', he mentions a few of his experiences with Dr Iqbal. In one place, he wrote: In one gathering, I mentioned the Makaatib and Madaaris (negatively). Dr. Iqbal said to me with great emotion and heart-felt pain, "When I was young like you, I also shared similar sentiments. I wished for the same kind of revolution which you

¹⁷ Akaabir-e-Deoband kya thei pg.17

¹⁸ talimiboardkzn.org

wish for. (I wished for) Such a revolution which will make the Muslims stand equally with the modern, cultured Western people. After visiting Europe, my opinion changed. Leave these (traditional) Makaatib (and Madaaris) as they are. Allow the children of the poor Muslims to learn and study at these Makaatib. If these simple Ulama and ascetics do not remain, do you know what will happen? I have just seen with my own eyes the (disastrous) consequences and outcome which will ensue. If the Muslims of India are deprived of the effects of these Makaatib, we will face a situation just like that of Spain. Despite Muslims ruling over Spain for 800 years, today, no traces of the signs of the Muslims and Islamic culture can be found, other than a few buildings in Granada and Cordova and the remnants of Al-Hambra palace and Baabul Ikhwatain. Similarly, (if these Makaatib no longer remain), you will not find any traces of 800 years of Muslim rule and Islamic culture in India, other than the Taj Mahal in Agra and the Red Fort in Delhi.¹⁹

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (rahmatullahi alayh) addressed some madrasah graduates:

“Please forgive me (for saying this). Presently, I am not so convinced regarding the benefits of having Higher-level Arabic Madrasahs (Darul Uloom) in every small town and village and I do not feel that every area must have the final year kitaabs and every Madrasah must complete Bukhaari Shareef. There is a greater need now for makaatib (plural of maktab).

As we are sitting here, India is changing very, very, fast. Everything is being controlled by the government. Presently, it’s



¹⁹ Awraaq Gum Gushtah by Raheem Bakhsh Shaheen, quoting from Chiraagh-e-Raah pg. 92, Khun Bahaa 1/439

the turn of the Muslim universities (to be under their control). Tomorrow it can be the Madrasahs. Thus, it is for this reason that we have to spread out the net of maktabas and make the masjids the centre of a Muslim's life.

Eventually, it will be in the masjid, where change shall take place. Thus, make such a place your centre where change will reach with a delay, or by the time any change reaches there, Qiyaamat will arrive. Therefore, make the masjids your centres and establish as many maktabas as you can.

You should not at all be distressed that you were once in a (big) madrasah. You studied this (big kitaab) and studied that (big kitaab). You learnt the different sciences and facts (of Deeni knowledge) and now you are here speaking to villagers and you have to teach little children, thus you have now wasted your knowledge. Don't ever think like this.

Our goal is the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala and the preservation of Islam."²⁰

Maulana Muhammad Talha Kandehlawi , the son of Shaykhul-Hadith Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya Kandelawi  wrote the following in a letter to some organization who wished to start up makaatib: The main emphasis should be to get children enrolled in the makaatib so that the desire for Islam and learning the Qur'an is created. Make an effort to bring the children to the Makaatib and to send out the adults in Jamâ'at so that the desire of Deen is created in them and in that way it will be easier to get their children free for Deen.

²⁰ Paaja Suraagh-e-Zindagi Page 173/174, translated by talimiboardkzn.org

I will narrate one incident to show you how the missionary schools are destroying the Islamic beliefs of the youngsters.

Some respectable people have informed me that in one missionary school, Muslim children were gathered in one huge hall. It was said to them, "Ask your Allah for things to eat such as toffees, biscuits etc. See if He gives it to you or not!" The result was that they did not get anything. Then these young children were told, "ask your Nabi ﷺ" ... Finally they said to them, "ask Jesus for these things". The children were made to lift up their hands and supplicate. While busy in supplication, one of the missionaries pressed a switch and toffee, biscuits, chocolates and other delicacies desired by the children began falling from the roof.

Now, ponder! Will our children remain steadfast on Islam in this manner? Think deeply! If we do not wake up from our slumber of negligence now, then when will we?!

In another letter, he wrote: Our seniors, after being unsuccessful in their Jihad movement put their minds together and came to the conclusion that the only means for Islam to remain alive - was the establishment of Makaatib. Today, we have turned our attention elsewhere. Instead of expanding great efforts in buildings and spending money for beautifying the Madrasahs, the necessity today is for the establishment of more and more Makaatib. Instead of placing these children in the businesses or filling up the schools with them, we should prepare children during their youth in the Makaatib. After going to the Makaatib and becoming regular on salaah, the child will always remain a

regular performer of salah in whatever environment he will go. This should be the concern for all those linked to the Madrasahs.

