

# Ta'arruf as a Philosophy of Muslim Education

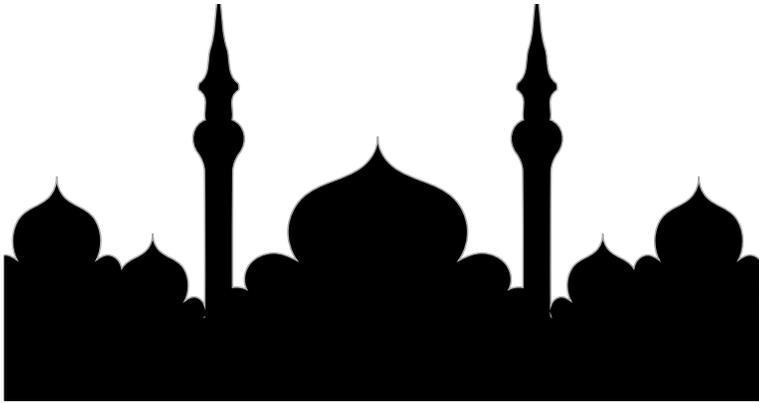
EXTENDING ABU BAKR EFFENDI'S PRAGMATISM

Yusef Waghid

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Yusef Waghid



SUN PRESS

*Ta'arruf as a philosophy of Muslim education - Extending Abu Bakr Effendi's pragmatism*

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First edition 2020

ISBN 978-1-928357-76-6

ISBN 978-1-928357-77-3 (e-book)

<https://doi.org/10.18820/9781928357773>

Gentium Basic Regular 11/14

Cover design, typesetting and production by African Sun Media

SUN PRess is an imprint of African Sun Media. Scholarly, professional and reference works are published under this imprint in print and electronic formats.

This publication can be ordered from:

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My profound gratitude is extended to Allāh Almighty, who has given me the Qurān and the Prophet (ﷺ) as an example to pursue knowledge in a higher education context continuously.

I express my indebtedness to my madrassah teachers, who influenced my rationality as a young learner attending their formal classes in District Six, namely, Haj Isma'il Fredericks, Haj Imam Abu Bakr Simons, and my grandfather, Haj Mogamad Salegh Williams. My initiation into Muslim education started with them who paved the way for me to continue researching educational philosophy.

My gratitude is also extended to Professor Dr Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, former Director of the Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC) now affiliated to the International Islamic University of Malaysia, whose seminal ideas (as a teacher and esteemed scholar) impacted my philosophical understanding of contemporary Muslim education.

I am also grateful to some of the staff, especially Sarvat Ujra, at the Markfield Institute of Higher Education, in Leicester in the United Kingdom for affording me the opportunity to share some of my initial thoughts on associational knowing (ta'arruf). I am humbled by the Institute's efforts to integrate knowledge that can engender academic rigour and the quest for truth and justice in Muslim education. My gratitude is also extended to Dr Yomna Awad from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto in Canada for her exemplary contribution to correct some of the Arabic translations in the text. I remain indebted to the reviewers who offered valuable advice on improving the quality of the manuscript.

This book would not be possible if it were not for the research ethos of Stellenbosch University (South Africa) where I have worked as a professional philosopher of education for more than two decades. My gratitude is especially extended to the Vice-Rector: Research and Innovation, Professor Eugene Cloete for his generous financial support and his continuous advancement of scholarship at the institution.

My enunciations and arguments proffered in defence of associational knowing (ta'arruf) remain in potentiality, and I do not claim to have the final word on the concept.

**Yusef Waghid**  
**1 November 2020**  
**Constantia, Cape Town**

# DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the great-great-granddaughter of his eminence,  
Abu Bakr Effendi,

my spouse Niedah Waghid (daughter of Zanap and Faiek),

our children Faiq, Zayd, and Sihan and spouses Aneesa, Faatimah, and  
Yasin,

and our grandchildren, Qaani'ah Sausaan, Hanaa', Sufiyah, Yusef, and  
Yahya.

May Allāh Almighty have mercy on you all and inspire you with wisdom!

## EXTRACT OF EFFENDI FAMILY TREE

**1st Generation:** Abu Bakr Effendi and Tahora Saban Cook

**2nd Generation:** Muhammad Alaeddin Effendi and Koelsem van der Schyff

**3rd Generation:** Amina Effendi and Mogamad Noor Toefy

**4th Generation:** Zanap Toefy and Faiek van der Schyff (father of Tauriq van der Schyff and son of Abu Bakr van der Schyff, the sibling of Koelsem van der Schyff)

**5th Generation:** Niedah van der Schyff and Yusef Waghid

# GLOSSARY OF ARABIC TERMS

<b>‘adl</b>	justice
<b>‘allama</b>	to teach
<b>‘aql</b>	human intellect
<b>‘arafa</b>	to know
<b>‘ayn al-yaqīn</b>	certainty of witnessing
<b>a-immah</b>	religious leaders
<b>adab</b>	goodness
<b>Aḥādīth</b>	Prophetic pronouncements
<b>al-bayyināt</b>	the clear proofs
<b>al-nās</b>	humanity
<b>al-Rahīm</b>	The One who forgives
<b>al-Rahmān</b>	The Compassionate
<b>al-tasawwuf</b>	Islamic metaphysics
<b>amānah</b>	trust
<b>aqīdah</b>	faith
<b>awqāf</b>	charitable endowments
<b>baghy</b>	oppression
<b>bashīr</b>	glad tidings or good news
<b>baṣīrah</b>	discernment
<b>Bayān al-Dīn</b>	an elucidation of religion
<b>bayān</b>	explanation
<b>birr</b>	righteousness
<b>da’wah</b>	summoning (of people)
<b>dhakara</b>	to remember
<b>dhikr</b>	remembrance
<b>dīn</b>	religion
<b>fahm</b>	discernment
<b>faḥshā’</b>	immorality

<b>falsafah-ḥikmah</b>	philosophical wisdom
<b>farḍ</b>	compulsory
<b>fasād fi al-'ard</b>	corruption of the earth
<b>fatāwā</b>	legal judgments
<b>fatwā</b>	legal judgment
<b>fiqh</b>	Islamic jurisprudence
<b>fu'ād</b>	spiritual organ of cognition
<b>ghufrān</b>	forgiveness
<b>ḥadath</b>	ritual
<b>Ḥādīth</b>	Prophetic pronouncement
<b>ḥāfiẓ</b>	a person who committed the Qurān to memory
<b>ḥalāl</b>	acceptable
<b>haqq al-yaqīn</b>	the truth of certainty
<b>haqq</b>	truth
<b>ḥarām</b>	prohibited
<b>hawā</b>	vanity
<b>ḥifẓ</b>	guarding (of the Quran)
<b>ḥikmah</b>	wisdom
<b>hudā</b>	guidance
<b>'ibādāt</b>	acts of service
<b>iḥsān</b>	performance of good deeds
<b>ijmā'</b>	consensus
<b>ijtihād</b>	independent reasoning or intellectual striving
<b>ikrām</b>	virtuosity
<b>'ilm al-yaqīn</b>	certainty of mind
<b>'ilm</b>	knowledge
<b>imām</b>	religious leader
<b>imāmah</b>	religious leadership
<b>īmān</b>	belief
<b>iṣlāḥ</b>	(equitable) reconciliation
<b>ithm</b>	crime
<b>jahada</b>	to strive
<b>jāmi'ah</b>	university

<b>jihād</b>	striving
<b>jumu'ah</b>	congregational worship
<b>khalāifah al-ard</b>	inheritors or protectors of the earth
<b>ḵhamr</b>	extract from the juices of grapes
<b>ḵhayr ummah</b>	the most justifiable community
<b>kitab mubīn</b>	Clear Book
<b>madāris</b>	schools
<b>madhāhib</b>	jurisprudential schools
<b>madhhab</b>	jurisprudential school
<b>madrasah</b>	school
<b>Marāshid al-Dīn</b>	Right ways of religion
<b>marāshid</b>	right ways
<b>mathhab</b>	jurisprudential school
<b>mu'minūn</b>	believers
<b>mudarris</b>	teacher or professor
<b>mufliḵūn</b>	flourishing people
<b>munkar</b>	wrongdoing
<b>muttaqūn</b>	righteous persons
<b>nadhīr</b>	warnings
<b>nafs</b>	self
<b>qāri'</b>	one who recites (the Qurān)
<b>qisṭ</b>	equitable solution
<b>qiyās</b>	analogic reasoning
<b>Qurān</b>	The Holy Qurān
<b>rabb</b>	The Creator (who educates)
<b>raḥmah</b>	compassion
<b>ri'āyah</b>	care
<b>rūḥ</b>	soul
<b>rusul</b>	messengers
<b>sa'ādah</b>	happiness
<b>sam'</b>	listen
<b>sharī'ah</b>	Islamic law
<b>shūrā</b>	mutual consultation

<b>Sunnah</b>	life experiences of Prophet Muhammad
<b>sūrah</b>	chapter
<b>ta'allum</b>	learning
<b>ta'āluḥ</b>	mutual affection
<b>ta'ārafū</b>	to know one another
<b>ta'arruf</b>	associational knowing
<b>ta'dīb</b>	good education
<b>ta'līm</b>	teaching
<b>ta'wīl</b>	deep analysis
<b>tadabbur</b>	contemplation
<b>tadhakkur</b>	remembrance
<b>tafakkur</b>	contemplation
<b>tafāsīr</b>	exegeses (of Qurān)
<b>tafsīr</b>	exegesis (of Qurān)
<b>taqlid</b>	imitation
<b>taqwāh</b>	reverence
<b>tarbiyyah</b>	rearing
<b>ṭarīqah Sufi</b>	order
<b>ṭarīqāt Sufi</b>	orders
<b>tasawwuf-‘irfān</b>	metaphysics
<b>‘udwān</b>	rancour (hatred)
<b>‘ulamā</b>	scholars
<b>ulu al-amr</b>	people of (intellectual) authority
<b>ulu al-bāb</b>	people of understanding
<b>‘ulūm al-aqliyyah</b>	non-revealed sciences
<b>‘ulūm al-naqliyyah</b>	revealed sciences
<b>ummah</b>	community
<b>ummatan wasaṭan</b>	a justly balanced community
<b>wājib</b>	necessary
<b>yaqīn</b>	certainty

# TRANSLITERATION TABLE

## Arabic to English

### Short Vowels

أ	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w
ي	y

### Long Vowels

أ	ā
و	ū
ي	ī

# PART I



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الحمد لله الذي جعلنا من هذه المدينة  
مكة المكرمة التي فيها نشأ سيدنا محمد  
صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم وأمه السيدة  
الطاهرة السيدة خديجة بنت خويلد  
والتي فيها ولد له سيدنا محمد  
صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم في يوم الاثنين  
الثامن عشر من شهر ربيع الأول سنة  
الفيل من الهجرة النبوية  
والتي فيها ولد له سيدنا محمد  
صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم في يوم الاثنين  
الثامن عشر من شهر ربيع الأول سنة  
الفيل من الهجرة النبوية  
والتي فيها ولد له سيدنا محمد  
صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم في يوم الاثنين  
الثامن عشر من شهر ربيع الأول سنة  
الفيل من الهجرة النبوية

# PREFACE

## Introduction

This book comprises two parts: The first part consists of a preface and five chapters, whereas the second part involves a preface and ten chapters. The first part of the book (a third) deals with an elucidation of a Cape Muslim luminary's educational philosophy, namely Abu Bakr Effendi, and how his seminal thoughts can be considered as a platform to lay the grounds for the argument I proffer in the second part of the book (two-thirds). In the second part, I develop an understanding of a philosophy of Muslim education. The first part dealing with Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy can be considered as an introduction to an understanding of Muslim educational philosophy in the Cape, my place of origin. The second part of the book offers a defence of Muslim educational philosophy as derived from the Qurān, the primary source of Muslim education.

Anecdotally speaking, my motivation for authoring the first part of the book is threefold: Firstly, my own seminal thoughts on Muslim education in the Cape are encapsulated in two texts – a doctoral dissertation in which I espoused conceptual problems within madrassah (school) education (Waghid, 1995); and a seminal text, *Conceptions of Islamic Education: Pedagogical Framings* (Waghid, 2011) in which I argued for a deliberative form of Muslim education to guide pedagogical actions. Although I proposed a reconsideration of Muslim educational philosophy in South Africa, my seminal work seems to be remiss of a rigorous engagement with the work of Muslim luminaries in the Cape during the period of colonialism, namely Shaykh Yusuf of Macassar, Shaykh Abu Bakr Effendi and Imām 'Abdullah ibn Qadi' Abd al-Salām (Tuan Guru). My rationale for focussing my attention on the erudition of Abu Bakr Effendi is instigated by the possibility that an

understanding of his educational philosophy would provide one with an understanding of what transpired in the Cape before and after his arrival in the 19th century.

Secondly, as a professional philosopher of education working at a leading South African university for more than two decades, namely Stellenbosch University, I proffered an argument in defence of reconsidering African philosophy of education as a practice in my book, *African Philosophy of Education Reconsidered: On Being Human* (Waghid, 2014). Although my novel argument is constituted by the notion of communitarian, reasonable and culture-dependent actions, in hindsight, I could have also invoked Muslim educational philosophy through the agency of African philosophical thought. Put differently, if the practice of an African philosophy of education is considered a new direction for the philosophy of education, such a discourse cannot be remiss of Muslim educational philosophy, especially if one considers that my work centres around the cultivation of imagination, deliberation, and responsibility within all communities. Looking at the seminal thoughts of a Muslim luminary in the Cape in the 19th century would provide one with a gateway to understanding what constituted educational philosophy during the time of Cape colonialism, and more importantly, what can be learnt from engaging with Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy.

Thirdly, on a personal note, I have been married to Niedah van der Schyff, a great-great-granddaughter of Abu Bakr Effendi, for almost forty years. During this period, I have occasionally been reminded by her mother, Zanap Toefy the daughter of Amina Effendi, of her (Zanap's) illustrious great-grandfather, the eminent scholar Abu Bakr Effendi. What comes to mind is Niedah's own autonomous and liberatory disposition that she attributes to her Van der Schyff, Toefy, and Effendi heritage. In 2018, Niedah and I went to Konya on invitation from a colleague and Dean of the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Prof. Dr Bilal Kuşpınar at Necmettin Erbakan University (Konya, Turkey) where I presented a paper at a conference on education in the Islamic World. The interest shown at the conference in our familial connection with an Ottoman Muslim scholar in the Cape undoubtedly inspired me to author this part of the book in his and his descendants' honour. In the same way, rigorous exegeses have been produced by scholars who had only a human connection with Aristotle and al-Farabi and their educational philosophies. I have attempted to offer a renewed philosophical account on the erudition of Abu Bakr Effendi with whom I also have a

human and scholarly connection and to whom my spouse, Niedah, and her biological Van der Schyff, Toefy and Effendi families (ascendants and descendants) have a familial attachment.

To begin with, early Muslim settlement in the Cape occurred between 1652 and 1834 (Da Costa, 1994:1) – that is, the zenith of colonisation in South Africa. During this period, many Muslims established themselves in the Cape as a consequence of forced migration due to the slave trade; and political excommunication from their countries of origin. Dutch and British colonisation not only impacted human migration and exploitation significantly during this period but also contributed towards an enhanced culture of societal living dominated by acts of courage, survival and a determination to adhere to religious practices from which the early Muslims were not exonerated. Cape Muslims embraced Islam through adherence to jurisprudential schools (*madhāhib*) of thought and Sufi orders (*tariqāt*) (Da Costa, 1994:17). Concomitantly with the cultivation of their religious practices, Muslims established mosques and private schools – *madāris* – and, as is common with a burgeoning society, association, assimilation, agreement and dissent constitute its acts of community.

The eminent scholar, Abu Bakr Effendi's arrival at the Cape in 1863 can at least be linked to three theses: Firstly, according to a political argument, it could be that a member of the Cape Parliament, Mr PE de Roubaix approached the British government that had 'friendly relations' with the Ottomans in Turkey to assist in resolving the ongoing dispute among congregants at the Palm Street mosque in Bo-Kaap (Upper Cape) regarding the appointment of an *imām* or religious leader (Davids, 1980:52). It so happened that in 1866, Effendi provided evidence to the Cape Supreme Court to resolve the *imāmah* (religious leadership) issue at the Palm Street mosque (Davids, 1980:54). Secondly, a social argument could be that the Cape Muslim community that already encountered subjugation and exclusion at the time, needed leadership that could guide them out of their social malaise. However, Achmat Davids's (1980:53) assertion that Effendi's bias towards the Hanafi school of thought contributed towards socio-religious problems in a 'predominantly Shafee [Shāfi'i] community' (Davids, 1980:53) seems to undermine such a thesis. Thirdly, a theological argument could be made that Abu Bakr Effendi thought it apposite to enhance Muslim theology in a colonised region so desperately in need of rational argumentation, debate, and political emancipation. It is the latter thesis that I shall explore in relation to Abu Bakr Effendi's magnanimous contribution to a philosophy

of Muslim education during colonialism. At the time of his arrival at the Cape there was a notable absence of Muslim theologians cum jurists and his contribution, as I show, can be considered as significant in light of the broader socio-religious and theological context that prevailed at the Cape in the 19th century.

## **Understanding Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy**

I depart from the premise that Muslim education prior to the arrival of Abu Bakr Effendi in the Cape has been dominated by the teachings of Imam Abdullah Qadi' Abd al-Salām, who arrived in 1780. Known as Tuan Guru or Mister Teacher, Imam Abdullah completed a handwritten text on Islamic jurisprudence during his political incarceration on Robben Island in 1781 (Davids, 1980:52). According to Davids (1980:52), this text was based on the Shāfi'i school of thought and was the primary theological text for the Cape Muslim community until the 1870s. Due to the dearth of Islamic literature in the language or dialect spoken by the Cape Muslims, a decade after his arrival in the Cape in 1873, Abu Bakr Effendi produced his *Bayān al-Dīn* – an Arabic-Afrikaans treatise on Islam (Davids, 1980:54). What is important to recognise is that at the time, Muslim literature existed mostly in the oral tradition and the seminal work of Abu Bakr Effendi would address the paucity of such literature in the written form. The *Bayān al-Dīn* (literally meaning, an elucidation of religion) was completed in manuscript form in 1869 and published in Turkey in 1877 (Dangor, 2008:129). It is regarded as the most extensive publication in the early history of Afrikaans literature and comprises pronouncements on Muslim law based on the Hanafi *madhhab* (Dangor, 2008:129). More specifically, the *Bayān al-Dīn* 'deals with rules and regulations pertaining to Islamic practices' (Dangor, 2008:129). What is significant of the publication of the *Bayān al-Dīn* is that it expanded the existence of Islamic theological and jurisprudential texts from 'kopiesboeke [literally Muslim memorised religious texts] in Arabic-Afrikaans' (Dangor, 2008:129) to a publication that provided guidance and advice to the Muslim community on religious matters.

This brings me to my first claim on Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy. He studied the spoken language of the Cape Muslim community, a variant of Dutch and Malay and used his knowledge of the Arabic language to produce a text which Muslims could read and understand. In other words, he knew that the majority of Muslims did not understand or speak Arabic, yet they could read Arabic script in the form of the Qurān – that is, the primary

source of Muslim education. Then he used their spoken language, Afrikaans and produced a text written in Arabic letters with Afrikaans meanings to the extent that when they read the text through Arabic letters, Afrikaans sounds emanated. According to Suleman Dangor (2008:130):

They ingeniously combined their students' ability to read the Arabic script with their ability to speak Afrikaans to create a new medium to produce texts that were accessible to them. The Arabic-Afrikaans texts, which were the products of this innovation, played a vital function in the transmission of the basic teachings of Islam to learners in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Abu Bakr Effendi's scholarly interest and concern with the Cape Muslim community is evident from his commitment to learn their spoken language and to produce a text of relevance to their societal living. The fact that he had to learn their language he connected with them through the linguistic agency of Arabic-Afrikaans. He did not just author a text they could not relate to but one that they could engage with, challenge and disagree about. What makes his commitment to the Muslim community so admirable is his willingness to open up his thoughts to scrutiny by them. In this way, Abu Bakr Effendi can be described as a critical teacher intent on provoking understanding in the Muslim community. It was not as if he merely authored the *Bayān al-Dīn* without engaging with the community. Instead, he was prepared to subject his theological views to the critical scrutiny by others. This makes Abu Bakr Effendi a critical teacher where criticism implies an invitation to consider diverse views of his own.

