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THE IMPORTANCE OF STRUCTURED MAKĀTIB

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

Many parents prioritise their children's worldly education, believing it will help them earn a living, and they ensure that their children attend the best schools, and instil the belief that any laziness regarding secular studies results in failure in the future of the child's life. While a sound secular education is important, it is even more crucial to provide our children with a strong Maktab education. They need to live as devout Muslims, obeying Allah's commands, as their true success lies in holding firm to their Imān until their last breath. With a solid foundation in the Qur'an, 'Aqīdah, and Fiqh, they will find it easier to follow Allah's commandments and receive His mercy.

حَدَّثَنَا أَيُّوبُ بْنُ مُوسَى، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ جَدِّهِ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: "مَا نَحَلَ وَالِدٌ وَلَدًا مِنْ نَحْلٍ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ أَدَبٍ حَسَنٍ."

Ayyub bin Musa narrated from his father, from his grandfather, that the Messenger of Allah said: "There is no gift that a father gives his son more virtuous than good manners." Jami' at-Tirmidhi 1952

The Prophet ﷺ states in a Hadith, addressing the importance of learning and teaching the Qur'an:

عَنْ عُثْمَانَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: "خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ."

Narrated `Uthman RA: The Prophet ﷺ said: "The best among you (Muslims) are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it." Sahih al-Bukhari 5027

The current system

Many parents today place significant emphasis on their children completing a full recitation of the Qur'an (Qur'an Sharif Khatam) as quickly as possible. While this is undoubtedly a very rewarding action, it's crucial to remember that the focus should not just be on finishing the Qur'an quickly, especially if it is done without adhering to the rules of Tajwīd. This approach can sometimes lead to an overemphasis on simply reading the Qur'an, leaving less time to focus on other essential aspects of Deen.

Every parent is concerned about how to raise their children in a way that strengthens their Islamic identity, instils good manners, politeness, and respect, enables them to read the Qur'an confidently with correct Tajwīd (pronunciation) and fluency, and equips them with the basic Islamic knowledge they will need throughout their lives. Parents send their children to Madrasah, Arabic School, or Hifz class with these goals in mind. They expect that if their child grows up to be a strong Muslim, they will have the capability to become the best husband or wife, the best father or mother, and the best human being.

Let's ask ourselves, did I gain the above qualities from attending a Madrasah/Arabic School/Hifz class when I was young? Is my Qur'ān recitation, as well as the recitation of my friends and relatives of the same age, sufficient to lead Salāh in a manner that would ensure the Salāh is accepted? Do I know the basic Farāidh and Wājibāt (Compulsory actions) of Wudu, Ghusl, Salāh etc?

Most people today would answer in the negative. We can clearly see the condition of the Ummah, as it often happens that when a regular brother leads Salāh in the Masjid or a Musallā, the congregants have to ask a Maulana or Shaykh whether the Salāh was valid. The most common questions that the Imams get asked by the adults of the general public are basic elementary questions of Islamic knowledge.

In earlier times, it was wrongly assumed by some parents that children can learn to recite however they wish at a Maktab/Madrasah/Arabic School/ Hifz class. Later in life, they can join an Arabic Madrasah, where they can learn to recite the Qur'ān correctly with Tajwīd. This is a totally wrong notion. Tajwīd should be taught from the very first day at a Maktab. This is essential so that whenever a child recites the Qur'ān, he or she should be able to do it properly. It is obligatory to recite the Qur'ān with Tajwīd. One who fails to recite the Qur'ān with Tajwīd will be considered a sinner by Allāh ﷻ.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

“We have sent it down, as an Arabic Qur'an, so that you may understand”. (12:2)

What is a Maktab?

This brings us to the explanation of what constitutes a structured Maktab. A Maktab is a structured Madrasah system that consists of:

1. Formal administration:

There should be a system of enrolment, policies and procedures to follow. This helps keep the parents and students informed of the high expectations and goals of the Maktab.

2. Structured and formal teaching methodology:

The teachers should be trained how to teach the students as a class, how to maintain discipline and how to cover the syllabus in a manner that the children can understand.

3. Syllabus: There should be a set structured syllabus consisting of:

- A. Qā'idah or Qur'ān taught along with the rules of Tajwīd.
- B. Aqeedah subjects (basic beliefs about Allah, books angles etc.).
- C. Fiqh subjects, (the basics of Wudu, Ghusl, Salāh etc.).
- D. Akhlāq (character and manners, respect for elders etc.).
- E. Seerah, the life of the Prophet ﷺ and Sahabah RA so they can form a strong Islamic identity.
- F. Kalimahs, Hadith and Duas.

4. Quality support:

Our Maktab or Madrasah system should be as structured and formal as our school systems, essentially functioning like an Islamic school after regular school hours, focusing primarily on Islamic studies.

Once the above structure is achieved, there are four objectives of a Maktab:

- A. Familiarise the Children with the Arabic language with its correct pronunciation.
- B. Ensure they have the correct beliefs about Islam.
- C. Teach practical Fiqh (Wudu, ghusl, Salāh etc.)

D. Teach Seerah so the children can grow to know and love our prophet ﷺ and Sahabah RA. The Maktab is the backbone of the Ummah and establishes a strong faith in Allah ﷻ within the heart of every Muslim child. Tauheed (belief in the Oneness of Allah and His unique Qualities), Risālat (belief in the Messenger-ship of all the Messengers, especially Nabi Muhammad ﷺ) and Ākhirah (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 ﷻ. **Wherever in the world the Maktab system is not established, people there easily lose their direction in Deen.**

The Prophet ﷺ says in a Hadith:

عَنْ جُنْدُبِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ كُنَّا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَنَحْنُ فِتْيَانٌ حَزَاوِرَةٌ فَتَعَلَّمْنَا الْإِيمَانَ ثُمَّ تَعَلَّمْنَا الْقُرْآنَ فَأَزْدَدْنَا بِهِ إِيمَانًا قَبْلَ أَنْ نَتَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ

Jubair bin Abdullah (RA) says: “We were with the prophet ﷺ as boys approaching our teenage years. We learnt Imān before we learnt the Qur’ān and then we learnt the Qur’ān and it increased us in Imān.” (Sunan Ibn Mājah 61)

We can clearly see from the above Hadith, that Rasulullah ﷺ first focused on the Islamic nurturing of the children and once they reached the age of mental maturity (teenage years), they were taught the Qur’ān so they could understand both its spiritual importance as well as master its delicate rulings and nuances.

If we can establish structured Maktab, we will witness a rise in the Islamic literacy of the Ummah. The next generation will improve in manners, etiquette, character, Islamic knowledge, and practice. Maktab students who choose to further their Islamic studies and become 'Ulamā will be of a higher calibre and will return to teach in the Makātib (plural of Maktab), continuing the cycle of preserving future Muslim generations and elevating their Imān. May Allah ﷻ grant us the understanding and strength to establish such institutions throughout the world!

A brief contrast of the Islamic value system with the secular educational system

THE ISLAMIC VALUE SYSTEM SEES MAN AS:	SECULAR VALUE SYSTEM SEES MAN AS:
VICEGERENT (KHALIFAH OF THE CREATOR)	SOVEREIGN
OBLIGATIONS ORIENTATED	RIGHTS ORIENTATED
LEARN TO SERVE	LEARN TO EARN
SACRIFICE	PLEASURE
HUMILITY	PRIDE
ACCOUNTABILITY	HEEDLESSNESS
TRANSFORMATION	INFORMATION



Reference: Maktab Australia

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