Together with this, effort should be made on the adults that they become connected to the effort of Tabligh which is a mobile madrasah... If Islam is to remain alive in the world, then only by means of the Makaatib will Islam become widespread in the Ummah...²¹

Advices of Senior Ulama regarding the Makaatib

Maulana Ebrahim Dewla (daamat barakaatuhu)

In establishing Makaatib, the advice of Maulana Ebrahim Dewla (daamat barakaathu) of Nizamuddin to a group of brothers who were engaged in this effort is indeed very important and concise. The following five points were mentioned by him:

1. Spend on Ta'leem (quality education), not on Ta'meer (buildings).
2. Teach with a proper syllabus.
3. Have complete supervision.
4. Assist partly, not entirely (so that the locals also involve themselves in the maktab).
5. Work together with other established institutions in the area.

Maulana Abdul-Hamid Ishaq (daamat barakaatuhu):

The Makaatib, a protection for our Islamic identity

When I was lecturing at the Rand Afrikaans University, a professor, who was head of the department, mentioned to me, during a conversation:

²¹ Extracted from: The Importance of the Deeni Makaatib {religious primary Madrasahs} by Bhai Muhammad Talha Kandehlawi (ﷺ)

“The day the Primary Level Religious Institutions (Makaatib) do not exist, the Muslim community will exist as a professional community and as a business community – but they will not exist as a Muslim community anymore.”

The Makaatib, a cause of failure for the missionaries

In the nineties, the Christian NGO's who were carrying out missionary activities in Africa spent huge amounts of money in order to propagate their beliefs. In a particular place, they had purchased a farm in order to accommodate their missionaries. These missionaries would set out from their residence even before dawn to begin their activities. They targeted the underprivileged and provided the learners of such families with school books, food, blankets, and other amenities. These missionaries decided to hold a seminar to discuss their progress thus far. In their discussion, they acknowledged that they were unable to make inroads into the Muslim communities due to the Maktab system that was in place.

The mind of a child, innocent and receptive

In that seminar, another matter was also discussed. The Roman Catholics asserted that if a newly born child is handed over to them only until the age of five, then such a child will always remain a Roman Catholic. There is a famous Arabic saying which goes as follows, 'Whatever ideas are inscribed in the mind of a child during childhood remains embedded there like an inscription that has been inscribed on a rock.' In simple words, it will never be erased.

The lap of the mother, the first maktab for a child

People generally suppose that a child should be left to play in its first few years, so the child is left to do as he pleases. This is the type of foundation that we have laid for the child. Of course, this does not mean that the child should be formally taught, but a Muslim home should be a Maktab. There cannot possibly be a better teacher for the child than the mother herself. A helper, maid, nanny or baby-sitter does not have the interests of the child at heart. Their interest is their wages which they expect at the end of the month. The love that a mother gives to a child cannot be given by anyone else.

The fundamental education of a Muslim-The Quran

It is ironic that those who play nursery rhymes, music, videos and television channels to their children in their homes later complain about their children. They have no right to complain. Their example is of a person who chops his own legs with a chopper and then complains of the consequences. Our rise and fall is within us. It is extremely important that we teach the Qur'aan Sharif to our children at home.

Maktab education - The next stage

Moulana Ahmad Saadiq Desai of Majlisul-Ulama maintains that the Jihaad of the century is to establish Makaatib everywhere. I am, one hundred percent, in conformity with Moulana's suggestion. This is one of the greatest needs of the time. If run correctly, the Maktab is the place which forms the very foundation of the Ummah. This is the place which practically every Muslim child ought to attend. According to Hadhrat Ali (ؓ), the time for a child to play is until the age of seven. A child's

formal education and training should start from this time, for which we require the Maktab education.

The importance of the maktab subjects and the ideal environment

In the past, the moment a girl had learnt to recite the Quraan Sharif fluently (which we generally term as 'naazara'), her Islamic education would be considered as complete. This was the trend in the past. Only the Quraan Sharif was taught to the girls, who were then required to remain at home. Nowadays, the children are taught Quraan, in addition to other subjects including Hadith, Fiqh, history, Aqaaid, etc. When a person is properly educated in Islam, his Aqaaid will also be correct. Through Islamic education, people acquire the knowledge of the injunctions of the Quraan Sharif. Actually, the Maktab is the place wherein the children are trained and indoctrinated with the correct Aqaaid (beliefs), Akhlaaq (character) and A'maal (actions).