Consequently, I do not agree with Davids (1980:53-54) that his guidance through the *Bayān al-Dīn* aroused societal problems in the form of dissent. Dissent cannot be regarded as a practice that is incommensurable with critical engagement. Instead, dissent is a recognition that different and diverse views are present as a consequence of people engaging in debate and argumentation, commonly known as '*bechara*' (Davids, 1980:55).

What Abu Bakr Effendi offered the Muslim community through the *Bayān al-Dīn* was an opportunity to enhance their deliberations on religious matters that concerned them. His views opened up the community to different perspectives that they could consider and with which they could either agree or disagree. For this reason, having published the *Bayān al-Dīn* was an opportunity for Cape Muslims to expand their criticism and to engage deliberatively with the religious text. For once, Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy was one of openness and critical scrutiny by others who either agreed or disagreed with his theological interpretations as enunciated in

the *Bayān al-Dīn*. And, for a Muslim community that was used to the practice of ‘*bechara*’, agreement and disagreement on religious matters should not be considered as an undesirable disputation.

Consequently, the claim that he demonstrated ‘a lack of insight and ... failure to realise that he was causing dissent’ (Davids, 1980:54) in the Cape Muslim community is unfounded. It could have been that his authoritative judgments proffered in the *Bayān al-Dīn* was at variance with understandings of the majority of Muslims at the time and with which they experienced discomfort and with which they perhaps could not contend. In this context, it is misleading to presume that the majority of Cape Muslims ‘never ... accepted [him] as an authority on Islam ...’ (Davids, 1980:54). A decision on what and who constitutes authority in Islam cannot rest on public opinion but rather, critical scrutiny of a scholar’s treatise on religion and society. In my view, Abu Bakr Effendi showed his educational authority when he opened himself up to critical scrutiny by others. And, whether people agreed or disagreed with him or not is not as important as having subjected his work to analysis and interpretation by others on the basis of which value-judgments were made on the authenticity of his arguments. The *Bayān al-Dīn* is a testimony of his critical acumen and religious authority to which others were invited to respond.

My second claim about his educational philosophy is linked to his research approach; more specifically, the epistemological framework he used to resolve challenging and often contentious matters about religion in his newly found Cape Muslim community. To apply a research approach implies that one uses both a methodology and procedure of analysis to justify arguments and claims. He was clearly attracted to the methodologies of *ijtihād* (independent reasoning), *qiyās* (analogic reasoning) and *ijmā’* (consensus), which he used in contriving judgments about *sharī’ah* (Islamic law) and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). In turn, his reliance on the primary sources of Islam, namely the Qurān and *Aḥādīth* (plural of *Ḥādīth* or Prophetic pronouncements) together with authoritative texts of four main jurists such as Abū Hanīfa, Shāfi’i, Mālik and Aḥmad ibn Hanbal, corroborates his reliance on authentic sources of knowledge. In the next chapter, I show how he used the above research paradigm to proffer judgments about particular religious matters in the Muslim community.

Thirdly, Abu Bakr Effendi’s judgments on religious and social matters were invariably geared towards the enhancement of justice and reform in the Cape Muslim community. By implication, his pronouncements grounded

in interpretive analyses of jurisprudential texts, whether they be about Friday congregational prayers, the assumption of religious leadership in mosques, the consumption of foods, and the public dress code of men and women, foregrounded his concerns for justice and reform in the Muslim community. Here, I concur with Halim Gençoğlu (2013:105) that ‘Effendi’s books were written pragmatically, providing a modern understanding of Islam for the Cape Muslim conservative society’. Put differently, Abu Bakr Effendi’s educational philosophy accentuated a pragmatic responsiveness to social reform in the Cape. By this is meant that his works were not just about erudition and justification but he was inherently concerned that social reform should emanate from his jurisprudential interventions and that the Cape Muslim community should be reformed – that is, he was adamant that through critical and pragmatic education Muslims should subvert superstitious, mystical and unjustifiable beliefs and practices that seemed to have pervaded some aspects of societal life in the Cape.

Fourthly, that Abu Bakr Effendi was a protagonist of gender equality and a politics of socio-pedagogical liberation is corroborated by his initiative to establish the first Muslim school for girls in 1864 of which his third wife, Tahora (Tahīrah) Effendi became the principal two years later (Gençoğlu, 2013:34). The curriculum of the school included subjects like Arabic, Dutch, English, Qurānic reading and writing, and Muslim moral education (Gençoğlu, 2013:86). At a time when the exclusion of women from public life and patriarchy were dominant, Abu Bakr Effendi’s educational philosophy was quite liberatory considering that school leadership was mostly associated with the masculine agency. Yet, it was a year prior to the opening of the girls’ school that Abu Bakr Effendi established in 1863, a Higher Theology School (Gençoğlu, 2013:86). With his educational background rooted in the study of languages, *tafāsīr* (exegeses) of Qurān, *Ḥādīth* (a saying of the Prophet Muhammad), *sharī’ah* (Islamic law) and *fiqh* (jurisprudence), it was not unusual that Abu Bakr Effendi would contrive a curriculum for the theological school that focused on a study of religion (*dīn*), Islam, faith (*aqīdah*), Arabic, and the observance of religious duty and practices. Earnestly he authored at least eight books on various aspects of Islam, mostly in Arabic, with explanations in Cape Dutch eventually taking the form of Afrikaans-Arabic script in an attempt to espouse Islam through texts to his students.

Fifthly, Abu Bakr Effendi constructed a rationale of pedagogical action constituted by a conscientisation of his students with a liberatory understanding of Islam that would hopefully advance their humanity in the

context of Cape colonialism. His deep love of humanity and his newly found connectedness with the Cape Muslim community made him determined to advance a modern perspective of Islam that was at variance with slavery, exclusion, oppression, and discrimination – all facets of Cape colonialism.

I have divided this part of the book into a preface and five interrelated chapters. In chapter one, I show what is meant by an educational philosophy in relation to the scholarship of Abu Bakr Effendi. I accentuate at least three dimensions of his educational philosophy: justification, integration, and provocation. Through justification, Abu Bakr Effendi provides reasons for his claims and arguments; integration involves his comprehensive conception of knowledge with a bias towards non-separation of sciences of knowledge. Provocation entails Abu Bakr Effendi's independence of mind and invitation to others to critically scrutinise his thoughts and judgments. Chapter two highlights three constitutive aspects of Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy: towards the cultivation of a community of thinking; enacting discernment; and endeavouring to take risks in the face of differences and disputes. In Chapter three, I give an account of Abu Bakr Effendi's pragmatist stance, in particular, showing how his educational philosophy integrates notions of reflectiveness, communication, and political awareness. In reference to what are considered as some of his contentious pronouncements, I make an argument that his reflectiveness seems to be grounded in a socio-political consciousness that grounds his work theoretically as well as practically.

In Chapter four, I show the emancipatory actions of Abu Bakr Effendi concerning his educational philosophy. I argue that he encouraged both men and women to pursue knowledge, to work and engage in transactions, which seemed to have brought him into conflict with the trend in the Cape colony that subjugated women and their right to education, work and commercial transactions. In this way, he can be considered as somewhat liberatory in his thinking. In Chapter 5 I argue that Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy seems commensurable with a modernist discourse that is constituted by rational pronouncements as contained in the *Bayān al-Dīn*; a bias towards human freedom, and individuality; and a public concern for education that represented the Cape Muslim community and its concomitant social advancement.

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# 1

## BAYĀN AS JUSTIFICATION, INTEGRATION AND PROVOCATION

### **Introduction**

Any philosophy of education would reveal what the form of education involves. A philosophy of education constitutes what the nature and scope of education are, why education is what it is, and how education manifests in practice. If one ascertains meanings that make up education, one would understand what education entails. And, getting to know the meanings of Muslim education would reveal understandings or reasons that underscore such a form of education. In this chapter, I am concerned with reasons that constitute Muslim education as espoused through the seminal thoughts of Shaykh Abu Bakr Effendi. I first provide some background as to who this scholar was and what he stood for. Secondly, I examine his philosophy of education concerning the aspects of justification, integration, and provocation. Thirdly, concomitantly with his educational philosophy of justification, integration, and provocation, I show how his work compares with understandings of Muslim education that existed in the Cape prior to his arrival in reference to the influences of Imam Abdullah Qadi ‘Abd al-Salām.

### **A reputable Muslim scholar**

Abu Bakr Effendi was born in Khoshnaw, in a village of Shahrazur in Iraq in 1814 and died in Cape Town in 1880 at the age of 67 (Gençoğlu, 2013:24, 41). His family originates from the al-Amjadiy dynasty, considered as one of the Quraishy clans that migrated into Anatolia from Makkah in the 12th century (Gençoğlu, 2013:22). Consequently, Abu Bakr Effendi is also referred to as Syed Shaykh Abu Bakr Effendi al-Qurayshy al-Amjadiy. In Khoshnaw, where Abu Bakr Effendi was born, his educated ancestry established the Amjadiy

*madrassah* (school) (Gençoğlu, 2013:22). It was here that Abu Bakr Effendi was initiated into Muslim education between the ages of two and fifteen, with his father, Mullah Omar, as the primary educator (Gençoğlu, 2013:28). Subsequently, members of the Amjadiy family moved to Damascus and later on to the centre of Erzurum, where they continued to teach the knowledge of Islam in their newly found *madrassah* (Gençoğlu, 2013:24). Of significance, at a very young age, Abu Bakr Effendi was initiated into a form of Muslim education guided primarily by the Qurān and *Sunnah* (life experiences of Prophet Muhammad), including *Aḥādīth* (Gençoğlu, 2013:20).

His advanced education occurred between 1830 and 1852. During this period Abu Bakr Effendi acquired knowledge at several *madāris* in Erzurum, Istanbul, Baghdad and Makkah – all under the auspices of the Ottoman regime – that eventually resulted in him being awarded the title of *mudarris* or professor in 1852 at the age of 38 in the city of his birth, Shahrazur (Gençoğlu, 2013:49). In the prominent *Arabic-English Lexicon* a *mudarris* is described as a person who reads much and repeatedly, that is, a lecturer, tutor or a professor of a college, collegiate mosque or an academy (Lane, 1863:871). His appointment as *mudarris* in 1861 at the Sarayönü *madrassah* in Erzurum confirms his eminent scholarly status (Gençoğlu, 2013:28). Nir Shafir (2016) recognises that a *mudarris* during the Ottoman period is referred to as a professor. The professorship of Abu Bakr Effendi is reflected in his advanced educational studies in some of the following disciplinary areas: philosophy, logic, psychology, mathematics, geometry, logarithms, *tasawwuf*, economics, jurisprudence, *fiqh*, scholastic theology, the Qurān and its recitation, Qurānic exegesis, the Prophetic Islamic tradition, *Aḥādīth*, debates and disputations, Arabic, Persian, French, German, and Russian, the science of calligraphy and ornamental gilding, calligraphic sciences, linguistic sciences such as Arabic language, grammar and syntax, spiritual sciences, Islamic theology, Islamic ethics and politics (Gençoğlu, 2013:29). More poignantly, Abu Bakr Effendi's professorship was not only corroborated by his knowledge of the sciences of religion, interpretation of the Qurān and *Aḥādīth*, knowledge of jurisprudential schools of thought, proficiency in Arabic communication, interpretation and writing but his meticulous observance of argumentation and justification – important facets of higher knowledge that confirm one's pedigree as a reputable scholar (*‘ālim*). According to Gençoğlu (2013:25):

When he arrived in South Africa he was already a professor of Islamic law (*Mudarris*). In the educational system of the *madrasahs* [*madāris*] of the Ottoman State, in order to become a *Mudarris*, a person had to have pursued Islamic education until the completion of ten specific degrees. This normally took a minimum of twenty years

subsequent to their primary education. In other words, a professor in the Ottoman State could not be younger than forty years of age, due to the lengthy educational process.

This brings me to a discussion of Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy as it emerged throughout his writings and involvement with the Cape Muslim community.

## **Cultivating a critical educational paradigm**

On his arrival at the Cape in 1863 as an emissary of the British government supported by the Ottoman regime in Istanbul, Abu Bakr Effendi situated himself in the Cape Muslim community on two fronts: Firstly, on a social level he married Rakea (Rukiyyah) Maker with whom he had two children of which one died at birth and the second son, Ahmet Ataullah went on to eventually become the first Muslim politician (Gençoğlu, 2013:28). After his divorce from Rakea, two years later he married Tahora (Tahirah) Saban Cook in 1866, the daughter of Eliza Saban and Jeremiah Cook. He had five children with Tahora, namely, Fehime, Hesham Nimetullah, Muhammed Alaeddin – a great-grandfather of my spouse who was a *Qāri'* and *Hāfiẓ* (one who recites eloquently and memorised the entire Qurān), Omer Jeleleddin and Husain Fewzi (Gençoğlu, 2013:34).

Secondly, at an intellectual level, he advocated for a critical understanding of Muslim education. A critical understanding of Muslim education constitutes interpretive analyses of religious texts with the possibility that those for whom the texts are meant would be afforded opportunities for self- and communal empowerment. Mia Brandel-Syrier's (in Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960) English translations of the Turkish and Arabic introductions to Abu Bakr Effendi's two books combined in a single volume, namely *Bayān al-Dīn* (Explanation of religion) and *Marāshid al-Dīn* (Right ways of religion), accentuate his educational philosophy. Both *bayān* (explanation) and *marāshid* (right ways) seemed to have been chosen distinctly by Abu Bakr Effendi as singular terms to announce his understanding of religion. In fact, what these terms denote is the author's invitation to readers and students of his explanation of religion and why he considers it as authentic. It is not as if he implies that his explanation is the only right one but rather that in proffering his elucidation of *dīn*, he summons readers to consider his proofs and evidence. Thus, having an educational philosophy seems to imply an engagement with a justifiable claim or a substantiated explanation based on which its authenticity is considered as plausible or not. Throughout *Bayān*

*al-Dīn* (Explanation of religion) and *Marāshid al-Dīn* (Right ways of religion), he relies on the Qurān, *Sunnah* and authoritative precepts of renowned jurists and scholars in Islam to justify his explanations in a succinct way leading him to posit that instruction would be more accessible for readers and students (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960). In the main, the titles of his combined books point towards an educational philosophy that is inextricably linked to the practice of justification.

Abu Bakr Effendi's focus on justification – proofs, evidence and authoritative precepts – derives from the Qurān (*Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* - *The Family of Amran*, chapter 3:verse 105) in which the following is stated:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

And be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the clear proofs had come to them. It is they for whom there is an awful torment.

His reference to the above verse in the Arabic introduction to *Bayān al-Dīn* (Explanation of religion) vindicates his use of substantiated evidence as clear proofs of his religious pronouncements. It also becomes evident why he could have titled his book *Bayān al-Dīn* (Explanation of religion) that seems to be linked etymologically to the Qurānic term *الْبَيِّنَاتُ* (*al-bayyināt* or the clear proofs). The basis of justification of Muslim religious matters cannot be other than the pursuit of substantiated evidence. The Qurān purports the following in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* – The Cow (chapter 2:verse 111):  
قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ [Qulhātū burhānakum inkuntum sādiqīn] – Produce your proof if you are truthful. Justification is a Qurānic account of interpretation of knowledge (*tafsīr*) that seems to resonate with Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy. I shall now expound on such an interpretive practice of justification in the context of integration and provocation commensurate with Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy.

## **A critical educational philosophy of justification, integration and provocation**

That Abu Bakr Effendi's critical educational philosophy commensurates with justification, integration and provocation is constituted by at least three facets of Muslim action. Firstly, he was prepared to pursue *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) to proffer judgments on religious matters. To proffer independent or autonomous judgments is a vindication that he was prepared to assume a position or to stake a claim after he has consulted

numerous other sources in addition to the Qurān and *Aḥādīth* (Prophetic sayings). In other words, the Qurān and *Aḥādīth* remained the primary sources of inquiry. However, as a corroboration of his elucidations proffered in the *Bayān al-Dīn*, he relied on jurisprudential injunctions and other important recognisable sources of knowledge such as Al-Tabrizi's collection of a *Aḥādīth*, *Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābīh* (A Niche for Lamps), which is an expanded version of a Al-Baghawi's – a 12th century Persian Shāfi'i scholar – *Maṣābīh al-Sunnah*, and Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī's *Multaqā al-Abḥur* (Confluence of the Seas) – a standard Ḥanafī text on *sharī'ah* (Muslim law) used in the Ottoman Empire since the 16th century, and the Muslim philosopher-cum-theologian, jurist and mystic, al-Ghazzālī's *Iḥyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Revival of the Religious Sciences). To have used the *Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābīh*, *Multaqā al-Abḥur* and *Iḥyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn* as authoritative sources of knowledge in conjunction with the Qurān and *Aḥādīth* is a testimony of Abu Bakr Effendi's insightful and critical acumen as he endeavoured to enact the *Bayān al-Dīn* at a personal, institutional, and societal level. In this regard, his educational philosophy is in consonance with the Qurānic injunction (*Sūrah al-Nisā' - The Women*, chapter 4:verse 59):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ تَلَوْتُمُ

O you who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger (Muhammad SAW), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allāh and His Messenger (SAW), if you believe in Allāh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.

Secondly, in addition to his exertion of *ijtihād* (independent reasoning), the *Bayān al-Dīn* is replete with elucidations that confirm his allegiance to analogical reasoning or *qiyās*. Consistently throughout the text, he introduces a theme on which he expounds in reference to Qurān, *Aḥādīth*, and other relevant authoritative sources of knowledge. In the *Bayān al-Dīn*, he introduces specific themes that include purification, prayer, taxation, and fasting. When he elucidates purification, for instance, he draws on both the Qurān, *Aḥādīth* and other secondary authoritative texts. Through *qiyās* (analogical reasoning), he derives prescriptions from the Qurān and *Aḥādīth* and then supports his inferences on the basis of authoritative texts. He then performs *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) after he had engaged through analogy and inference with matters pertaining to purification. Fazlur Rahman (1994:15) depicts *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) as systematic analyses, whereas *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) brings rigour to such analyses. For a scholar like Abu Bakr Effendi to have employed the analytical

processes of *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) and *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) is a vindication that his approach to proffering judgments on religious matters did not deviate from the approaches of intellectual inquiry used in the *Sunnah* of the early Muslims. Put differently, Abu Bakr Effendi relied overwhelmingly on integrating sources of knowledge into his arguments. In this way, it is not unusual to find that he constructed and reconstructed his religious judgments around the thoughts of credible scholarship in Muslim history.

As a corroboration of his integrationist approach to educational philosophy, and in addition to the works of al-Tabrizi, al-Ghazzali, and al-Baghawi, Abu Bakr Effendi also used the following sources of knowledge: *Kitāb al-'ilāl wa Ma'rifatu al-Rijāl* (The Book of Narrations Containing Hidden Flaws and of Knowledge of the Men [of *Hādīth*] by Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal [2006]); *Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān* by Muhammad ibn Muhammad Māturīdī (2005/2011); and *Rūh al-Bayān* by Ismail Hakkı Bursevî' (2012). According to Halim Gençoğlu (2013:89-90), the above-mentioned sources of knowledge are situated in the personal library of Abu Bakr Effendi's great-grandson Zobri Effendi. Hence, it would be prudent to assert that Abu Bakr Effendi used an educational philosophy grounded in the practice of *ijmā'* (consensual action) whereby he referred to multiple sources of knowledge to substantiate his religious pronouncements.

Thirdly, while the *Bayān al-Dīn* (Explanation of religion) and *Marāshid al-Dīn* (Right ways of religion) can be looked at in terms of acts of virtue and socio-religious consciousness (Gençoğlu, 2013:101), in reference to its themes of inquiry, namely purification, prayer, tax, fasting, slaughtering of livestock, religious prohibitions, drink and hunting, it appears as if Abu Bakr Effendi was also concerned with aspects of Muslim life that could enhance co-living, especially in light of disagreements and disputes. To my mind, the emphasis of his work had a strong educational dimension – not that virtue and socio-religious conscientisation do not involve education – in the sense that his thematic approach in the two books mentioned accentuates his deep concern for human coexistence, interaction, and deliberation. The very practice of education is constituted by acts of human engagement, deliberation and dissonance (Waghid, 2019). Furthermore, the emphasis of writers such as Mia Brandel-Syrier (in Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960), Achmat Davids (1980) and Halim Gençoğlu (2013) put on disputations and refutations in his work and the 'majority' of the 19th century Cape Muslim community's objections to some of his seminal positions on acts of virtue and socio-religious practices seem to obscure his defensible educational thinking and positioning. To my

mind, Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy cannot be minimised as unimportant to the practice of human engagement. It seems that he was not merely concerned with Muslims participating in his expositions about Islam and human life but more importantly, that they engage with his thoughts.

At a time when Cape Muslims were already subjected to oppression and exclusion, his educational philosophy courageously summoned them to take issue with what he taught them. My position here is to move away from unsubstantiated claims that Abu Bakr Effendi was a divisive teacher, leader and scholar in the sense that his judgments spawned religious conflicts and disputes in the Cape Muslim community. When someone's works can provoke one to think differently and to take issue with him, his educational philosophy should be considered as critical. This is so because criticality arouses debate, contestations, and disputations – that is, in a sense used by the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1988), criticality leads to forms of dissonance that caused a sudden upheaval of religious thoughts among Cape Muslims. More specifically, their thinking and practices were visibly ruptured to the extent that Muslim religious thought and practice – that is, their educational experiences, during and after Abu Bakr Effendi's demise was never really the same. In fact, Muslim education gained a critical impetus with Abu Bakr Effendi's pedagogical thinking and actions.

In sum, Abu Bakr Effendi internalised and espoused an educational philosophy that was and remains critical. His autonomous judgments were not only insightful and lucid but also provocative and rigorously entrenched in established Muslim thought and practice. He was independent of mind, and his reasoning was systematic as he endeavoured to articulate a theory of knowledge and understanding that can enhance good societal living. When his innovative and at times, imaginative religious judgments evoked dissent in the Cape Muslim community, it was to evoke understanding that could enhance respectable and dignified societal living. In brief, his educational philosophy evokes human understanding towards renewal and good societal living. In this way, his educational philosophy connects conceptually and pragmatically with notions of autonomy, integration and provocation that gave his philosophical thinking a critical dimension. Next, I examine such an educational philosophy in the context of educational philosophies of other Muslim luminaries that preceded his sojourn in the Cape in the 19th century.

## **A critical educational philosophy in the context 19th century Cape Muslim society**

Abu Bakr Effendi arrived at the Cape colony with a well-established Muslim community that derived most of its existing educational philosophy at the time from the teachings of Imam ‘Abdullah ibn Qadi ‘Abd al-Salām (1712-1807). Commonly known as Tuan Guru, Imam ‘Abdullah was primarily responsible for the institutionalisation of Islam at the Cape. His writings reflect his knowledge of law, theology and mysticism (Rafudeen, 2006:93). Exiled to the Cape in 1780 after engaging in confrontation with the Dutch in Indonesia, he was incarcerated on Robben Island where, according to Auwais Rafudeen (2006:93):

... he wrote his compendium of Islamic knowledge, consisting of 613 pages in a mixture of Malay and Arabic. This compendium was to shape Cape Muslim thought and practice for the centuries to come. Upon his release in 1793, he quickly became recognized as the Chief Imam of the Muslim community and established South Africa’s first Muslim school (*madrassah*) and mosque.

The educational philosophy of Tuan Guru is to be found in his commentary of Shaykh ‘Abdullah al-Malalihis’s transcription of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Sanusi’s (1435/6-1490) *Umm al-Barāhīn*. Tuan Guru transcribed this classic *Ash’arite* text on Islamic belief together with al-Malalihis’s commentary and ‘was partially memorized by students and copied in their notebooks (‘koplesboeke’) up until the 1950s’ (Rafudeen, 2006:95). Tuan Guru’s transcription of *Umm al-Barāhīn* constitutes a component of his ‘compendium of Islamic knowledge’, referred to as the *Ma’rifat al-Islam* (Knowledge of Islam) consisting of *Aḥādīth* (Prophetic sayings), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), supplications, amulets and transcriptions of parts of the Qurān (Rafudeen, 2006:96). The educational philosophy that constitutes *Ma’rifat al-Islam* is associated with a rationality of *Ash’arite* thought, a Shāfi’i-Sufi spirituality, and an autonomy that resists oppression (Rafudeen, 2006:96). By implication, the educational philosophy that prevailed in the Cape just prior to Abu Bakr Effendi’s arrival was undeniably critical. It seems as if Tuan Guru’s notion of criticality converged with the notion of critique espoused through Abu Bakr Effendi’s seminal thoughts, giving rise to an expanded view of criticality that came to constitute Cape Muslim educational theory and practice.

Firstly, *Ash’arite* thought can be considered an objection against religious rationality that confines explanations of theological matters to only human reason; instead, rationality should also be subjected to intuition as was the

case with al-Ghazzali (Shaikh, 1994). Tuan Guru's *Ma'rifat al-Islam* affirms such a theological trend that can be considered as orthodox to Sunni Islam. In other words, Tuan Guru's thinking is inherently orthodox as opposed to the radicalism of non- (more specifically Mu'tazilite) scholars. For instance, as a manifestation of theology in Tuan Guru's text, human freedom is both free and predetermined by Allāh, thus confirming its conservative positioning. Secondly, the manifestation of spirituality in conjunction with a Shāfi'i-*Ash'arite* epistemology is very evident in *Ma'rifat al-Islam* considering that 'Sufi spiritual practices through activities such as the mawlid (celebration of the Prophet's birthday or saints' days) and *gadats* (ritual recitation of certain litanies every Thursday evening or upon special occasions)' are very pervasive in the text (Rafudeen, 2006:104).

My own initial Muslim education in the 1960s in District Six (Cape Town) includes a study of Qurānic recitation, aspects of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and Sufi practices like *hadath* (ritual) – spelt as 'gadad' in Dutch-Malay – in which exaltations of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad are proclaimed. Thirdly, *Ma'rifat al-Islam* conscientised Muslims to develop self-awareness and self-confidence about their social realities (Rafudeen, 2006:93). In other words, their Muslim education provided them with an alternative perspective to colonial subjugation and domination because *Ash'arite* theological views of human free will and self-determination undermine practices of enslavement and coloniality. According to Rafudeen (2006:96):

Many of those subjugated, through learning the text, had such knowledge. Since the colonists generally did not have such knowledge, it was, in fact, the socially oppressed group that had the superior, liberating access to reality. This, in turn, created a mindset under-awed by colonial dominance that, in fact, subverted the notion of dominance, and that was consequently prepared to challenge their social hegemony as well.

Thus, prior to the arrival of Abu Bakr Effendi in the Cape, Muslim education was already informed by a critical spirit of reason and intuition, spirituality, and a consciousness that undermined slavery, colonialism and human subjugation.

## Summary

The socio-political and religious milieu in the Cape in the 19th century paved the way for Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy to converge with the religious and educational understandings that prevailed. It is not necessarily the case that Abu Bakr Effendi was invited to the Cape to deal

with religious confrontation and disputation because, with the prevalence of critical Muslim education, there was already a pervasive cultural and religious ethos of '*bechara*' (debate). It seems more plausible to purport that Abu Bakr Effendi's philosophical and educational allegiance to justification, integration and provocation provided an expanded notion of critical education to manifest. Put differently, his educational philosophy provided a renewed framework of '*bechara*' in which deliberation, dissent, and consensus could be extended.

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# 2

## COMMUNITY OF THINKING, DISCERNMENT AND RISK

### Introduction

Educational philosophies are enunciated by people. Inasmuch as humans advocate such philosophies, so humans, in turn, announce these philosophies in the public realm. When the Prophet Muhammad publicly announced a philosophy of Muslim education he did so in the context of a community in which he lived, matured, and enacted his lived experiences in ways replicated by his descendants, scholars, and those who adhered to Islam. Similarly, some of the most prominent scholars who advanced educational philosophies for Muslims, such as al-Ghazzali and, more recently, Naquib al-Attas, announced their philosophies in the context of community, in particular, what such a community ought to be doing concerning the philosophies espoused.

In this way, an educational philosophy is not just a public pronouncement or epistemological premise according to which concepts should be organised but also a practical manifestation of how human actions ought to manifest in relation to such a philosophy of education. Similarly, the educational philosophy of Abu Bakr Effendi cannot be elucidated without reference to the community of thinking with which such a philosophy ought to resonate. Consequently, in this chapter, I analyse the concept of community and why Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy frames a community of thinking along the lines of reason, discernment, and risk.

### On a community of thinking

Taking my cue from the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida (2004), the concept of community seems most appropriately explained in the context of thinking. In other words, talking about community is situated in the

idea of thinking. One cannot glibly use the term 'community' without also referencing thinking that makes up such a community. In light of Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy, the notion of community would refer to the thinking that can be drawn out from the project of reasoning endemic to such a community. Put differently, a community of thinking assumes a responsibility by taking up a position subjected to the unquestioned authority of reason (Derrida, 2004:148). Specifically, Derrida (2004:151-153) refers to a community of thinking in relation to three aspects: a knower of causes possessing reason or the capacity to teach, a place or faculty of rational knowledge where truth is spoken without controls and concern for utility (such as pleasing an audience), and a responsibility to make decisions that are risky and moved by suspicion. When reasons are espoused, unconstrained truths spoken, and risks taken in the interest of knowledge, then such a community of thinking represents a faculty of thought. Consequently, it would not be incorrect to associate Abu Bakr Effendi's educational responsibility with a community of thinking or a faculty of thought. This brings me to a discussion of his community of thinking or faculty of thought that guided his educational philosophy.

Some writers hold the view that several of the religious disputes at the Cape during Abu Bakr Effendi's sojourn were instigated by an uninformed religious leadership (*imāmah*) and a resentment towards the scholar (Gençoğlu, 2013:66). It could be that such claims contain a sense of validity, but one cannot presume that misinformation and spurious beliefs are necessarily the only reasons for several of the apparent irreconcilable disputes that prevailed within the Cape Muslim community. I would attribute an unwillingness to the use of reason as a more plausible justification of why religious disputes persisted. Considering that several of the religious leaders (*a-immah*, plural of *imām*) have already been educated within the tradition of *Ash'arite* theology and *Shāfi'i* jurisprudence through the teachings of Imam Tuan Guru's *Ma'rifah al-Islām* (Knowledge of Islam), it seems evident that their dogmatic adherence to their existing Muslim education was brought into contestation with Abu Bakr Effendi's newly established educational philosophy.

When a community adheres to religious beliefs and are provoked to see things differently, they invariably encounter a rupturing that either causes them to be dismissive, disparaging or engaging. My contention is that there could have been a level of intransigence among some of the religious leaders (*a-immah*) in the sense that their remarkable opposition to colonialism stood them in good stead to deal with their own religious challenges.

Furthermore, what Abu Bakr Effendi did was to proffer his reasons in view of how he perceived religious issues that brought him into contact with meanings of religion outside his rational parlance. It seems as if he made clear his understanding of rationality, and by implication educational philosophy, that people (in this instance, Cape religious leaders) should not just have viewpoints alone but also rational thoughts. As a *mudarris* (teacher or professor) he was answerable to the principle of reason that gave his pronouncements on what seemed to have been contentious religious issues a much-vaunted level of 'professional rigour and competence' (Derrida, 2004:150).

That Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy was grounded in a form of rationality that perhaps affronted the Cape Muslim community, is described by Achmat Davids (1980:51-55) concerning a perceived Hanafi-Shāfi'i 'dispute'. According to Davids (1980:51), the Cape Muslims during the 19th century were overwhelmingly Shāfi'i and their inflexibility to consider also another *madhab* (jurisprudential school of thought) 'gave rise to many [religious] disputes'. What seems to be an implausible accusation is that 'Abu Bakr Effendi, as it turned out, was a Hanfee [Hanafi] and his introduction as spiritual guide in a predominantly Shafee [Shāfi'i] community led to problems' (Davids, 1980:53). To corroborate this skewed depiction of his knowledge of *dīn* (religion), it is also erroneously asserted that Abu Bakr Effendi's '... lack of insight and his failure to realise that he was causing dissent resulted in his remaining unpopular with the majority of Cape Muslims and never being accepted as an authority on Islam by them' (Davids, 1980:54). Such a view is not only disingenuous to the scholarship of Abu Bakr Effendi, but it also distorts an ontological and epistemological understanding of early Cape Muslim education. A scholar who himself publicly announced his allegiance to a mode of interpretation of religious matters in conjunction with the *Qurān*, *Aḥādīth*, and authoritative sources of knowledge has assumed a responsibility subjected to the unquestioned authority of reason. A scholar who was prepared to undertake new analyses and an evaluation of the socio-political and cultural-religious beliefs and practices of Cape Muslims cannot unfairly be reduced to being a thinker who only seemed to have been biased towards Hanafi pronouncements. His work cannot be reducible to the positions taken by Hanafi jurists for that in itself would undermine his ethical responsibility as one who formulated reasons for his religious claims. Moreover, the reasons were not just rooted in particular Hanafi positions. It is not necessarily improper to have referred to Hanafi sources, which he did, but his rational judgments were not just exclusively

based on the Hanafi tradition. Likewise, the recognition of a scholar does not reside in his rational judgments appeasing the utility of a particular group of people, in this instance, the majority of 19th century Cape Muslims. Instead, the authority of a scholar is subjected to a principle of reason that raises questions, transforms the mode of writing as he did with his *Bayān al-Dīn*, and announces the inside of his religious understandings.

### **On discernment (*fahm*)**

Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy is constituted by a capacity for discernment (*fahm*). He formulated his judgments with reasons unhindered by the control of the religious leadership (*imāmah*) and the concern to appease them. By being discerning, he was conscious that he had to ground his judgments – that is, motivate, justify, and authorise what he proffered. In this way, he could render discernible (*fahm*) judgments that could be explained and accounted for. The interconnectedness between his use of discerning judgments – that is, judgments that were ascertained on what is approvable (Lane, 1877:2453) – and the term '*bayān*' (explanation) points out his intent to provide religious judgments that were fitting of *tafsīr* (exegesis) and *ijtihād* (independent reasoning).

Consequently, one finds that his application of *fahm* (discernment) came through when he proffered a *fatwā* (legal judgment) or *fatāwā* (legal judgments) about matters of *sharī'ah* (Muslim law). What is crucial about his acts of discernment is that *fatāwā* (legal judgments) were never meant to assuage Cape religious leaders. Instead, the discernment in his *fatāwā* (legal judgments) was quite pronounced as he endeavoured to find solutions to matters of faith such as burials, prayers, fasting and marriage ceremonies.

Of course, as could have been expected, several of the *fatāwā* (legal judgments) did not resonate with many of the Cape religious leaders, resulting in disagreements and perhaps resentment towards Abu Bakr Effendi. During the second half of the 19th century, on several occasions, Abu Bakr Effendi was asked to provide *sharī'ah* evidence to the Cape Supreme Court on the appointment of religious leaders at some mosques. Based on discernment (*fahm*) in reference to the Qurān and *Sunnah* of the Prophet, he declared that mosques were charitable endowments (*awqāf*) and not the proprietorship of leaders who wanted to appoint leaders of their choice. Rather religious leaders, he argued, should be appointed based on competence in and about

the *dīn* (religion of Islam). For obvious reasons, his discerning judgments were incommensurable with a zealous religious leadership that could have prejudiced cronyism and personal choices.

## **In the pursuit of taking risks**

Abu Bakr Effendi assumed a responsibility to make decisions that were risky and moved by suspicion. This implies that he learnt the language spoken by Muslims at the time, namely Cape Dutch and then took the risk to summon them to engage with the *Bayān al-Dīn* (Explanation of religion). In the Turkish introduction to the text, Abu Bakr Effendi (1960:XLV) posits the following:

The majority of the Muslim inhabitants of Cape Town ... were not conversant with the Arabic language ... [and] I realised that in order to make myself understood, I would have to master the language (Cape Dutch) spoken by the majority and I therefore set myself the great task of learning 'Cape Dutch' to enable me to explain to them the Koran [Qurān] and the meaning of the Arabic idioms necessary to carry out the basic rules of the religion, to translate the text and teach these people in their own language the true Islamic religion ... It was necessary to give them advice, and in many instances, I had to try hard to reform some of their bad habits and practices, which were contrary to the religion of Islam.

In three ways, Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy involved taking risks: the risk of learning a foreign spoken language (Cape Dutch) and to articulate himself in a text in the same language; the risk of speaking his mind autonomously with the possibility that he might be rebuked; and the risk to provide advice to others on his understanding of authentic religious beliefs and practices. That he partially succeeded in provoking many is corroborated by his assertion that he 'experienced difficulty with a minority, but the majority were eager to learn and follow the correct Koranic [Qurānic] laws and regulations for the proper observance of the Muslim religion' (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:XLV).

Likewise, that he to some extent succeeded to evoke their potentialities to learn is corroborated by his own evaluation of his teaching: 'Some began to realise how the religious disputes they used to have prior to my arrival were futile and unnecessary in the absence of a guiding authority like myself on religious matters' (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:XLV). Undeniably, he was an authority on religious matters, but what makes his educational philosophy evocative is that he was prepared to take the risk of subjecting that authority to question – a confirmation of genuine authority. It is one thing to espouse truth claims on religious issues, but it is indicative of one's critical acumen to

subject one's truth claims to scrutiny by others. In this way, he also exposed them to an expanded view of debate or commonly known then as 'bechara' in the sense that he risked having been rebuked by 'a minority' for holding and advocating divergent views. In this regard, the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Nahl* – The Bee (chapter 16:verse 125) states the following:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْخَيْرِ ۚ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

Invite (humankind, O Muhammad) to the Way of your Lord (Islām) with wisdom (of and the Qur'ān) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.

## Summary

Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy was undeniably constituted by the cultivation of a community of thinking that could take risks through the Qurānic wisdom of discernment and appropriate judgment. He summoned the Cape Muslim community to deepen their thinking about religious matters and to act with discernment and informed judgments. Similarly, he provoked them to render reasons without any contradiction. This makes his educational philosophy one of espousing thoughtfulness, coherence, and an invitation to deliberation. To my mind the disputes that occurred among Cape Muslims could not just have been about humiliating one another and the perpetuation of conflict; but rather, these disputes occurred as a consequence of people being challenged to see things differently. Disputes are a recognition that a community is not silent and paralytic towards that which they confronted anew.