Education is one's power and strength, without which one can be deviated and influenced very easily. The effort of Da'wat and Tabligh has accomplished much, but if it is not coupled with the Maktab system, there is great fear of deviates like the Shias and Salafis ruining all the effort that was made. It is for this reason that the Tablighi elders stress that the Maktab system should also be in place.

The sources where these subjects are taught unadulterated are the Makaatib (in contrast to Islamic schools, as discussed above). The Maktab is the place where the Qur'aan Sharif and other Islamic subjects should be taught under the tutelage of such an Aalim or Aalimah that has sacrificed seven to ten years to study

the knowledge of Deen in its pristine form and has adopted practical Deen in his or her life as well.

Congratulations to those who teach in the Makaatib

Those who are serving in the makaatib are worthy of congratulations, since they are carrying out the most fundamental work of Nubuwwah. The institution of the makaatib is referred to by Allah, who has declared one of the most fundamental duties of Rasulullah (ﷺ) to be to teach the words of the Book of Allah to mankind.

A word of caution for those who teach in the Makaatib

Remember that Islamic education is not only restricted to formal education, but that the actual objective and purpose is to practice upon it. Whatever knowledge is acquired should be practiced upon. Knowledge plays the position of an Imaam and Amal (practicing upon that knowledge) is like the Muqtadi (the follower of the Imaam in Salaah). If we only have an Imaam, but not any Muqtadis, Salaah with Jama'ah can never take place.

In the Makaatib, many a teacher only imparts knowledge, but shows no concern over whether the child is performing Salaah or not, or whether the child is dressed correctly in Islamic attire or not. This indicates that the Ustaadh (teacher) is failing in his duty. This is part of his responsibility as well. It is the responsibility of the teacher to inculcate in the child Islamic Ethos and good character as well.

5 ways by which every person can serve Qur'anic education

1) Involve ourselves in the service of the local maktab: Everyone should devote himself to the teaching of the Qur'aan

Sharif. We should take a personal interest in the Makaanib (primary Madrasahs for the Islamic education of the children) that are established in our areas. A person who is interested in the future of his community should get involved in the Maktab system. We should ensure that we have a proper smooth-functioning Maktab system with the best of teachers.

2) Turn our homes and businesses into maktab: Every Muslim home should be a Maktab. There are those people who have allocated time for Ta'leem (imparting Islamic education) in their business places. In fact, some have initiated madrasahs that are operating at their businesses. A very good friend of mine, who is an Aalim, has a great passion for the Qur'aan Sharif. He visits the offices and businesses of people and teaches them Qur'aan, specifically accommodating those that have forgotten how to recite the Qur'aan Sharif. Others are under the impression that he is visiting for some work with the boss, while he is actually teaching him the Qur'aan Sharif. We should therefore make our businesses into Madrasahs as well.

3) Teach Qur'aan wherever we get the opportunity: We should all try and engage in the teaching of the Qur'aan. A person that knows how to recite Surah Fatiha should teach Surah Fatiha to another. One who has memorized a few Surahs should teach those few Surahs. A new-Muslim should be taught that much by which he can perform his Salaah, even if it means that he repeat the Surah in all the rak'ats. If the maid at home had accepted Islam, we should teach her, and not just push over the responsibility to the Imaam or local Aalim.

4) Sponsor a maktab student, a Haafiz or an Aalim: If one feels that he is unable to impart the knowledge of Deen, then at

least sponsor a Hafiz, so that you may have a Hafiz to your credit on the day of Qiyaamah. What great rewards have been stored for a person who makes his son a Hafidh-ul-Quraan?! If one is unable to do so, then at least sponsor a student.

5) Sponsor an entire maktab, local or abroad: Currently there is a demand for South Africans to run Makaatib in other countries. There are brothers that are overseeing institutes in Mozambique, Malawi and other countries. Involve a few businessmen and incorporate an Aalim as well in these projects. Once these projects have taken off, make regular visits to ensure the smooth functioning of these institutes. South Africans have a share in many parts of the world. We should therefore try to work locally or abroad, or both if it is within our means.²²

Maulana Salim Dhorat (daamat barakaatuhu)

The Madrasah's Legacy

The madrasah is not an insignificant institute. The flame of Īmān (faith) is first kindled in the madrasah. The light of Īmān first permeates the heart of a Muslim child in this environment. It teaches our young children moral values.