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# ON PRAGMATISM, REFLECTIVENESS, AND POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

# 3

## Introduction

On reflecting about my own Muslim schooling or *madrassah* education as a pupil attending the classes of Imām Abubakr Simons – a student of Shaykh Ismāʿīl Ḥanīf Edwards who was a first cousin of my grandfather Mogamad Salegh Williams – at the *Khalīl al-Raḥmān Maṣjid* (mosque) in Ellesmere Street, District Six in the late 1960s to early 1970s, I came to realise how an educational philosophy could not merely be associated with thoughts and understandings. Instead, an educational philosophy also had a practical intent in much the same way my initial schooling extended to practices of Qurānic recitation and litanies in the public, mostly at the homes of congregants under the spiritual leadership of one’s teacher. Examining an educational philosophy linked to the manifestation of practical acts of service in the Cape Muslim community will be the subject of discussion in this chapter concerning Abu Bakr Effendi’s *modus operandi*.

Quite interestingly, with the death of Abu Bakr Effendi, the pragmatist movement became very prominent in educational circles in the United States. Scholars such as Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey introduced pragmatism into educational studies between 1878 and 1922 – two years prior to the death of Abu Bakr Effendi. Of interest to my analysis of an educational philosophy is that the pragmatist turn in scholarly circles also seemed to have been prevalent in the late 19th century Cape Muslim community.

The pragmatist tradition of educational theory made famous by Peirce, James and Dewey is concerned with the consequences of human reflective thought on society: Firstly, pragmatists hold the view that ideas are grounded in human consciousness that provides meaning to people’s

beliefs, habits and actions. Secondly, people's thoughts have experiential consequences – that is, pragmatism is concerned with everyday practical matters. Thirdly, the community plays a role in educating the individual as much as the individual educates the community through intelligent inquiry, thus making a pragmatist educational philosophy highly communicative and political (Garrison & Neiman, 2003).

In this chapter, I argue that Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy could have been pragmatist in the sense that his thoughts and judgments point towards a relevance pertaining to the consequences of individual thoughts for the late 19th century Cape Muslim community and *vice a versa*. In other words, his educational philosophy had reflective, communicative, and politically-informed dimensions. Concerning significant religious judgments (pronouncements) pertaining to Muslim life in the Cape, I now examine what I would refer to as Abu Bakr Effendi's pragmatist turn.

### **On reflective thought: A Hanfi-Shāfi'i dispute?**

When Imām Abdol Rakiep, the grandson of Imām Tuan Guru and a student of Abu Bakr Effendi, approached his teacher to inquire about the performance of Friday congregational prayers at the Nūr al-Islām Mosque in the Bo-Kaap (Upper Cape) where he officiated since the age of 17 years, he was advised to use his own judgment (*ijtihad*) based on an interpretation of not only the Shāfi'i tradition but also the Hanafi jurisprudential school of thought (Tayob, 1995). Of importance to note is that Achmat von Bengalen, a confidant of Imām Abdullah (Tuan Guru), entrusted Imām Abdol Rakiep to be taught by Abu Bakr Effendi, which meant that the latter would also initiate him (Imām Abdol Rakiep) into a tradition of learning the Qurān and *Sunnah*, and secondary authoritative religious sources. According to an understanding of the Shāfi'i tradition, the Friday *jumu'ah* (congregational worship) could only proceed when at least forty male worshippers congregated for the service and considering that a Hanafi position did not require such a numerical number of congregants, Imām Abdol Rakiep proceeded with the *jumu'ah* (Tayob, 1995:50). Much to the dissatisfaction of some congregants who did not depart from the Shāfi'i ruling of having forty congregants, the *imām* was subsequently charged with incompetence – violating the juristic rule of *jumu'ah* (congregational worship). After Abu Bakr Effendi provided evidence in support of Imām Abdol Rakiep's decision, the Cape Supreme Court ruled in his favour (Davids, 1980:133).

Although there seemed to have been scepticism about Abu Bakr Effendi's evidence among some Cape Muslims in 1863, the court's judgment was based on the credible evidence that was provided. If a scholar under oath announced that he was also a Shāfi'i as well as having been trained by Shāfi'i teachers (Davids, 1980:133), my contention is that such claims were in line with the authority of Abu Bakr Effendi's religious leadership. Rather than having resolved a Hanafi-Shāfi'i dispute, it appears that Abu Bakr Effendi applied reflective thought according to which he relied on authoritative sources that were most relevant to the judgment at that time. Moreover, it happened that for this judgment, a Hanafi justification seemed to have been more plausible. In other words, this judgment that relied on a Hanafi ruling was provided by a scholar who claimed to have been a Shāfi'i as well. My understanding of this judgment is that Abu Bakr Effendi announced his scholarly position by drawing on relevant jurisprudential sources – Hanafi and Shāfi'i – to corroborate his judgment.

Unfortunately, some writers have used the court ruling as a vindication of Abu Bakr Effendi's prejudice to jurisprudential schools of thought rather than his relevant use of religious sources that guided his judgments. What is more disconcerting is that an apparent Hanafi bias – as if such a bias is necessarily indefensible – was that Imām Abdol Rakiep 'never again performed Juma-ah [*jumu'ah*] at the ... Mosque' (Davids, 1980:133), which is an indication of religious intolerance and dogmatism that emerged as a result of the court case.

The pragmatism exercised by Abu Bakr Effendi in defence of a *jumu'ah* is indicative of his reflective thought about the matter. He probably deemed the *jumu'ah* message as more prudent for congregants and the Cape Muslim community than its abandonment only because of a numerical deficiency. Moreover, to apportion blame to Abu Bakr Effendi for having instigated a Hanafi-Shāfi'i dispute is not only to misrecognise his capacity for reflective thought but also to accentuate an indefensible Hanafi-Shāfi'i dichotomy that was alien to genuine Muslim erudition. What is of interest to this discussion, is that the reflectivity and pragmatism associated with Imām Abdol Rakiep's educational philosophy, a mentee of Abu Bakr Effendi, was that years later (in 1939) Shaykh Ismā'il Ḥanīf Edwards was appointed at the Nūr al-Islām Mosque and he continued the pragmatic spirit of reflective thought that was known to be linked to the religious matters at the mosque. He was involved in several deliberations with religious leaders at the time, and the most classical confirmation of the reflective tradition that was pursued at the

mosque revolved around his judgment that a Muslim woman could enter marriage without her parents' approval – much to the resentment of some of the clergy (Davids, 1980:136).

## **A communicative concern for practical matters**

An important facet of Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy was his determination and consciousness to learn the spoken language of the 19th century Cape Muslims. Mia Brandel-Syrier (in Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:XXXVI-VII) posits that he had an 'adequate' command of the spoken Afrikaans (Cape-Dutch) among Muslims and it appeared that he had 'acquired an appreciable proficiency in Afrikaans even to the point of being able to use pertinently certain idiomatic expressions ...'. His sterling efforts to author the *Bayān al-Dīn* (Explanation of religion) in a language that brought him in relatively close contact with the Cape Muslim community confirms his pragmatic indulgence to communicate a view of Muslim religious matters, as aptly put by Brandel-Syrier (in Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:XXXVI), 'with a view to local circumstances' that at times contained 'his own judgments'. Of interest to the pragmatist orientation towards communicative engagement, Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy pertaining to such a view is worth referring to. One of his 354 pronouncements on religious matters in the *Bayān al-Dīn* involved a pronouncement on interreligious human relations, that is, in reference to pronouncement 341 the following is stated:

There is no objection to illuminating (the Qur'ān); nor to allowing Christians and Jews under Muslim protection to enter a sacred place of worship; nor for Muslims to visit such persons (when they are ill) ... (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:179).

Abu Bakr Effendi's pragmatist educational philosophy seems to be one of openness and reflectively opening up the Qurānic guidance to people of any religious persuasion. This makes sense, considering that the Qurān (*Sūrah Saba'* - The Saba, chapter 34:verse 28) was sent to the entire humanity:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَلِمَةً بِلُغَةِ النَّاسِ يَحْبُرُونَ وَنَبِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to all humankind, but most of [wo]men know not.

A pragmatist educational philosophy is one that connects with people of all religious and non-religious persuasions and not exclusive of a particular thought or worldview. Abu Bakr Effendi's invitation to Muslims and non-Muslims to enter one another's places of worship (mosques, churches

and synagogues), and to visit the sick are indicative of his openness and respect towards others and otherness. In this way, his pragmatism was concerned with everyday matters that affected the real lives of all humans. Of importance to this issue is his advocacy for inter-religious interaction among different religious groups with the possibility that knowledge is enhanced. The focus of this pronouncement is on the advancement of knowledge through interaction among different religious groups.

Pursuant to the above discussion, pronouncement 310 deserves some discussion. The *Bayān al-Dīn* states the following:

To seek religious knowledge is also a Command upon every Muslim, man or woman.  
The best of all occupations is the Holy War. (The second best) is trade and commerce  
(Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:165).

Now considering that Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy can be considered as one of pragmatism and inclusion, Mia Brandel-Syrier (in Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:65) account of 'Holy War' (*jihād*) seems untenable. She asserts in a footnote that Abu Bakr Effendi advocated 'War against unbelievers and schismatics, or other heretics in order to glorify the religion of Islam and make its enemies weak and humble' (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:165). In contradiction to the pronouncement above in which Abu Bakr Effendi lucidly advocates intra- and inter-religious interaction, Mia Brandel-Syrier (in Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960) inexplicably chose to translate from Arabic-Afrikaans and associate Abu Bakr Effendi with advancing Islam through the subjugation of the other. Why would a scholar encourage Muslims and non-Muslims to be illuminated by the Qurān through understanding and engagement and then consider 'Holy War' as a way to coerce people? I think explaining his reference to *jihād* (striving in the way of Allāh) as synonymously with 'Holy War' seems incongruent with the pragmatist spirit of his educational philosophy of striving to acquire knowledge of the Qurān and *Sunnah* and to implement such knowledge vigorously in one's everyday practices. As a proponent of *bashīr* (glad tidings or good news) and *nadhīr* (warnings), it seems more apt to equate Abu Bakr Effendi's pragmatist communicative position with the cultivation of reminders of good societal living than to parochially connect his educational philosophy with the threat of 'Holy War'. In this regard, the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Tawbah* – The Immunity (chapter 9:verse 41) states the following:

أَنْزِرُوا حِفَافًا وَيَقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

March forth, whether you are light (being healthy, young and wealthy) or heavy (being ill, old and poor), strive hard (مجاهدين) with your wealth and your lives in the Cause of Allāh. This is better for you, if you know.

Abu Bakr Effendi's pragmatist stance towards education and the pursuit of knowledge informs his notion of *jihād* as a striving in the way of Allāh to gain an understanding of the Qurān and *Sunnah* and authoritative sources of knowledge rather than a 'Holy War' as unjustifiably referred to by Brandel-Syrier. In fact, pronouncement 310 of the *Bayān al-Dīn* emphasises the quest for knowledge as an injunction from the Qurān and *Sunnah*, in particular about what is compulsory (*farḍ*), necessary (*wājib*), acceptable (*ḥalāl*) and prohibited (*ḥarām*) (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:164) – all knowledgeable judgments that had pragmatic consequences for the Cape Muslim community. To abruptly insert an understanding of a 'Holy War' against unbelievers and infidels into a discussion on the earnest pursuit for knowledge is being disingenuous to a scholar who summoned Cape Muslims to exert themselves (*ijtihād*) in the quest for knowledge and understanding. Moreover, to use a footnote in her translated text of Abu Bakr Effendi's *Bayān al-Dīn* to point the reader to a 'Holy War' syndrome is to unjustifiably make skewed religious assumptions about his work that was never there. I have no doubt that Abu Bakr Effendi was cognisant of *jihād* (striving) as a way to combat injustice against oppression and exploitation concerning colonialism at the Cape, but I am less inclined to associate his work with a 'Holy War' against infidelity through coercion and violence. In my reading of the original Arabic-Afrikaans manuscript of the *Bayān al-Dīn*, I did not encounter any reference to 'Holy War' or 'heilige oorlog' or 'religieuse aanslag' in Afrikaans or Afrikaans-Dutch respectively.

Moreover, what is even more disconcerting of Mia Brandel-Syrier's (in Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:XVI-VII) erroneous claims about *ijtihād* (intellectual striving) is embedded in her view that 'the door of IJTIHĀD [*ijtihād*] was closed forever ... [and] [s]cholars, as well as laymen, are now obliged to TAQLĪD [*taqlīd*], i.e. to recognise the undisputed and final authority of the former independent scholars'. As a brief introduction to Abu Bakr Effendi's translated text into English, Brandel-Syrier (in Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:X) quite comprehensively elucidates 'Islamic jurisprudence' concerning *shari'ah* (law), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), the Qurān, *Sunnah*, science of *fiqh*, *fatwā* (judgment), science of *Aḥādīth* and the quest for knowledge in conjunction with the practice of *ijtihād*. However, it seems as if her view on the discontinuation of *ijtihād* is either meant to minimise the authenticity of the *Bayān al-Dīn* as a recognised scholarly work or to devalue Abu Bakr Effendi himself for not actually having applied *ijtihād* but rather having used *taqlīd*

(imitation) to formulate his pronouncements. Small wonder she remains adamant that the *Bayān al-Dīn* seems to replicate a well-known Hanafi treatise: 'Abu Bakr's text is a close copy of the *Multaqa al-Abhur* of Muhammed b. Ibrahim al Halabi, the most recent authoritative elementary handbook of the Hanafite School of Law which has been in current school use throughout the Turkish Empire from the 16th century onwards' (Brandel-Syrier in Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:VII). Such a ridiculous presumption can only be remotely distant from the truth and that Abu Bakr Effendi's authoritative exertion of *ijtihād* cannot be misrecognised as is evident in the *Bayān al-Dīn*. How could the doors for *ijtihād* ever have been closed if scholars like Ṣadr ad-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī, also called Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1635/40), and Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938), immediately preceded and succeeded him respectively?

### **On being educated by the Cape Muslim community and political consciousness**

Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy was as much about his intellectual pronouncements as it was in response to what the Cape Muslim community's socio-political situation was. His responses, as enunciated in the *Bayān al-Dīn*, were on several occasions directly linked to the situational contexts Muslims experienced and hence, required religious intervention to ensure their continued commitment to their faith. In reference to pronouncements 314 and 344 about the carrying and drinking of *khamr* (extract from the juices of grapes) respectively, his judgment on carrying *khamr* as permissible, in contrast to his judgment on the prohibition of its consumption, which intimates that he must have been conscious that some livelihoods of Muslim workers depended on their labour during harvesting. However, he was not oblivious of the Qurānic injunction that the consumption and sale of *khamr* are prohibited as confirmed by pronouncement 346 (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:181). The point about this discussion is that Abu Bakr Effendi was not only intellectually astute, but he also proffered pronouncements that had a direct bearing on the livelihoods of Muslims. He was moved by their life situations according to which he made a specific pronouncement.

Similarly, concerning pronouncement 306, on declaring '[a]nything in excess ... [as] unlawful (ḤARĀM) ... [u]nless it is done with the aim of strengthening oneself for the fast of to-morrow, or in order not to put one's guests to shame' (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:162), Abu Bakr Effendi must have been aware of the socio-economic conditions of the Muslim community. His recognition of poverty, hardship and unemployment in the community

must have influenced his humility to treat other humans with dignity and that they should not be shamed. He was educated by his exposure to the community in which he lived that, in turn, affected his religious judgments, notwithstanding the fact that slavery was just abolished prior to his arrival in the mid-19th century, and the prevalence of depressing socio-economic conditions, contributed to some of the formulations in his pronouncements, especially on the prohibitions of foods and drink.

Another interesting, and what came to be described as a contentious pronouncement, pertains to his judgments on seafoods (pronouncements 295 to 300). Known as the crayfish controversy, Abu Bakr pronounced in the *Bayān al-Dīn* that 'crabs and lobster and all shell-fish' were unlawful to consume (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:156; Davids, 1980:54). On closer examination of pronouncement 300, the following is stated:

No animals which live in water should be eaten, except fish which, however, may not be eaten when found floating on the surface. But when the water has flown away from the fish it may be eaten (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:158).

The jurisprudential argument has gained much attention in the writings of scholars on Abu Bakr Effendi's *Bayān al-Dīn*. His judgment on seafoods seems to be grounded in an interpretation of the *Qurān* and *Aḥādīth* in which he posits (pronouncement 302) that '[a]ll other sea animals [besides fish] are ritually impure, and are unlawful, in accordance with the QUR'ĀN ... (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:159). My own understanding of his reference to ritual impurity is twofold: that all water animals besides fish are ritually unclean to consume; and that the prohibition to consume all water animals besides fish is contextually related to the socio-economic situation of the time. I think the first assumption has not been considered in conjunction with the second one. Prohibiting the eating of crayfish can, therefore, not be seen separate from the socio-economic situation in the late 19th century at the Cape. In this regard, Cockcroft and Mackenzie (1997:75) aver that commercial exploitation of rock lobster commenced in the late 19th century, which has become 'an important subsistence and/or recreational activity for communities along the west and south-west coasts of South Africa'. It could well have been that his pronouncement on the prohibition of crayfish consumption was also to curtail possible Muslim involvement in commercially exploitative practices – thus making his judgment demonstrably political in the face of a burgeoning commercialised seafood industry. To my mind, it seems more plausible to contend that his concern was that Muslims should continue pursuing virtuous lives and that corruption and exploitation often associated with commercialisation should, at all costs, be avoided.

Rather than considering the political and social consequences of his pronouncements on seafoods in the Cape, it seems as if analyses of such pronouncements were about highlighting an unnecessary Hanafi-Shāfi'i dispute that obscured an understanding of his pragmatist educational philosophy.

## **Summary**

Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy was not only reflective and communicative but also inherently politically-driven. Some of his pronouncements on social life and nourishment had a definitive reflective, communicative and political orientation that were not always appreciated in historical, sociological and theological writings and analyses of his work. My argument is that his work also has an educational, and by implication, political slant not always highlighted in theses about his life and works.

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# ON GENDER, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL LIBERATION

# 4

## Introduction

Abu Bakr Effendi arrived in the Cape after the abolition of slavery in 1834. The post-1834 Muslim community was not exonerated from the economic hardships in the Cape after the end of slavery, and their identity as Cape ‘Malay’ Muslims gained significant prominence (Bickford-Smith, 1995; Baderoen, 2004). Muslims, following Gabeba Baderoen (2004:15) during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been portrayed in the media not only in relation to their disavowal of slavery but also as ‘placid, law-abiding and industrious, and characterized by colourful clothing and rituals ...’. Helen Bradford (1996:351) describes the 19th century Cape women as insignificant and unimportant in relation to men and the colonial encounter. Moreover, this meant that Cape Muslim women could only have been regarded as gentle, honourable, and hardworking yet, paradoxically so in a patriarchal society as unimportant. In this chapter, I argue that Abu Bakr Effendi was not a misogynist considering that his position on women was another dimension of Muslim thought and practice that constituted his educational philosophy.

## On gender and education

According to the *Bayān al-Dīn*,

When someone leads a single person in a Command-prayer and becomes impure, that person, if he be a man, becomes automatically [sic] the leader whether the prayer-leader did appoint him or not. If (however, he is) not (a man, then there is) no (prayer-leader) and the prayer becomes invalidated (since it is prayed) without a leader (and the intention was made to pray with a leader) (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:71).

From the above pronouncement (27) it seems as if a prayer should, at all costs, be led by a man otherwise the prayer itself would be negated on the grounds that only a man can seemingly provide leadership through prayer. This pronouncement appears to align with mosque prayers until today in the Cape where women would seldom, if at all, lead prayers in public. Such an understanding of leadership only being associated with men seems to be ambivalent with the practice of appointing women teachers at Muslim schools. Furthermore, here Abu Bakr Effendi's idea of leadership does not seem to be at variance with his decision to have appointed his spouse, Tahīrah Effendi, as principal of the girls' school in the Cape. However, one could argue that she was appointed to a girls' school in 1864. The argument is about leadership, and often even women principals are not considered, it seems, as authentic leaders even at schools for girls. On these grounds, Abu Bakr Effendi can be said to have recognised the leadership capacities of women, and it did not bother him when his own spouse became the leader at a school for girls established by him.

One has to recognise that it would have been quite incongruent with the religious ethos in the 19th century for women to have led prayers and similarly even today. Therefore, Abu Bakr Effendi's pronouncements on leaders for prayers that prejudice women should not be used to advance misogynist views about the scholar. Notwithstanding what seems to be endemic to the position of women in Muslim societies that they do not lead prayers for men, Abu Bakr Effendi's appointment of his spouse as a leader of the first girls' school at the Cape in the 19th century should be viewed as going against the grain of the hegemonic view that only men can and should be educational leaders in schools.

Not much has changed today even in higher education, considering that in Africa not even ten per cent of vice-chancellors at universities are women. According to the Forum for African Women Vice-Chancellors (FAWOVC) it is 'noted that out of the one thousand five hundred (1 500) universities in Africa, only forty (40) were headed by women' (FAWOVC, 2020). The point is, for Abu Bakr Effendi to have already appointed a woman as the leader of a girls' school in the 19th century Cape colony, has to be acknowledged as an educational initiative that recognises gender equality. At a time when girls were discouraged from attending school and the feminine discourse was to remain at 'home' as it was a girl's 'sacred duty and privilege' to support her mother who has sacrificed so much for her in order to become 'proficient in all that a woman should know of the art of making a home pretty and

attractive, and also learn to cook, and make her own clothes' (Duff, 2006:8). When a woman was viewed as having only a moral and spiritual role to perform in her marriage and the community (Duff, 2006), Abu Bakr Effendi saw it apposite to designate his spouse as the leader at the Muslim girls' school where Arabic, Dutch and English, Qurānic memorisation, reading and writing, as well as morality in Islam were taught (Gençoğlu, 2013:86).

What follows from the above is that it would be safe to claim that Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy was not gender impaired and that he recognised the importance of formal education for women who could contribute towards the moral and intellectual upliftment of the community. His recognition of the equal right of women to be educated hardly seems prejudicial considering that in the 19th century Cape colony social and educational prejudice against women were rife. In fact, his curricula initiatives and recognition that women could enact a leadership role in the community stands in contrast to some of his pronouncements in the *Bayān al-Dīn* that seem to undermine his unbiasedness towards the feminine gender. Perhaps in mitigation, it could be claimed that the socio-political times were not conducive for such change, but then again liberatory changes occur at the most unexpected times and, so it seems, Abu Bakr Effendi was perhaps not prepared to take more courageous initiatives.

## **On social liberation**

In addition to the seeking of knowledge, Abu Bakr Effendi was clear in pronouncements that work, and engagement in commercial transactions are incumbent and permissible for males and females respectively (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:164, 174). At a time of great social inequality in the Cape (Dooling, 2005), this suggests that women should not be discriminated against if they choose to work and engage in transactions.

In this regard, Abu Bakr Effendi's view on the freedom and equality of women impacted his educational philosophy that did not prejudice women in the quest for knowledge. The point is, he recognised that their education would enhance their work capacity and to engage in transactions, which makes his educational philosophy quite liberatory. That is, working in public and owning property, for instance, were not out of the purview of his educational philosophy. Moreover, considering that social inequality was rife and wealth measured against what men possessed (Fourie & Von Fintel, 2009), Abu Bakr Effendi's pronouncements on work and transactions concerning women

seem quite emancipatory, especially his pronouncement 'that it is wiser for men as well as women to have some lawful occupation' (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:164).

## **Summary**

Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy does not disparage women as they were encouraged to embark on knowledge, to work and pursue their professions lawfully. At a time when political discrimination towards women and their denial of education were on the upswing, he was willing to pronounce the significance of acquiring knowledge, engaging in transactions and working in opposition to the socio-political trend at the Cape in the 19th century. In this way, Abu Bakr Effendi cannot be dismissed as not having been radical in his thinking and pronouncements.

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# ON EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND MODERNITY

# 5

## Introduction

Abu Bakr Effendi's *Bayān al-Dīn* was never meant to be the ultimate truth on religious matters for Muslims at the Cape in the 19th century, nor was it meant to provide pronouncements on every aspect of Muslim life. Therefore, Brandel-Syrier's assertion that he omitted a chapter on pilgrimage does not seem to be valid considering that he felt the need to put into writing those judgments on most aspects of Muslim life that had direct relevance to their existing societal practices. In my view, the *Bayān al-Dīn* deserves acclaim for its profundity as an important text in Cape Muslim educational philosophy. Commencing with his pronouncements on ritual purification, ritual prayer, alms-tax, fasting and then concluding with judgments on ritual slaughter, ritual prohibitions of eating and drinking, rules of food, drinks, gainful occupations, clothing, and beverages to hunting, Abu Bakr Effendi applies interpretations of Qurān and *Aḥādīth* in support of his pronouncements in propositional form.

In order to understand the *Bayān al-Dīn*, one has to understand the theme he introduces and the context that prevailed according to which he proffered his judgments. What is interesting to note about his analyses is that he uses 'his judgments ... substantiating those decisions which he holds to be of importance ... [providing] also sometimes lengthy explanations of points of divergence' (Brandel-Syrier in Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:XXXVI). His philosophical analyses point towards the view that his inferences follow coherently and lucidly that remind me of serious educational philosophy that has practical relevance. In this chapter, I examine the nature of such practical relevance and why his educational philosophy cannot be seen as incongruent with a modernist discourse.

## A modernist educational discourse

That Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy seems commensurable with a modernist discourse is linked to his rational account of pronouncements as contained in the *Bayān al-Dīn*; the priority he assigned to human freedom, and individuality; and public concern for education that represented the Cape Muslim community and its concomitant social advancement. Firstly, throughout the text, he introduced themes coherently with the aim to advance particular understandings specific to just human living. Rationally, he explains important facets of Muslim acts of service (*'ibādāt*) by providing justifications from traditional sources of Muslim thought and practice, specifically the Qurān and *Sunnah*. Whenever he recognises the need for elaboration and justification, he refers to various traditional sources of knowledge as a vindication that his pronouncements are rationally framed and substantiated. For example, when he explains funeral prayers for martyrs, he is cognisant of the possible circumstances that can result in martyrdom. Then he discusses procedures to handle the deceased bodies of martyrs and the care required to prepare their bodies for burial (pronouncement 216). Afterwards, he expands on conditions for martyrdom before concluding with rational assertions as to when and how prayers for the deceased martyrs can proceed (pronouncement 218) (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:115-116).

Secondly, pronouncements in the text are invariably connected to individualism and freedom. In quite a deterministic mode, he constantly refers to the individual and his and her possible freedom that can emanate from the observance of religious rules. Pronouncement 242 is an example in point where reference to human individualism and freedom are emphasised:

If a Muslim or a Christian or Jew under Muslim protection, find minerals whether gold or silver, iron, lead or copper, on land on which the title is due or on land on which the general tax is due 1/5th must be paid as alms-tax, whilst 4/5th may remain for the finder if the land does not belong to anyone, but for the owner of the land, if it belongs to someone (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:128-129).

The individuality in the pronouncement is evident. What is even more lucid is the emphasis on how the individual's freedom can be secured through the paying of alms-tax. What is important to note in this pronouncement, is that human freedom is strictly dependent on the individual being advised to make a decision that favours the personal self or the other self with little if perhaps any relevance to collective freedom.

Thirdly, Abu Bakr Effendi's modernist educational philosophy is evident throughout the *Bayān al-Dīn*. Again, by way of example, he discusses alms-giving in relation to other humans (pronouncement 255):

When giving the alms-tax (to a needy person) it is recommended to give him so much that he need not beg anymore for that day. It is reprobated to give the whole amount due or more to one poor person who is not indebted. It is also reprobated to send alms-tax from one village or province to another unless it is to one's relatives, or to someone who is in greater need than the people of one's own place (Abu Bakr Effendi, 1960:134).

In the above pronouncement about the distribution of alms-tax, the evidence is clear that such tax should be given to those members in society in real need, thus confirming the notion of social upliftment in the community. I infer that he was not just concerned with giving alms-tax but that the appropriate persons should receive such tax.

Hence, Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy had a modernist orientation with a bias towards rationality, individuality and a concern for social upliftment. His concern for modernity is most poignantly illustrated in his defence of rational argumentation, and his attempt at reconciling rational thinking with human freedom and progress. In a way, the *Bayān al-Dīn* remains a modernist critical examination of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and law (*sharī'ah*) in the context of the Qurān and *Sunnah* commensurate with pronouncements (legal judgments) on religious matters for Cape Muslims during the 19th century. My own reading of the *Bayān al-Dīn* is such that I recognise Abu Bakr Effendi's educational endeavour to construct knowledge for himself and others in the Cape Muslim community of the 19th century and perhaps beyond. His rationality is evident when he articulates himself through pronouncements that seem to attune his students and readers to the social world where possibilities may be contemplated, reflected on, transformed and deepened (Waghid, 2002:52).

Through rationality, he construed his role in the Cape Muslim community whereby he obliged himself to clarify and proffer reasons for his pronouncements. As Charles Taylor (1985) so aptly reminds us, through rationality, one communicates meanings or understandings to others who may be interested in one's perspectives and perceptions in a clear and consistent or unambiguous manner. I have no doubt that Abu Bakr Effendi's rationality transformed his pronouncements into a rational form of language that gave importance to interpretations and constructed meanings aimed at improving the social conditions of Muslims at the Cape

in the 19th century through education. Put differently, through the *Bayān al-Dīn*, he was engaged in dynamic meaning-making with which he envisaged Muslims would become agents of change (Waghid, 2002). It is his clarity and transparency that attracted me most to his text, and his explanations based on multiple sources of knowledge. He summons his readers, as aptly put by Taylor (1985), to reflect on their own lives and to help envision better lives for themselves and others.

## **An inquiry in and about critical educational theory**

How should Abu Bakr Effendi's *Bayān al-Dīn* be considered? Being a rational text with pragmatic overtones it would help to read his text in a critical way. Being critical implies looking for meanings that illuminate the text's emancipatory potential. In other words, it is not plausible enough to just deduce meanings for the sake of clarity without also looking for some ways in which societal practices can be liberated. If the text is not interpreted critically, one will not do justice to the author's critical and liberatory intent. For instance, if one were to examine his pronouncements on prayer, it is not good enough to merely deduce rules and regulations of the religious practice independent from its potential to conscientise and liberate Muslims' minds from subjugation and oppression. In this way, an elucidation of prayer has meanings that are not only lucid but also meanings that advocate human freedom.

Reading the *Bayān al-Dīn* with a critical mind should also make one open and reflective about one's own practices with the possibility to look at one's practices anew. Here, I am specifically referring to a critical reading of pronouncements on paying alms-tax for just fulfilling a religious obligation but more poignantly to think differently about alms-tax as a way to emancipate communities. By this is meant that the fulfilment of one's duty should not be separated from what one envisages should enhance human empowerment. In other words, I am thinking of linking the payment of alms-tax to the creation of sustainable employment opportunities for members of a community. A critical take on the *Bayān al-Dīn* does not mean that one relinquishes a rational understanding of the text, but rather, that one augments one's inferences with understandings that evoke the potentialities of Muslims to advance their freedoms.

## **Looking beyond the educational philosophy of Abu Bakr Effendi**

My analysis of Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy was meant to bring more light to his phenomenal contribution to education. The analysis was never meant to be a theological, political, or linguistic elucidation of his seminal work as articulated in the *Bayān al-Dīn*. As a scholar who was responsible for opening Muslim educational institutions during the 19th century Cape colony, it would not be imprudent to have analysed his contribution to Muslim educational philosophy at the Cape. He not only brought Muslim educational theory and practice into conversation with rational, critical, pragmatic, and modernist claims about education, but he also figured prominently in advocating for a critical educational philosophy as could be deduced from his *Bayān al-Dīn*. In this section, I offer an account of deconstructive educational theory and how it potentially influences Muslim practices.

My attempt to rethink Muslim educational theory in South Africa appears in Mukhlis Abu Bakar's (2017) edited collection of essays, entitled *Rethinking Madrassah Education in a Globalised World*. Firstly, I argue that a non-dichotomous view of knowledge is untenable (Waghid, 2017:105). All knowledge comes from Allāh Almighty and to bifurcate knowledge into revealed as separate from non-revealed knowledge problematises an integrationist understanding of knowledge that does not compartmentalise different categories of knowledge. By implication, Muslim educational theory cannot be blind to the notion of a non-dichotomous view of knowledge. Secondly, Muslim educational theory is inherently critical and therefore has the potential to be responsive to critique and recognition of otherness (Waghid, 2017:115). Critique implies that knowledge cannot only be subjected to memorisation, and that reflection about knowledge should augment the practice of knowing. In this way, Muslim educational theory is commensurable with reflexivity that requires critical and deliberative engagement in and about knowledge itself. What follows, is that any understanding of Muslim educational theory cannot be indifferent to human consciousness and the exercise of human autonomy in a deliberative spirit. To think that Muslim educational theory should just be conjured up by independent scholars without subjecting such thoughts on Muslim education to critical scrutiny by others would undermine the authenticity that ought to be associated with such a form of education. In my reading

on commentators' views on Abu Bakr Effendi's *Bayān al-Dīn*, I have not encountered a critical engagement with his thoughts on educational theory, as if such a theory does not have agency.

Finally, my understanding of Muslim educational theory is that such a theory ought to be reconsidered in light of its potential to be radical. Although Abu Bakr Effendi's work was modernistically critical and pragmatic, I infer a reluctance in some of his pronouncements to be even more radical. My argument in defence of a radicalised imaginary on Muslim educational theory seems to be connected to cultivating enhanced educational spaces for social cohesion and human co-existence (Waghid, 2017:116). Perhaps, the time is opportune for Muslim educational theory to be looked at in a more radicalised form than what was done by scholars such as Abu Bakr Effendi in the 19th century Cape colony.

In conclusion, in *African Philosophy of Education Reconsidered: On Being Human* (Waghid, 2014), I argue for a reasoned, culture-dependent educational philosophy. Such an educational philosophy draws on a communitarian understanding of *ubuntu* that can contribute towards the cultivation of democratic justice on the African continent (Waghid, 2014:2). My argument in defence of *ubuntu* (human dignity and interdependence) is threefold: Firstly, *ubuntu* constitutes an African educational philosophy with reference to the cultural understandings of people, including their languages and modes of human engagement; secondly, the notion of *ubuntu* draws on acts of reflective inquiry and justification in the quest to advance human freedom and understanding; and thirdly, *ubuntu* is inextricably connected to the dictum 'I am therefore we are [and become]' through which just human actions are pursued on the African continent (Waghid, 2014:2-3).

In my view, an African philosophy of education ought to constitute an African Muslim educational philosophy because of its inherent connection with the cultivation of justice on the continent. The pragmatist educational philosophy of Abu Bakr Effendi can become a springboard for the cultivation of an African philosophy of education geared towards the cultivation of democratic justice on the continent. In the second part of this book, I make an attempt to advance philosophy of Muslim education beyond its pragmatic frame as instigated by illustrious scholars such as Abu Bakr Effendi.

## Summary

Abu Bakr Effendi's educational philosophy is not only critical, pragmatic and rational, but his pronouncements lend his understanding to a sense of modernity that made his objective for educational renewal a real possibility. And here, educational renewal implies that his work had an inherent emancipatory bias that deserves a modernist-cum-critical acclaim. Of course, I am not denying that a study of educational philosophy had already ventured into the post-modern realm and that a deconstructive reading of the *Bayān al-Dīn* would more feasibly perpetuate the relevance of his work. However, for now, it is apposite to point out the critical tendencies in his educational philosophy that invariably place his work in the realm of scholarship that can cultivate critical communities. I am persuaded that the *Bayān al-Dīn*, if read critically, can become more liberatory than what it had been considered to be thus far. It is high time that more justice is being done to his critical and modernist educational philosophy.

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## PREFACE

Muslim education has a copious and illustrious historical legacy. Until the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Makkah, Saudi Arabia in 1977, concepts such as *tarbiyyah* (rearing) and *ta'lim* (learning) have predominantly carried the prestige of Muslim education as is evidenced in the early writings of prominent scholars such as Isma'il al-Faruqi (1982), Abu Sulayman (1994), Abdul-Rahman Salih Abdullah (1982), Fazlur Rahman (1982), and Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud (1990). During and more profoundly after the conference in 1977, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1991) couched Muslim education through the concept of *ta'dib* (good education). What makes *ta'dib* (good education) an extension of *tarbiyyah* (rearing) and *ta'lim* (learning) is an understanding that rearing and learning have connections with socialisation and individuation, respectively.

On the one hand, when someone is socialised into the inherited traditions of knowledge of a particular thought perspective, then such a person has been initiated into what is rudimentary to such a theory of knowledge. Therefore, socialising a Muslim learner into the elementary aspects of Muslim education, implies that such a learner acquires basic knowledge of the faith, for instance, getting to know the articles of faith and the principles of Islām as a way of life. On the other hand, for a person to be initiated into *ta'lim* (learning) means that such a person does not only familiarise himself or herself with tenets of the faith, but also begins to question what he or she has learned. In other words, *ta'lim* (learning) implies that a Muslim learner can question and challenge aspects of the traditions of Muslim education. Thus, throughout the history of Muslim education, teachers and institutions have pursued a complementary relationship between socialisation and individuation, but at times, and some will argue overwhelmingly so, the focus on Muslim education has predominantly been prejudiced towards

socialisation. The latter claim is corroborated by the emphasis many Muslim educational institutions in the world have placed on Qurānic memorisation and the acquisition of voluminous *Aḥādīth* (sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ)). Of course, it would be disingenuous to assert that Muslim education was or is remiss of criticality because as is evident from many doctoral theses I have examined throughout my professional career, from at least Muslim institutions of higher learning, learning has also been linked to critique and disagreement. For instance, Ahmad Akgunduz (2015) gives an example of the Islamic University of Rotterdam in The Netherlands founded in 1997, that according to him develops and deepens understanding of knowledge and a critical attitude towards Muslim traditions. However, if Muslim education were to be placed on a continuum of minimalist-maximalist education, such a form of education would be more tilted towards a minimalist understanding of education. Perhaps, it is for the latter reason that al-Attas (1991) was convinced that Muslim education ought to be looked at differently, that is, through the lenses of *ta'dīb* (good education).

Based on the seminal thoughts of al-Attas (1991:25) *ta'dīb* (good education) 'involves action to *discipline* the mind and soul; it is the acquisition of the good *qualities* and *attributes* of mind and soul; it is to *perform* the *correct* as against the erroneous *action*, of *right* and *proper* as against *wrong*; it is the *preserving from disgrace*'. Action that involves both mind (intelligence) and soul (emotion) seems to guide plausible as against untenable judgments on the part of Muslims. For this reason al-Attas (1991:24-26) accentuates the importance of recognising, acknowledging (socialisation), and discerning just speech (individuation) as constitutive of what it means to practice *ta'dīb* (good education). Put differently, judging appropriately (correctly) is a matter of proffering defensible reasons for one's truth claims and, not just making imprudent judgments about matters concerning humans and non-humans. When one makes injudicious truth claims the possibility is always there for careless actions to ensue. What makes *ta'dīb* (good education) an extension of the complimentary thesis between *tarbiyyah* (rearing) and *ta'lim* (learning)? In the first place, socialisation and individuation cannot be devoid of prudent judgments as that would mark the end of appropriate rearing and learning. Secondly, to be initiated into social practices and to be provoked to think critically about those practices should be linked to actions that are dignified and free from ignominy or what al-Attas (1991:26) refers to as 'disgrace'. If not, the possibility is always there for *tarbiyyah* (rearing) and *ta'lim* (learning) to be thoughtfully and emotionally deficient. Thirdly, *ta'dīb* (good education) enhances the possibility that socialisation and

individuation – *tarbiyyah* (rearing) and *ta'lim* (learning) – remain connected to the cultivation of righteous Muslims within a just society. In this way, *ta'dīb* (good education) not only consolidates appropriate *tarbiyyah* (rearing) and *ta'lim* (learning), but also guides a community towards the cultivation of justice.