It is in the madrasah where we learned that to lie is a very great evil and that we should always speak the truth. It warned us against the use of bad language and that stealing, cheating and oppressing people are wrong. The madrasah taught us not to be a thorn in the side of our parents and to care for the elderly, orphans and widows. It was in the madrasah that we learned

²² Extracted from : Ilm, worldly knowledge and secular education, from the advices of Moulana Abdul Hamid Ishaq (daamat barakaatuhu)

that we should be kind to our neighbours, be they Muslim or non-Muslim.

The madrasah even taught us things that we do as adults without paying attention to them, like the simple yet rewarding act of removing an obstacle from a path. The good morals and character we take credit for as adults were acquired through the madrasah. All the teachings we are familiar with and today practice in our lives spring from there. By taking stock of every good deed we are performing and every evil that we detest and avoid, we will be witnessing the legacy of the period of our lives between the age of four or five up to thirteen or fourteen: the years spent in the madrasah.

Madaaris Benefit the Nation

The madrasah not only brings our children benefits in relation to the hereafter, it also provides them goodness in this world. Parents too, receive worldly gain: a child that spent its time well at madrasah will become a means of comfort and joy for its parents. The madrasah is a boon for the country as well because it produces good citizens, regardless of whether it operates in an Islamic country or a secular state. At madrasah, children are taught to respect the rights of all people and are warned against involvement in drugs, alcohol, theft, vandalism and all types of antisocial behaviour. It contributes towards a socially cohesive society and is a great blessing for humanity as a whole.

Rasulullah ﷺ came into this world as a mercy and all his teachings are full of mercy. What is taught in the madrasah is what the Rasulallah ﷺ taught. His life, his character, his dealings – they all form the basis of what our children learn. Every child

who attends a madrasah becomes familiar with these Prophetic teachings and is equipped to go on to embody them and serve humanity and work for its betterment.

Parents' Responsibilities Towards their Children

In order for a child to get the most out of his/her madrasah education, parents need to work in partnership with the madrasah. Parents should not hand over their children to the madrasah and feel that they have fulfilled their share of educational responsibility. Some parents are content with just enrolling their children in any madrasah, but even those that take the time to find one that offers the best ta'līm (education) and tarbiyah (upbringing) should not feel that after enrolling their child their duty has ended.

It is the parents who will be questioned by Allāh ﷻ about their children's education. If the teachers, principal or the management committee failed in fulfilling their responsibilities, they will also be held accountable for their actions, but the parents will be questioned and held primarily responsible for any negligence regarding their children.

Allāh ﷻ will demand the answers to two questions from every parent concerning their child: what 'ilm (sacred knowledge) did they give him and what ādāb (good manners/social etiquettes) did they teach him? Each mother and father will have to answer for each one of their children. And at that moment, no parent will be able to blame the child's teacher or madrasah chairman.

It is the parents' duty to give the correct ta'līm and tarbiyah to their children. They cannot exonerate themselves from it. In light

of this, the parents have to keep a close watch on the performance of their children. In the case of a madrasah not fulfilling its responsibility of educating and nurturing their children, parents should voice their concerns. And if the parents' concerns are not addressed adequately then they should remove their child and enrol him or her in another madrasah. It is just like when a child becomes sick and we take him to a doctor; we check the progress of the child and if we feel he is not receiving adequate treatment, we talk to the doctor. If, after a couple of such discussions, the condition persists and it seems pointless talking to the doctor any further, we look for a better doctor. Just as the parents are responsible for their child's physical treatment, they must shoulder the responsibility of their religious upbringing and education too.

A Partnership Between Parents and the Madrasah

Parents should also cooperate with the madrasah and try to understand its aims and objectives. If a madrasah emphasises punctuality and regular attendance, with few breaks in between, parents should cooperate. For instance, if the board of scholars or committee of a particular madrasah consider it necessary to decrease holidays to allow enough hours to complete the curriculum, parents should ensure the attendance of their child. The people responsible are aware that if they allow longer holidays, the end result will be academic, religious and social underachievement. Therefore parents should cooperate with the madrasah; a vast amount of time and effort is spent in deciding what is best for our children.