Now inasmuch as *ta'dīb* (good education) seems to extend notions of *tarbiyyah* (rearing) and *ta'lim* (learning), my understanding of education as *ta'dīb* is that such a form of education does not seem to be laudable enough particularly, considering that Muslims live together with others in pluralist societies, and often Muslims have migrated to their newly found communities; and, the cultivation of justice from one's own cultural-religious tradition cannot be considered as universally applicable to all others for that in itself would be tantamount to disrespecting others' ways of being and acting. In this way, the argument I proffer in this book is not about undermining *ta'dīb* (good education) and its concomitant link with notions of *tarbiyyah* (rearing) and *ta'lim* (learning), but rather, to offer a more relevant and defensible concept of education that can deepen the notion of *ta'dīb* (good education). The central thesis of this book is about a Qurānic concept of education – *ta'arruf* (from *ta'ārafū* meaning to get to know one another or associational knowing) – that promotes teaching and learning in pluri-culturally diverse communities where the question of critical rigour based on reasoned judgments guides responsible and just human actions. Lane (1863) in *Al-Qāmūs Madd: Arabic-English Lexicon*, explains *ta'ārafū* as becoming acquainted with one another or to get to know one another. Therefore, I have decided to refer to *ta'arruf* as knowing one another in association or associational knowing. Undeniably, this is a book about education, more specifically Muslim education with an inherent connection to good living – as couched in the framework of *ta'dīb* (good education). In addition, this is also a book about the potential for human flourishing. In other words, when Muslims are educated the possibility is there that they will flourish. And here, human flourishing has an internal connection to what it means to become thinking, virtuous, purposeful, aspirational, relational and changing or renewable beings. Unlike Aristotle who viewed the purpose of education as enhancing the well-being of humans, so Muslim education involves enabling people to become morally just beings. In the Qurān Luqmān (chapter 31:verse 17) advises his son to do the following:

O my son! Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong: and bear with patient constancy whatever betide you; for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs.

بِنَبِيِّ أَفِيمِ الصَّلَاةِ وَأَمْرٍ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَنْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَسْبَابَكَ ۚ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

Thus, according to the Qurān, human flourishing involves people becoming virtuous through prayer, enacting justice in their lives, and to constantly persevere in their denial of wrong. Put differently, Muslim education should guide humans to act with moral justice which in turn enhances their flourishing. Quite legitimately the question can be asked if human flourishing is enhanced by morally just action, is there a place for happiness (*sa'ādah*) in Muslim education? Happiness is a human experience that recurs, so that a person is happy when she experiences a moment of happiness such as when she celebrates a birthday or a Muslim festival. However, her flourishing is continuing or remains in becoming, and for Muslims human flourishing is both earthly and eschatological (in this life and the afterlife). Thus, flourishing is ongoing inseparable from one's education as a Muslim whereas happiness seems to be confined to a moment and or occasion. As stated in the Qurān in *Sūrah al-A'lā* - The Most High (chapter 87:verses 16-17): 'Nay (behold), you prefer the life of this world; But the Hereafter is better and more enduring':  
لَا تُؤْمِنُونَ الْآخِرَةَ الْآخِرَةَ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَرُ

The arguments in this book are premised on at least three assumptions which can be understood in accordance with a Qurānic concept of certainty (*yaqīn*). Before I examine the notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing), I shall briefly expound on this notion of certainty and how it foregrounds the arguments I pursue in this book on a philosophy of Muslim education. Firstly, I rely on a Qurānic concept of certainty of mind (*'ilm al-yaqīn*) as espoused in *Sūrah al-Takāthur* - The Abundance of Wealth (chapter 102:verse 5):

Nay, were you to know with certainty of mind, (You would beware!). You shall certainly see Hell Fire! Again, you shall see it with certainty of sight! Then shall you be Questioned that Day about the joy (you indulged in)!

كَذَلِكَ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ جَلْمَ الْيَقِينِ - لَفَرُّونَ الْجَحِيمِ - تَمَّ لَفَرُّونَهَا حَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ - تَمَّ لَفَسْطَنَ يَوْمِيذٍ عَنِ  
التَّعْيِيمِ

Certainty of mind (*'ilm al-yaqīn*) implies that one has the conviction that knowledge in the Qurān is certain. Whether through upbringing, intuition, or the pursuit of knowledge itself, I draw mainly and unapologetically on the Qurān as a primary source of knowledge that informs my understanding of Muslim education. This means that I have already made a judgment that my learning and articulation of Muslim education is framed by a certainty of

mind that for Muslims, the Qurān is its dominant source of knowledge and knowing. In other words, central to knowing and understanding for Muslims like myself, a reliance on the Qurān is without doubt and uncertainty necessary. By implication, the arguments proffered in this book already acknowledges that Allāh Almighty is the Provider of the guidance in the Qurān and He alone has authority over its understanding. The assumption is, that I would not have come to an understanding of Muslim education as *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) were it not to have been for the guidance in the Qurān. Now such an understanding of knowledge construction is not unique in the sense that texts of authors have been read in the past and particular interpretations have been made on the basis of a reading of such texts. So, when one reads Aristotle's *Politics* one interprets and reinterprets what such an illustrious thinker said. When one engages with a reading of the Qurānic text, one makes inferences and judgments about what one reads. The Qurān even goes as far as making a distinction between meanings that are established and those that are metaphorical. And, the basis of Qurānic interpretation is in reference to established meanings so that there is a consistent interplay between verses that are decisive and those that are confirmed as allegorical. In the Qurān in *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* - The Family of Amran (chapter 3:verse 7) the following is stated:

He it is Who has sent down to you the Book: in it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: others are not of well-established meaning. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is not of well-established meaning. Seeking discord, and searching for its interpretation, but no one knows its true meanings except Allāh, and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: 'We believe in it; the whole of it is from our Lord'; and none will grasp the Message except men [people] of understanding.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرُّسُلُ أَسْخُونُ فِي مَا أَلْجَمُوا يَقُولُونَ ءَأَمَّنَّا بِالْحُكْمِ الَّذِي نُنزِلُ مِنْ جُنْدٍ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Of importance to this discussion of certainty of mind (*'ilm al-yaqīn*) is that Allāh (the author of the Qurānic message) claims sole authority in its understanding. In other words, one cannot assume that the originator of a text cannot have such claims in the same way one would not deny Aristotle to couch meanings in his texts of which others who engage with the texts cannot claim absolute understanding. Allāh as the all-Knower makes the claim that He alone has complete understanding of such knowledge (no one knows its – in reference to the Qurānic text – true meanings except Allāh).

Secondly, I am guided by the Qurānic notion of certainty of witnessing (*‘ayn al-yaqīn*), that my interpretation of the Qurānic guidance is limited to my own witnessing. What I articulate through my own (re)constructions of knowledge is what I bear witness to and I do not discount the possibility that my reasoned judgments are not always at the level of certainty desired. But then again all certainty rests with Allāh. I interpret the Qurānic guidance pertaining to knowledge and knowing according to my intellectual level of scrutiny in relation to what I encountered through texts and human educational experience. If Muslims who endeavour to understand the Qurān for purposes of living a virtuous and righteous life then it makes sense for them to gain access to the knowledge and guidance of Allāh Almighty. Of course, there are many translations, interpretations and understandings of the Qurān. And, as inquirers one invariably refers to existing sources of Qurānic understanding and interpretation. However, none of the existing sources of Qurānic exegeses (*tafsīr* and *ta’wīl*) claim to present absolute understandings of the guidance of Allāh and therefore, there is always infinite room for further clarification, elucidation and analysis. After all, Allāh announces that only people of understanding (الذوالفهم) will be able to acquire meanings and by implication, not if one does not exert oneself in the pursuit of understanding.

Thirdly, the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Wāqī’ah* – The Event (chapter 56:verse 95) mentions the following verse in relation to certainty (*yaqīn*):

‘Verily, this is the Very Truth and Certainty. So celebrate with praises the name of your Lord, the Supreme’.

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَّ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ \* فَسَبِّحْ بِأَسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

The notion of ‘the truth of certainty’ (*haqq al-yaqīn*) refers specifically to matters pertaining to truth in opposition to falsehood in this life and what is predicted in the future or after-life for humans. The contemporary times of this life are dominated by a secular view of knowledge whereby the presence of Allāh’s Divine authority has been disconnected from everything and anything knowledgeable. Charles Taylor posits that humans are living in a secular age where all our sense of morality have been delinked from a transcendental reality. In his words (Taylor, 2007:2):

... as we function within various spheres of activity – economic, political, cultural, educational, professional, recreational – the norms and principles we follow, the deliberations we engage in, generally don’t refer us to God or to any religious

beliefs; the considerations we act on are internal to the 'rationality' of each sphere – maximum gain within the economy, the greatest benefit to the greatest number in the political arena, and so on.

In a different way, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1993:17) posits that '[s]ecularization encompasses not only the political and social aspects of life, but also inevitably the cultural, for it denotes the disappearance of religious determination of the symbols of cultural configuration'. Thus, as Muslims, we live in times of secularism and what this book envisages to accomplish is to rupture the uncertainty of our times with a view on knowing that can perhaps be both aspirational and invitational to all humans concerned with an interest in knowledge. What is meant by rupturing is to look at knowledge and knowing and by implication education in a different way – or a matter of looking at concepts and understanding if they could be otherwise. And here, I specifically acknowledge the presence of secularism, yet also recognising the possibility that such a situation is not sufficient to deny the presence of other. In this case, the presence of other would then be to even bring secularism in conversation with Allāh's certain knowledge. The point I am making is that if secularism is a reality of our times, then for such the recognition of such a realm cannot remain uncontested. Therefore, to bring the certainty of Allāh's knowledge into a discussion within these times would not be inappropriate.

In *Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt* – The Apartments (chapter 49:verse 13), the concept of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is elucidated as follows:

O humankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allāh is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allāh has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ  
أَتْقَىٰكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

The aforementioned verse accentuates at least three constitutive aspects of interest to the notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing). Firstly, the very practice of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is inextricably connected to commonalities, differences and diversity. In other words, there cannot be *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) if human encounters are not underscored by what is common and different to humans and the many ways they engage with one another. Put differently, humans can only come to know

one another on the basis of connecting with what is common and different to one another – that is, what is common and different from the vantage point of other humans. Therefore, the encounters of people irrespective of their nationalities and ethnicities are premised on the understanding that they are different. Also, humans have distinctive ways of understanding themselves and their relations with others in the world. Therefore, they have an autonomy that also encourages them to act in association with others. If not, humans would never come to know, at least, one another – that is, they would remain an aggregation of persons. Their acts of knowing are inextricably connected to engaging in hospitable encounters that transcend dogmatic, cultural and ethnic differences in thought and practice. Secondly, the exhortation addresses humanity and, by implication, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) cannot be exclusively associated with only those who are common in faith. Instead, people of pluricultural orientations are spoken of which suggests that associational knowing transcends monocultural practices. Thirdly, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is uniquely related to that (knowledge) that is still to come. It cannot be presumed that everything about human encounters is known already as that would be the end of the encounters themselves. The point is, the engagement of humans in encounters is conditional upon the idea that there is yet more to know and that things are in becoming. The latter is by implication an affirmation that human beings are in potentiality and their encounters will reveal their associational knowing. Small wonder the verse makes humans cognisant of Allāh's vastness of knowledge. It is such a notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) that seems to expand the idea of *ta'dīb* (good education) on the grounds that the idea of justice cannot be the authoritative ownership of a single community. The point I am making is that good education should extend the parameters of cultural, political and economic boundaries on the basis that humanity is pluricultural and enacts different and divergent ways of being. This implies that the co-living of humans invariably results in them sharing their similarities and differences. That is, they learn from one another as they cohabit the earth. It is this concept of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) that forms the backbone of my argument in this book on rethinking Muslim education. Now considering that Allāh's knowledge is infinite and vast humans would do well when they endeavour to comprehend Allāh's guidance and then to apply such guidance to their daily practices.

Moreover, my attraction to *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) which I first made public during an invitational lecture rendered at the Islamic Foundation's Markfield Institute of Higher Education in the United Kingdom in 2019,

enhanced my different understanding of Muslim education. In the main, I argue that *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) extends the notion of *ta'dīb* (good education) and that it seems more apt to refer to Muslim education in this manner according to the following justifications: Firstly, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is inextricably connected to practices of *dhikr* or *tadhakkur* (remembrance) and *tafakkur* (contemplation) as enunciated in the Qurān in *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* – The Family of Amran (chapter 3:verses 190-191):

Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of Night and Day, there are indeed Signs for men [women] of understanding. Men who celebrate the praises of Allāh standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought): 'Our Lord! not for nothing has You created (all) this! Glory to You! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire.

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْخَلْقِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ \* الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا  
وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا مَّسْحُوفًا  
فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

Based on the above verses of the Qurān, *ulu al-bāb* are people of understanding – literally people of the door – are associated with those who perform the actions of *dhikr* (remembrance) and *tafakkur* (contemplation). Now considering that people of understanding can also be associated with those ones who engage in *ta'arruf* (associational knowing), it can be inferred that *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is constituted by the acts of *dhikr* (remembrance) and *tafakkur* (contemplation). The upshot of such an exposition of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is that humans develop an intuitive spiritual connection with the pursuit of knowledge actions and concomitantly render contemplative judgments about that which they uncover. In a way, such an understanding of education as *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) seems to invert the Kantian view that rationality (and by implication, contemplation) is enacted in the pursuit of human enlightenment that invariably results in connections being established among people and that which they examine. Instead, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is primarily concerned at first with the transcendental connections humans develop among themselves and that which they examine prior to proffering reflective judgments about matters under consideration. Put differently, for Muslims, purity of mind or consciousness will deepen their contemplative thought. In this way, there seems to be a spiritual connection between the search for truth and a deepened understanding of knowledge.

Of course, I am not oblivious of the historical legacy of the concept of education. Long before the actual revelation of the Qurān and the establishment of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, the ancient Greeks, known as the sophists advocated a particular understanding of education under the name of *padeia*. For the sophists or commonly known as intellectuals before the time of the famous Greek philosophers, namely, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, the education of humans involved a striving towards a common good of the community. In this regard, education (*padeia*) as moral excellence or *arête* should be about cultivating persuasive speech as opposed to thinking like a warrior. So, for the sophists, education was about living an active life of engagement in assembly or the marketplace where people could convince one another through rhetoric and speech. Of interest is the sophists' focus on living an active life of speech and persuasion as opposed to having a warrior-like mentality of fighting and victory over the enemies. Followed by the sophists, the Greek philosophers Socrates and Plato advocated for the living of a contemplative life from within (the soul) in relation to the city-state or the polis. Internal reflection and contemplation for both Socrates and Plato have been considered as necessary for the *telos* (purpose) of *padeia* (education). And, it was Aristotle who advanced the notion of civic virtue in Greek antiquity in the sense that he advocated for the interrelationship between politics, ethics and education (*padeia*). In a way, the view of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) and an Aristotelian notion of *padeia* (education) seem to have a common feature, that is, humans are central to any understanding of education. This is so on the basis that both Aristotelian *padeia* and *ta'arruf* are constituted by the idea of human interrelationships (McCoy, 2008). That is, one cannot speak of education without recognising that central to a notion of education is the idea that human consciousness is constitutive of relationships and has to be present in such encounters. Of course, both forms of education differ regarding their nature and purposes which I examine in relation to Muslim education throughout the book. For example, whereas, for Aristotle *padeia* (education) is meant to enhance citizens' relationship with a notion of community. Muslim education is also about cultivating an Allāh-consciousness from within that can advance one's interrelations with others in community.

This part of the book about the central thesis of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) that builds on the pragmatist educational philosophy espoused in the previous part. In Chapter 1, I offer some justification as to why *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) should be considered as both a consolidation and expansion of *ta'dīb* (good education) and its concomitant links with the notions

of *tarbiyyah* (rearing) and *ta'lim* (learning). Chapter 2 offers an examination of concepts of *dhikr* (remembrance) and *tafakkur* or *tadabbur* (contemplation) and how these concepts seem to advance the implementation and enactment of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing). In Chapter 3, I show as to how and why *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) enhances the practice of *ijtihad* (intellectual exertion) and how *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) as an extension of *ijtihad* (intellectual exertion) transcends the dichotomous understanding between what can be considered as revealed and non-revealed (rational) knowledge. Chapter 4 examines how an understanding of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is inextricably connected to the enactment of justice (*'adl*) so that the reason for practising *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) should not be detached from an enactment of just ways of knowing, being and acting. In Chapter 5, I examine some of the implications of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) on Qurānic concepts of teaching and learning in and about education. Chapter 6 examines the ideas of caring and compassion in relation to *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) and how such ideas potentially impact education. Chapter 7 gives an account of why *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is commensurable with a notion of *Ummah* (community). In Chapter 8, I examine as to why the concept of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) offers a way to counteract dystopias in society, particularly in relation to autocracy, patriarchy and a violence of dehumanisation. Chapter 9 examines the notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) in relation to a non-dichotomous understanding of knowledge. I argue that the bifurcation of knowledge into revealed (*'ulūm al-naqliyyah*) and non-revealed (*'ulūm al-aqliyyah*) sciences, represents different categorisations of knowledge and that its bifurcation actually undermines the Islamisation of knowledge initiatives of Muslims. In Chapter 10, the notion of a thinking university is addressed in relation to a notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing). I argue in defence of an active university constituted by *hikmah* (wisdom as philosophical thinking) that encourages the exploration and (re)organisation of the spaces of knowledge in all spheres of the academy thus rendering the university a place that puts into question that which is hierarchized. Such a university engages its scholars openly, freely and pluralistically in an atmosphere of intellectual hospitality and cooperation urging one another towards new openings and possibilities.

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# IN DEFENCE OF TA'ARRUF (ASSOCIATIONAL KNOWING): EXTENDING TA'DĪB (GOOD EDUCATION)

# 1

## Introduction

Not since the demise of the Caliphate under the rulers of the Ottoman Empire in 1924 have the Muslim world been in such disarray despite the early 21st century Arab Spring that momentarily offered a glimmer of hope for Muslim majority countries in the Middle East to hold their political autocracies accountable. Spearheaded by public protests and revolts that spread across the Middle East in late 2010 – for example, in Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain – the Arab Spring began as a political response to impoverished socio-economic conditions and marginalised forms of human living in many Arab countries. And, for once, there was hope for Muslim education to be informed by a democratic spiritedness that characterised the uprisings. Needless to say, the revolutionary insurgencies were quickly quelled by repressive political regimes whose violent responses to the revolts resulted in many Arab regimes curtailing efforts to transform Muslim education. In fact, the educational programmes in Arab contexts focus on factual knowledge about geographical and historical aspects and avoid dealing with political issues and critical thinking skills (Al-Maamari, 2011:46). Citizenship education remains ineffective in several Arab contexts suggesting a strong disconnect between political awareness and critical literacy (Al-Maamari, 2011:46).

In citizenship education programmes the emphasis seems to be more on enhancing Muslim values, understanding national history and a sense of patriotic belonging to the Arab homeland, as well as ‘promoting national pride and strengthening the sense of appreciation for the government’ (Al-Maamari, 2011:39). Of course, during these times of political uncertainty and instability in Muslim majority countries, Muslim education remains

enveloped by notions of *tarbiyyah* (rearing) and *ta'lim* (learning) – with a particular focus on obedience rather than participation (Al-Maamari, 2011:43). In this book, I argue that *tarbiyyah* (rearing) and *ta'lim* (learning) should be enhanced by the notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing). More specifically, in this chapter, I examine the notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) and how the Qurān seems to use this concept.