Being involved with both the madrasah and dārul 'ulūm educational systems, I am of the opinion that it is the madrasah

more than the dārul 'ulūm that is of crucial importance to the Muslim community, since ninety percent of Muslim children will pass through it...This fact is enough for us to understand the primary importance of the madrasah system in educating our children to become good Muslims who will serve as role models for our society.

Therefore we all must work together: the principal, the teachers and the parents. Cooperation will enable us to build a secure future for our coming generations, in which the masājid will continue to be attended, the Dīnī environment we take for granted now will be maintained and society at large will continue to benefit from good citizens. Our children are the future. May Allāh ﷻ assist, bless and guide us in this noble task. Āmīn.²³

What is taught in a Maktab?

Harun Ar-Rashid (the famous Abbasi khalifah) advised his son's teacher Abul Hasan Al-Ahmar:

“O Ahmar, verily Ameerul Mu'mineen (referring to himself) is entrusting in your care a part of himself and the apple of his eye, so take him under your wing. Make his obedience to you obligatory. Let him regard you as if YOU are the Ameerul Mu'mineen (leader of the Muslims). Teach him to recite the Qur'an and acquaint him with (Islamic) history. the traditions of our noble prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Narrate to him poetry and literature. Teach him the sunan – the traditions of Rasulullah (sallAllahu alaihi wasallam). Make him aware of the times at which he should speak and when he should remain silent. Prohibit him from laughing at inappropriate times. Teach

²³ Riyādul Jannah, Vol. 15 No. 12, Dec 2006

him how to respect the elders of Banu Haashim (his family elders) if they come to meet him, and how to respect the senior state officials if they enter into his presence. Do not allow a moment to pass by wherein you do not take the opportunity of teaching him something beneficial. But do not bore him, otherwise you will kill his mind and brain. Don't be too tolerant, otherwise he will become accustomed to a free and unrestricted life and will love it. Correct him with love and kindness, but if he rejects this approach then you must be firm and strict."²⁴

The greatest concern for our makaatib – for the students to practice on what is learnt

عن زياد بن لبيد الأنصار رضي الله عنه قال : أتيت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم و هو يحدث أصحابه و هو يقول قد ذهب أوان العلم قلت : بأبي و أمي و كيف يذهب أوان العلم و نحن نقرأ القرآن ونعلمه أبناؤنا و يعلمه أبناؤنا أبناؤهم إلى أن تقوم الساعة ؟ فقال : ثكلتك أمك يا ابن الوليد إن كنت لأراك من أفقه أهل المدينة أو ليس اليهود و النصارى يقرؤون التوراة و الإنجيل و لا ينتفعون منهما بشيء (رواه الحاكم في المستدرک وقال هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين و لم يخرجاه)

Rasulullah ﷺ once remarked: “The time has come for knowledge to be uplifted from people.” Ziyaad bin Labeed Ansaari ﷺ asked: “How will knowledge be uplifted when we read the Quran; and we will continue teaching it to our children and they will teach it

²⁴ يا أحمر إن أمير المؤمنين قد دفع إليك مهجة نفسه وثمره قلبه، فصير يدك عليه مسبوطة وطاعته لك واجبة، فكن له بحيث وضعك أمير المؤمنين. أقرئه القرآن وعلمه الأخبار وروو الأشعار وعلمه السنن، وبصره بمواقع الكلام وبدنه وامنعه من الضحك إلا في أوقاته، وخذ به بتعظيم مشايخ بني هاشم، إذا دخلوا عليه، ورفع مجالس القواد، إذا حضروا مجلسه. ولا تمرن بك ساعة إلا وأنت مغتم فائدة تفيده إياها من غير أن تحزنه، فتمت ذمته. ولا تمنع في مسامحته، فيستحلي الفراغ وبألفه. وقومه ما استطعت بالقرب والملاينة، فإن أباهما فعليك بالشدّة والغلظة. انتهى

Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldun 1/478, Al-Mahaasin wal Musaawi of Baihaqi pg.244

to their children until the day of Qiyaamah?” Rasulullah ﷺ replied: “Ibnul Waleed! If only your mother had lost you! I always thought you were among the most understanding people of Madinah! (But here you fail to understand a simple thing!) Don’t the Jews and Christians teach the Torah and the Gospel to their children; yet they do not benefit from these books at all (when they fail to practice on these books).” (Mustadrak Haakim)

This however will only be possible if the parents co-operate with the teachers and are ready to sacrifice for their children and make lifestyle changes to support what their children learn in the Makaatib. May Allah enable us all to do so. Aameen