## **A Qurānic analysis of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing)**

In relation to *Sūrah al- Hujurāt* – The Apartments (chapter 49:verse 13), the concept of *ta'arruf* can be elucidated in the following ways: Firstly, humankind is summoned to engage in *ta'arruf* (associational knowing). The concept of *ta'arruf* is derived from the Arabic root, namely *'arafa*, which literally means 'to know'. About *'arafa*, a prominent *Ḥadīth* (Prophetic saying) explains the verb as follows: *Man 'arafa nafsahu fa qadd 'arafa rabbahu* – من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه – 'Whoever knows himself [herself] knows his [her] Lord'. The idea of knowing the self is linked to the notion that humans have autonomous selves. In a way, being invited to engage with the autonomous or independent selves is a precondition for acquiring a sense of spiritualism – that is, getting to know a sense of the Being who is responsible for the self's existence. Yet, the most poignant moment in the elucidation of *'arafa* – to know – is a matter of exercising one's efforts in coming to understand one's autonomous self (*nafs*). The Qurān in *Sūrah al-Ṣāff* – The Ranks (chapter 61:verse 11) corroborates that one exerts one's efforts in recognition of what the human self is capable of in a meritorious way:

That you believe in Allāh and His Messenger, and that you strive (your utmost) in the Cause of Allāh with your property and your persons: that will be best for you, if you but knew!

تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۖ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

Put differently, one's understanding of one's autonomous self would most appropriately awaken the relations one is about to engage in with others. Thus, in relation to human interactions, the notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is conditional upon getting to know the autonomous self and its capabilities. This is necessary for whatever the nature of encounters will be and the autonomous self envisages to engage in. However, what seems to be evident from the *Ḥadīth* above, is that an earnest commitment to come to know the self is inextricably connected to a knowledge of the Lord – that is, the One who educates (*rabb*).

One of the most salient aspects in an understanding of Allāh's names or references to His being, is that humans ought to aspire towards becoming like what His names represent. Of course, I am not intimating the impossibility that humans would ever become like Allāh. Rather, I am accentuating the claim that if the Divine Being introduces Himself as, for instance, *al-Rahmān* (The Compassionate) and *al-Rahīm* (the One who forgives), then the implication is that humans should become compassionate and forgiving. Of course, it is an impossibility that humans will ever become anything near Allāh, but what seems to be quite possible is for humans to act compassionately and forgivingly – that is, humanely. What follows from the aforementioned is that any human aspiration should be accompanied by an autonomy to mould the self according to Allāh Almighty's all-encompassing descriptions – an important facet of any form of Muslim education. When humans act autonomously they not only strive to become Allāh-conscious, but also emulate the qualities of Allāh so that their interactions with other humans would be pursued along the lines of virtues associated with reverential actions. By implication, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) implies that human autonomy should be enacted according to virtues that can enhance respectful human engagement. In a different way, human encounters are not constituted only by what humans conceive to be rational, but also emotional and spiritual, such as being divulged through virtuous devotion. This claim is corroborated by so many references in the Qurān to the idea of *rabb* (Lord). One such pertinent enunciation is provided in *Sūrah al-Muminūn* – The Believers (chapter 23:verse 118):

So say: O my Lord! grant Your forgiveness and mercy! for You are the Best of those who show mercy!

وَقُلْ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

The significance of educating humans is constituted by the devout virtues of *istighfār* (forgiveness) and *rahmah* (compassion). And, if autonomous human action were to be enacted, then such action should be guided by what it means to forgive and be compassionate. The point is, autonomous human action is conditional upon an enactment of virtues associated with some higher transcendental good (Allāh consciousness). And, if *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) manifests in human practices, then autonomous action must have been guided by virtues of devotion and compassion for one another.

Secondly, engaging in *ta'arruf* (associational knowing), is also conditional upon encountering others different from oneself. Engaging with different others is already a recognition that humanity does not comprise monocultural individuals and communities. That *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is constituted by a recognition that humanity comprises pluricultural communities is a vindication that different others are invited to encounter one another with their diverse perspectives and otherness. If not, what would be the point of embarking on such encounters? When different people come together there is the possibility that they might agree and find consensus or alternatively disagree and achieve dissensus. The latter is so on the grounds that human encounters are modes of action that bring people intersubjectively into communication with one another with the possibility that they may or may not find common ground. The Qurān reminds humans on at least two occasions about the importance of engaging in encounters:

Those who harken to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation [*shūrā*]; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance (*Sūrah al-Shūrā* – Council, chapter 42:verse 38).

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنزَلُوا لَهُمْ سُرُورًا وَيَوْمَا نُنزِّلُهُم بِبُرْقَانٍ يُنقِفُونَ

It is part of the Mercy of Allāh that you deal gently with them. Were you severe or harsh-hearted they would have broken away from you; so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allāh's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment) (*shāwirhum*). Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allāh. For Allāh loves those who put their trust (in Him) (*Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* - The Family of Amran, chapter 3:verse 159).

فِيمَا رَحْمَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَئِن لَّمْ يَلْمُوكُمْ لَأَذَابُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَرِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ  
فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

Of significance to the notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing), is an understanding that humans have to engage in order that they encounter one another and what ensues can be that they learn from their engagement on the basis of *shūrā* (mutual consultation). Yet, learning from one another on the basis of *shūrā* (mutual consultation) implies that humans should engage in deliberation with one another. That is, engagement should be subjected to one another's articulations. If not, there would not arise the possibility that people would actually listen to one another. Listening is an important facet of *shūrā* (mutual consultation) on the basis that one gets

an opportunity to experience what the other has to say. Without listening there cannot be any *shūrā* (mutual consultation) and the possibility of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) would be unnecessarily constrained. The point about *shūrā* (mutual consultation) is that humans are summoned to engage *with* one another. And, engaging with one another implies that humans express their points of view and even show a willingness to listen to what the other has to say. If articulation and listening do not manifest, we cannot legitimately talk about *shūrā* (mutual consultation). On the basis of the following *Ḥadīth* (Sunan Abū Dāwūd, 2008:5128), *shūrā* was advised by the Prophet (ﷺ):

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: He who is consulted is trustworthy.

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " الْمُسْتَشَارُ مُرْتَضٍ "

*Shūrā* (mutual consultation), by implication, is conditional upon articulation and listening. However, the reason why listening seems to be accentuated within the practice of *shūrā* (mutual consultation) is that listening gives the other and one an opportunity to take what has been heard into some kind of scrutiny and, hence, talk back to what has been heard. If there is no talking back to the points that have been articulated and listened to, there would be an absence of legitimate *shūrā* (mutual consultation). What is the point of articulating oneself, listening to others, and never critically examining the thoughts of others and letting others know about one's analyses of their views? In such a case, *shūrā* (mutual consultation) would not happen as the practice is conditional upon articulation, listening and talking back. This is what is meant by engaging *with* one another. Reserving the right not to talk back would render any *shūrā* (mutual consultation) and, by implication, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing), untenable. It is for this reason, it seems, that the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Nahl* – The Bee (chapter 16:verse 125) announces the following:

Invite (all) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for your Lord knows, best who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance.

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ۚ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ حَقَّنَ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

In any human encounter, justifiable speech through argumentation and the use of wise words should be prevalent when an educational discourse is at stake. In other words, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) can never be coupled

with forms of hostility that alienate (exclude) humans from encounters rather than keeping in touch with them through justifiable speech. And here, wise and just speech (الْمَوْعِظَةُ الْحَسَنَةُ) is a vindication that any summoning of people (*da'wah*) cannot be linked to coercion as that in itself would undermine the free and willing acts of human engagement that constitute the notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing). If human encounters are not free and autonomous the possibility is always there that humans might be excluded from the encounter on the basis of humiliation and belligerence. What makes *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) a legitimate summoning of people to engage in encounters is that such encounters are not intended to exclude humans and that justifiable speech would be used to summon them to engage with one another.

Thirdly, in reference to the opening expression of *Sūrah al-Hujurāt* – The Apartments (chapter 49:verse 13), '*yā ayyuha al-nās* – verily, humankind!', it is evident that humans are summoned to engage in encounters. Now, the rationale for cultivating humanity is premised on the practice of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing). Humans are not just summoned to engage with one another. Rather the potentiality of human encounters is geared towards the cultivation of humanity. And, this implies that humans should engage with one another on the basis of civility and deliberative speech. If not, how would it ever be possible that they might learn from one another? Cultivating humanity is espoused quite succinctly in the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Fuṣṣilat* – Hā Mīm (chapter 41:verse 33):

Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allāh, works righteousness, and says 'I am of those who bow in Islam'?

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Clearly, being Muslim in submission to Allāh Almighty is associated with the performance of righteous acts in service of Allāh and His creations. Thus, cultivating humanity in relation to acting righteously – that is, devoutly and justly – is synonymous with being Muslim or one who surrenders to Allāh Almighty. By implication, when humans encounter one another they commit themselves to acting righteously otherwise they would not be cultivating humanity. As aptly reminded in the Qurān in *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* – The Family of Amran (chapter 3:verse 104):

Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong; they are the ones to attain felicity.

وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

Of importance here is the emphasis the Qurān places on becoming of those who flourish – that is, the *mufliḥūn*. This community of flourishing beings would invariably engage in summoning one another to goodness; and announce themselves with just as opposed to unjust action. What is also significant about the idea of cultivating humanity through *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is that every individual is also summoned to take stock of himself or herself in relation to cultivating humanity. As the Qurān states in *Sūrah al-Ḥaṣhr* – The Banishment (chapter 59:verse 18):

O you who believe! Fear Allāh and let every soul look to what (provision) he has sent forth for the morrow. And fear Allāh: for Allāh is well-acquainted with (all) that you do.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مِمَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

The point about being cognisant of the human self is linked to the practice of being open and reflective about the self and the traditions to which one might be attached. In this way, one would remain open and reflective about one's own cultural-religious attachments. Put differently, working towards the cultivation of humanity cannot be enacted without looking at the autonomous self and how the self is situated and guided by the traditions to which the self is attached. It is not possible to cultivate humanity if one does not look independently at one's self. It was narrated by Caliph 'Umar that people need to take stock of themselves – openly reflect on themselves – in preparation for Judgment Day which is a vindication that openly reflecting about the self is necessary in cultivating humanity. Similarly, to be reflective about the self is also the beginning of how one prepares oneself to be reflectively open to 'tomorrow' – that is, what is still to come.

In a *Ḥadīth* narrated in the Sunan Abū Dāwud (2008:1581) the following is stated:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: There will be civil strife (*fitnah*) which will render people deaf, dumb and blind regarding what is right. Those who *contemplate* it will be drawn by it, and giving rein to the tongue during it will be like smiting with the sword.

سَتَكُونُ فِتْنَةٌ صَمَاءٌ بِكُمَاءٍ عَمِيَاءٌ مَنْ أَسْرَفَ لَهَا اسْتَشْرَفَتْ لَهُ وَإِسْرَافُ اللِّسَانِ فِيهَا كَوْفُوعِ السِّيفِ

Hence, two aspects emanate from an understanding as to why and how one contributes towards cultivating humanity: first, to be reflective and open about the self; and second, to be open and reflective towards that which

is in becoming. In these ways, one's encounters with others will possibly be enhanced. That is, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is inextricably connected to the self being reflectively open to his or her own attachments – traditions, cultures, ethnicities, and ways of being and ways of acting – and, concomitantly with self-reflection, the self remains open to that which is still in becoming.

## Summary

In this chapter, I have shown, firstly, as to why the practice of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is conditional upon getting to know the autonomous self and its capabilities. Secondly, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) involves summoning different people to engage in deliberative encounters that can result in justifiable speech. Thirdly, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is inextricably connected to the self being reflectively open about the self and its attachments; and, concomitantly being open and reflective towards that which remains in becoming. In the above ways, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) has the potential to cultivate humanity. Cultivating humanity is not just about being concern about one's own ways of acting and doing, but rather, to extend one's internal openness and reflectiveness to those of others. Only then one's encounters with others would be legitimate as one does not engage with others on the basis of prejudice towards one's own ways of being and acting. The way one has been reared and learnt through one's upbringing influences one's relations with others. In this way, one's *tarbiyyah* (rearing), *ta'lim* (learning), and *ta'dib* (good education) are taken into account when one advances *ta'arruf* (associational knowing). Thus, the point about *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is that it does not nullify practices of *tarbiyyah* (rearing), *ta'lim* (learning), and *ta'dib* (good education). Rather, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is concerned with consolidating and expanding such notions of education. Simply put, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) broadens the concept of *ta'dib* (good education).

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# 2

## ON DHIKR (REMEMBRANCE), TAFAKKUR (CONTEMPLATION) AND TA'ARRUF (ASSOCIATIONAL KNOWING)

### Introduction

This chapter builds on the idea that education has a nature and purposes. Inasmuch as education is constituted by meanings, so such meanings are intended to guide education in particular ways. I do not want to use education in an instrumental goal-oriented way, as if education should be looked at with some determined outcomes in mind. Rather, the actions of education manifest in many ways and organise actions in ways pertaining to what education means. In this way, I talk about purposes of education. The argument of this chapter is that *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) has purposes in relation to its meanings. In the previous chapter, I have shown as to why and how the notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) seems to be intertwined with practices of *tarbiyyah* (rearing), *ta'līm* (learning), and *ta'dīb* (good education). Concomitantly, I have argued as to why an enactment of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) can be linked to the cultivation of humanity. In this chapter, I show as to why and how *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) should be connected to meanings of *dhikr* (remembrance) and *taffakur* (contemplation) as humans endeavour to enact their humanity. And, when humans enact their humanity they do so on account of what purposes of education are under consideration.

### The quest for *dhikr* (remembrance)

The idea of *dhikr* (remembrance) is not exclusively linked to devotional utterances exalting Allāh Almighty and reifying the illustrious service of His prophets, messengers and saints to humanity. More poignantly, the notion of *dhikr* (remembrance) is also inextricably connected to an internal

realisation of who the human self is and what the self is capable of. As aptly stated in the Qurān in *Sūrah al-'Arāf* – The Elevated Places (chapter 7:verses 205-206):

And do you (O reader!) bring your Lord to remembrance in your (very) soul, with humility and in reverence, without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings; and be not you of those who are unheedful. Those who are near to your Lord, disdain not to do Him worship: they celebrate His praises and bow down before Him.

وَأَذْكُرُكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَرُدُونَ الْجَهْرَ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْغَافِلِينَ \* إِنَّ  
الَّذِينَ جند رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ ' وَلَهُ ' يَسْجُدُونَ

Establishing *dhikr* (remembrance) is also a recognition of the inner self's potentiality, humility and conscientiousness associated with cultivating the self in relation to other human selves. This implies, that an acknowledgement of the significance of *dhikr* (remembrance) has some bearing on the autonomous self's quest to exalt the Higher Good and make the human self vulnerable to Allāh's will. In this way, the inner self develops an internal connection with the Higher Good. Again, the Qurān is emphatic in its exhortation about developing *dhikr* (remembrance) with Allāh. In *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb* – The Allies (chapter 33:verses 41-42) the following is stated: 'O you who believe! Remember Allāh with much remembrance. And glorify His Praises morning and afternoon'. Moreover, cultivating *dhikr* (remembrance) is associated with an enactment of virtuous action as espoused in the Qurān (*Sūrah al-Aḥzāb* – The Allies, chapter 33:verse 35) as follows:

For Muslim men and women – for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves) for men and women who guard their chastity and for men and women who engage much in Allāh's praise – for them has Allāh prepared forgiveness and a great reward.

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ  
وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّابِغِينَ وَالصَّابِغَاتِ  
وَالْحَاطِطِينَ فَرُوحَهُمْ وَالْحَاطِطَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

In the above verse, an enactment of virtue and by implication *dhikr* (remembrance), is associated with a compliance to the Will of Allāh, truthfulness, patience, humility, and an observance of acts of alms giving, fasting, and morality. And, the observance of such virtuous acts is also a matter of sincerity and conviction – that is, a remembrance guided

by ‘hearts and tongues’. As I am authoring this section in the month of Ramaḍān, I am reminded of being in a state of devotion and, invariably, the sentences constructed on account of what it means to embark on *dhikr* (remembrance) seem to be constructed with some sense of conviction. At once, I realised that remembering Allāh Almighty, especially during the month of Ramaḍān cannot sincerely manifest without a recognition of the importance of complying with His Commands in relation to the observance of acts of virtue – that is, to give to those in need, to persist with fasting, and to abstain from immoral acts. In a different way, a person, devoted to the duty of fasting is performing an act of *dhikr* (remembrance) because that person constantly reminds himself of his responsibilities to act sincerely, truthfully and with morality in the performance of the duty of fasting in service of Allāh and humanity.

In *Sūrah al-Baqarah* – The Cow (chapter 2:verses 183-186), the following is stated:

O you who believe! fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that you may (learn) self-restraint. (Fasting) for a fixed number of days; but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the prescribed number (should be made up) from days later. For those who can do it (with hardship) is a ransom, the feeding of one that is indigent. But he will give more of his own free-will – it is better for him, and it is better for you that you fast, if you only knew. Ramadan is the (month) in which the Qur’ān was sent down as a guide to humankind and also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So everyone who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting, but if anyone is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. Allāh intends every facility for you. He does not want to put you to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance you shall be grateful. When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them); I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls on Me; let them also with a will listen to My call and believe in Me; that they may walk in the right way.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ \* أَيُّهَا مَعْلُودَانِ  
فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ فَمَن  
تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ \* شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ  
الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۚ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۖ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا  
أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّمَّا يَوْمَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ وَيَلْبِسُوا بِسُتْرٍ أَسْفَلَ مِنِّي ۗ وَالْعِدَّةُ لِلْجِدَّةِ وَلِلسَّعْيِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ  
عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَيْتُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ \* وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ  
فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

*Dhikr* (remembrance) can be linked to the enactment of at least three responsibilities pertaining to fasting: first, the performance of the duty of fasting is connected to inquiry in and about Allāh's 'guidance' and 'clear proofs'. The point is that upholding the remembrance of fasting cannot be disassociated from gaining knowledge of Qurānic guidance and justifications; second, fasting and by implication remembering Allāh is connected to the practice of magnifying Him – a matter of increasing one's connection with Allāh; and third, showing thankfulness in everything one does, in particular in one's relations with Allāh's creation (humans and non-humans, including the environment). My understanding of *dhikr* (remembrance) in relation to the performance of fasting is that *dhikr* is an affirmation that one's responsibility towards Allāh should be enhanced and this implies acting as a guided being, exalting one's indebtedness towards Allāh, and being thankful for the capacity to show gratitude towards one's Creator and His creation. If I consider such an understanding of *dhikr* in the context of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing), then it implies that one's associational knowing ought to be constituted by guidance (from Allāh), magnifying His Eminence, and showing gratitude in whatever one does, especially in one's relations with Allāh's creation. The point is, one's understanding of matters in the world can only be deepened if informed by guidance, exaltation, and gratitude. It is in such a context that I imagine *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) unfolds within human actions. If matters of human concern are treated with the illustriousness it deserves, deepened by guidance provided by Allāh, and the showing of gratitude, then *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) becomes an immensely intellectual, spiritual and emotive experience. Analysing Allāh's guidance implies that humans are intent on making sense of such guidance for their actions. This means that they endeavour to find justifications as to why they act in particular ways based on their intellectual pursuits of guidance. The activity of seeking guidance becomes highly spiritual as humans always remember with dignity and pride that they are merely interpreters of the guidance from an Exalted Being and, by implication, they might be wrong about their judgments. Likewise, their gratitude towards understanding the interpreted guidance is premised on the view that they do not have the ultimate understanding of such guidance. That is, they remain thankful for understanding Allāh's guidance on the basis of which they can live their lives in humility and thankfulness. It is with such an understanding of *dhikr* (remembrance) that the human action of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) becomes such a dignified, graceful and spiritually guided practice. And, when Muslim education is constituted by

*ta'arruf* (associational knowing) the possibility should invariably be there for humans to act with guidance inspired by their defensible interpretations and justifications thereof, an expansion of their moral imaginations, and a deep sense of gratitude that they do not always know everything and can make mistakes in their judgments. Put differently, Muslim education seems to have a distinct purpose with its connection with *dhikr* (remembrance). That is, to cultivate a moral relation with the self so that the self engages with others in the pursuit of a common good for humanity.

Likewise, when Muslims practise *dhikr* (remembrance) they recognise their fallibility as humans to make mistakes and hence, to minimise their ill-judgments they are summoned to use their *tadabbur* or *tafakkur* (contemplation) to make more vigorous judgments about what they learn from the Qurānic guidance. As Muslims strive toward a moral good they become actively engaged with others and together they strive to cultivate a common good for themselves as a community. They are bound by the practice of *dhikr* (remembrance) according to which they remain in one another's presence, recognising one another's fallibilities. They use their *tadabbur* or *tafakkur* (contemplation) to make decisive judgments about matters that concern them on the grounds that they remain deeply inspired to act with humaneness and concern for one another towards cultivating a common good. At once, their *dhikr* (remembrance) does not seem misplaced but rather situated in a sense of doing things together.

### **In pursuit of *tadabbur* (contemplation)**

As an expression of a Muslim's gratitude towards Allāh Almighty for having created her, she endeavours in earnest to understand the guidance of the Qurān in order that she may live a life in gratitude, humility and appreciation for the gift of creation. And, as a condition of her good living she uses the guidance to enhance her connection with other humans, animals and the environment provided to all of humanity as a recognition of Allāh's favour to humanity. As stated in the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Raḥmān* – The Beneficent (chapter 55:verses 1-12):

(Allāh) Most Gracious! It is He Who has taught the Qurān. He has created [wo]man. He has taught him speech (and Intelligence). The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly) compute; and the herbs and the trees-both (alike) bow in adoration. And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the balance (of Justice), in order that you may not transgress (due) balance. So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance. It is He Who has spread out the earth for (His) creatures.

Therein is fruit and date-palms, producing spathes (enclosing dates), also corn with (its) leaves and stalk for fodder and sweet-smelling plants. Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

الرَّحْمٰنُ \* عَمَّ الْفَرَءَانِ \* خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ \* عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ \* الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ \* وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ  
يَسْجُدَانِ \* وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ \* اَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ \* وَاَيْمُوْا بِالْوَزْنِ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا  
تَخْسِرُوْا الْمِيزَانَ \* وَالْاَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْاَنَامِ \* فِيْهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْاَكْمَامِ \* وَالْحَبُّ ذُو  
الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ \* فَبِآيِ ءِ اٰلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

Moreover, In the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Nisā'* – The Women (chapter 4:verse 82) the following is stated: 'Do they not then consider the Qur'ān carefully (*tadabbarūn*)? Had it been from other than Allāh, they would surely have found therein many contradictions' – اَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ الْقُرْءَانَ وَاَلَوْ كَان مِنْ جِذْعِ نَخْلٍ لَّوَجَدُوْا فِيْهِ اٰخِلَافًا كَثِيْرًا. Again, in *Sūrah al-Mu'minūn* – The Believers (chapter 23:verse 68) the following is said: 'Have they not pondered over the Word (of Allāh, i.e. what is sent down to the Prophet (ﷺ)), or has there come to them what had not come to their fathers of old?'

كِتٰبٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ اِلَيْكَ مُبٰرَكٌ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوْا اٰيٰتِيْهِ- وَ لِيَتَذَكَّرَ اُولُوْا الْاَلْبٰبِ

Clearly, the Qurān regards *tadabbur* (contemplation) as necessary and enabling to understand the Divine messages of Allāh Almighty (الْقَوْن). In fact, the Qurān summons humans to contemplate and find contradictions in His messages. This suggests that exerting oneself in understanding the Qurānic messages is considered as sacrosanct to any analysis of the guidance from Allāh. And those who endeavour to embark on *tadabbur* (contemplation) are encouraged to search for deeper meanings in the messages. In fact, in *Sūrah Ṣād* (chapter 38:verse 29) the Qurān clearly establishes a link between *tadabbur* (contemplation) and *dhikr* (remembrance) so that the action of remembrance cannot manifest without contemplation. As stated, '(This is) a Book (the Qurān) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its verses (*tadabbur*), and that [wo]men of understanding may remember (*dhikr*)':

كِتٰبٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ اِلَيْكَ مُبٰرَكٌ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوْا اٰيٰتِيْهِ- وَ لِيَتَذَكَّرَ اُولُوْا الْاَلْبٰبِ

Here, the Qurān clearly espouses the interrelationship between *tadabbur* (contemplation) and *dhikr* (remembrance). It is not as if one performs *dhikr* without *tadabbur* or *vice a versa*. Rather, these two practices are

inextricably intertwined so that doing one action is never disengaged from the other. Remembering implies drawing on what is known to one and contemplation means that what is familiar to one should be given thought to. It is not as if one recognises something and just accepts it as is but rather that one endeavours to think through the matter. For instance, one remembers what is stated in a particular Qurānic verse but when one reflects about the guidance in the verse, one would be doing something else. In this way, remembering assists in drawing on that which might be known to one, whereas contemplation seems to be linked to its scrutiny. For this reason, remembrance on its own might not be a sufficient condition for education as the act of remembering brings one into contact with a particular thought or idea. But when one contemplates the idea, one actually gives thought and searches for meanings that might not be evidently tangible. In this way, contemplation seems to reinforce remembrance. So when students remember a given verse of the Qurān they would enhance their learning by also giving thought to what they remember. Consequently, remembrance and contemplation seem to be intertwined.

What emerges from the afore-mentioned discussion is that the notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is constituted by acts of *dhikr* (remembrance) and *tadabbur* (contemplation). The point is, if one endeavours to know in association with other persons, such knowing would be deepened if enacted on the grounds of remembrance and contemplation. In other words, practising *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) brings into play the acts of *dhikr* (remembrance) and *tadabbur* (contemplation). That is, without being deeply (spiritually) committed to finding out matters in and about the world through vigorous acts of contemplation, it would be very unlikely that one would actually perform *ta'arruf* (associational knowing). In fact two prominent Muslim pedagogical thinkers, Ibn Al-Qayyim (1996) and Al-Ghazzālī (1980) both have references in their books about the significance of remembrance (*dhikr*) and contemplation (*tadabbur*) as human advancement in the way of Allāh (*'ibādāt*) – that is, Muslim education and its flourishing depends on exercising both remembrance and contemplation. As the Prophet (ﷺ) defined in a famous *Ḥadīth* '[human flourishing] is to worship Allāh as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He certainly sees you'. That is, spiritual advancement is to always remember Allāh and to be contemplative of Him. Ibn Al-Qayyim describes *tafakkur* (reflection) and *taddabur* (contemplation) as forms of spiritual action in conjunction with remembrance (*dhikr* or *tadhakkur*). In other words, both these human actions can enhance Muslims' flourishing in relation to their understanding and

living. Next, the question arises as to how notions of *dhikr* (remembrance) and *tadabbur* (contemplation) contribute towards cultivating humanity and by implication, enhancing their flourishing.

To be deeply involved in remembrance opens oneself up to a wide-awakeness whereby one's understanding of matters in the world would be expanded. To be in a state of remembrance is in actual fact to internalise matters that confront one so that one's understanding of such matters is deepened. In this way, one's learning becomes more intense in the sense that what one learns is thought through, that is, one does not merely accept things at face value but rather one becomes open to the unexpected. Being immersed in remembrance is a recognition of not just looking at things peripherally and that there is always more to be opened up and to learn. In a different way, *dhikr* is a form of thinking through matters without being constrained to look at things in a much broader manner. That is, one is in a state of profound attentiveness about matters that concern one and that require a deep level of cognition. In this sense, *dhikr* (remembrance) is not just about drawing on matters known to one but to actually give attention to what one is confronted with. Giving attention to matters that one faces requires an intense attentiveness that is made possible through remembrance. Concomitantly with the practice of remembrance, one is summoned by the Qurān to be contemplative. Practising *tadabbur* is not just a matter of thinking about matters (for that is what *dhikr* requires) but thinking through them such as to search for alternatives and justifications not thought about previously. And, when matters are scrutinised, there is an expectation of alterity, in other words, that one's understanding would be expanded and not just confined to what presents itself in a narrow way. To practise contemplation is to be influenced by reasons in a persuasive way unconstrained by coercion and to come up with thoughts not yet thought of before. In this way, contemplation draws one to look deeper at things and to search for alternatives. In this sense, *tadabbur* becomes a cognitive act of opening up to that which one has not thought of before – a matter of widening one's imagination. One does not take things for granted by delving deeper into a search for understanding that could provoke one to see things as if they could be otherwise. The combination of *dhikr* (remembrance) and *tadabbur* (contemplation) encourages one to search for deeper meanings that would invariably impact one's societal living. And, in a way, one's flourishing is enhanced because one is now in a more favourable position on the grounds of having remembered and contemplated to come up with judgments that point to an alterity. The interrelationship between *dhikr* (remembrance) and

*tadabbur* (contemplation) is meant to evoke one's potentialities to see things anew so that one's living becomes more attuned towards serving Allāh. To be in service of Allāh on the basis of *dhikr* and *tadabbur* are educational practices that relate strongly to one's sense of flourishing. As stated in the Qurān in *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* – The Family of Amran (chapter 3:verses 190-192):

Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of Night and Day, there are indeed Signs for men of understanding. Men who celebrate the praises of Allāh standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought): 'Our Lord! not for naught has You created (all) this! Glory to You! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire'. 'Our Lord! any whom you admit to the Fire Truly you cover with shame, and never will wrong-doers find any helpers!

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالاخْتِلافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ \* الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ فِيهَا  
وَفُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا تُسَخِّطُكَ  
فَفِينَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ \* رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَن تُدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَفَدَّ أَخْرَجْتَهُ \* مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن نَّصْرٍ \* رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا  
مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيَّا سَيِّدَاتِنَا وَتَوَقَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ

What can be inferred from the above Qurānic verses is that *dhikr* (remembrance) and *tadabbur* (contemplation), in this instance, *tafakkur* are profoundly concerned with understanding Allāh's creation, the universe, and humans residing on earth. To exert oneself in finding out more about the environment and universe is a highly commendable practice that brings a sense of satisfaction to one's well-being – that is, one's flourishing. And, one way of serving Allāh is to be attentive to His creation and humanity. Like one is enjoined to remember and contemplate about creation so one is equally exhorted by the Qurān to be attentive to humanity. This implies that people should not be ungrateful about their existence and destroy their societies and the environment. Being summoned to contemplate deeply about their creation and humanity is tantamount to acknowledging that creation and humanity ought to be honoured as they constitute Allāh's omnipotence. By implication, when humans live in hostility and disrespect one another they are in violation of Allāh's will. Destroying the environment is a form of humans dishonouring their habitat. The implication of such wrongful acts is that humans do not act as Muslims who should be in service of Allāh through honouring creation and humanity. Even the Greek philosopher Aristotle was adamant that education of humans should involve understanding the interrelationship between nature, habitat and reason and how this relationship guides their living (Aristotle, 1995). That is, when humans do not use their reason and destroy the environment they can be

said to lack *dhikr* (remembrance) and *tadabbur* (contemplation) and hence, their *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is absent. Put differently, Muslims that act without *dhikr* (remembrance) and *tadabbur* (contemplation) do not do justice to the practice of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing). To say the least, their *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is practically undermined. That is to say, their Muslim education is lacking. Thus, if one were to articulate a purpose of Muslim education, it would be to deepen their sense of remembrance and contemplation of benefit to their human flourishing in relation to their domain of associational action. Humans who embark on *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) would at once be attentive to themselves, one another, and the environment they occupy. It is not that one performs *dhikr* (remembrance) without *tadabbur* (contemplation) about themselves in relation to others and the environment. Rather, their actions of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) are constituted by their *dhikr* (remembrance) and *tadabbur* (contemplation) for the purposes of their own human flourishing.

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# IN DEFENCE OF IJTIHĀD (INTELLECTUAL EXERTION)

# 3

## Introduction

There is a misconception among critics of Islām and Muslim education that such an education encourages aggression and violence. To begin with, such critics claim that Muslim education encourages *jihād*, translated by such critics as ‘holy war’ against those considered as infidels or the enemy of Islām. In the previous part of the book, I showed how Abu Bakr Effendi’s educational philosophy was misconstrued in relation to *jihad*. Of course such views are unsubstantiated because the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* – The Cow (chapter 2:verse 191) is clear that the principle of any confrontation among humans should be non-aggression: ‘Fight in the cause of Allāh those who fight you but do not transgress limits; for Allāh loves not transgressors’.

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

But, even though the Qurān discourages transgression, it seems that critics of Muslim education wrongly assume that such an education advocates an aggressive war concept of *jihād*. Yet, Muslim scholars in the past like Ibn Taymiyyah (1995) posited that warfare is only permitted on condition that people are threatened first and, that when they engage in war, women, children, and elders should not be violated. In other words, the reason for war is more about defending oneself rather than taking what is commonly understood as pre-emptive action. However, of interest to me is that often the concept of *jihād* is erroneously linked to *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion) although the two concepts are semantically linked to the same verb, namely *jahada* – that is, to strive. And, to equate *ijtihād* with *jihād* would be an etymological misjudgment on the basis that these two concepts have distinctly different meanings.

The Qurān in *Sūrah al-Nisā* – The Women (chapter 4:verses 58-59) recognises the importance of exercising one’s reasoned judgment as a condition of justice. That is, one cannot claim to act justly without exercising one’s judgments in a reasoned way:

Allāh does command you to render back your Trusts to those to whom they are due; and when you judge between people that you judge with justice: verily how excellent is the teaching which He gives you! for Allāh is He who hears and sees all things. O you who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those charged with authority among you. If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allāh and His Messenger if you do believe in Allāh and the Last Day: that is best, and most suitable for final determination.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا \* يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

Making reasoned judgments as a condition of justice [*‘adl*] is only subjected to the authority of the Qurān and *Sunnah* (Tradition) of the Prophet. Even if one differs with those in authority among people [*ul al-amr*], the Qurān and *Sunnah* should remain the guiding texts according to which one exercises reasoned judgments.

In this chapter, I show as to how and why *ta’arruf* (associational knowing) enhances the practice of *ijtihad* (intellectual exertion) and how *ta’arruf* (associational knowing) in relation to *ijtihad* (intellectual exertion) can enhance autonomous thinking so necessary in understanding and implementing the Qurān and *Sunnah* in contemporary contexts. Reasoned judgments have always been central to the lives of Muslims as lived out by the illustrious jurists, namely, Abū Hanīfah, Mālik, Shāfi’ī and Ahmad ibn Hanbal. And even they extended their judgments by building on one another’s thoughts, even disagreeing with one another on the basis of recognised human fallibilities in reasoned thinking. The principle according to which these jurists and several others exercised their independent or autonomous thinking is known as *ijtihad* (intellectual exertion). I shall now analyse the practice of *ijtihad* (intellectual exertion) and point out how it advances *ta’arruf* (associational knowing).

## **On the necessity for *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion)**

The word *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion) is derived from the Arabic root verb, that is, *jahada* which means to strive or to exert oneself vigorously or studiously (Lane, 1863:473). And, with respect to speech and action, *ijtahada* is explained as striving in earnest to make a right (appropriate) judgment (Lane, 1863:473). More specifically, the noun *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion) is considered a term whereby a person exerts her faculties of mind to make a reasoned judgment based on the Qurān and *Sunnah* (Lane, 1863:473-474). In reference to the etymology of the word *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion), it becomes evident as to why the Qurān seems to revile those persons who do not exercise their reasoned judgments. As stated in *Sūrah al-Anfāl* – Voluntary Gifts (chapter 8:verse 22), ‘Verily! The worst of (moving) living creatures with Allāh are the deaf and the dumb, who understand not (i.e. the disbelievers)’; and again in *Sūrah al-Furqān* – The Discrimination (chapter 25:verse 44), ‘Or do you think that most of them hear or understand? They are only like cattle; nay, – they are even farther astray from the Path. (i.e. even worse than cattle)’. The significance of exercising one’s intellect in the pursuit of reasoned judgments is not the reserved ownership of a few. Rather every individual endowed with speech is capable of making a reasoned judgment if she exercises her intellect (*‘aql*) to do so. Small wonder the Qurān exhorts Muslims to reflect (*afa lā yafqahūn*), understand (*afa lā ta’qilūn*), and contemplate (*afa lā yatadabbarūn*).

Thus, from the aforementioned it can be inferred that *ijtihād* is a human practice whereby an individual or group exercises judgments based on reasons and intelligence. In this sense, it is not incorrect to translate the practice of *ijtihād* as intellectual exertion in the sense that humans use their reason or intellect to make certain judgments about matters that concern them and, of course, these judgments are also commensurate with the Qurān and *Sunnah*. A reasoned judgment that is incommensurate with the Qurān and *Sunnah* would by implication require further elucidation and judgment. However, when reasoned judgments differ individuals or groups can either aspire to reach a consensus known as *ijmā’* – that is, agreement is sought on the basis of which individuals or groups scrutinize and deliberate on the reasoned judgments. However, if a temporary consensus or no consensus is attained it does not mean that the reasoned judgments are unauthentic. Rather, disagreement is also a form of compromise that humans disagree about a matter that concerns them. In fact disagreement should encourage people to reevaluate their reasoned judgments in light of new evidence

and justifications. The point is not that agreement is always the most appropriate decision but instead that a decision agreed to by many or all might be a temporary reasoned judgment until new evidence is produced that the judgment ought to be reconsidered. And, an agreed upon decision might possibly be repealed in light of more reasoned justifications. It is for this reason that the jurists mentioned above never claimed that reasoned judgments cannot be produced after their demise and that *ijtihād* should be abandoned after them. Even the Prophet (ﷺ) never closed the doors for *ijtihād* because different peoples in different life worlds would invariably conjure up new thoughts and understanding. By implication, reasoned judgments are temporal because they are relevant for a certain time. It can never be that the Qurānic interpretations and reasoned judgments would be valid for all times for that in itself would be a deference to the view that the Qurān is not valid for all times. Humans are fallible and so their reasoned judgments are temporal and valid only for certain times. And, when new evidence emerges so judgments will be amended as new interpretations would be proffered. If considered in such a way, then the Qurān can be and should be considered as a guidance for all times. And, that only reasoned judgments based on the Qurān and *Sunnah* cannot be considered as immutable. Put differently, reasoned judgments remain in potentiality and cannot be presented as absolute truths. The potentiality concerning judgments is that a reasoned judgment once accepted is credible on account of the evidence available. However, when more credible evidence emerges the judgment will undergo an alteration. By implication, reasoned judgments remain in potentiality.

What follows from the above, is that *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion) is an ongoing and fallible human practice: firstly, humans exercise their reasoned judgments premised on evidence available at a certain time; and, secondly, when humans exercise their judgments there is always the possibility such judgments would be reasoned but not necessarily free from error. This is so on the basis that human judgments are temporal and fallible and that there is always more to know and learn as time elapses and more evidence becomes available. For many years it was thought that the water levels in the oceans would rise due to excessive storms and rain. Only recently, new evidence emerged that suggests global warming and climate change to be the actual causes of the melting of the ice caps and the rise in the water levels of the oceans. The point is *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion) is only valid for certain times and that a thought once considered as authentic might not be so on the grounds that new evidence informs more tenable judgments.

Consequently, the Prophet revealed in a *Ḥadīth* (saying) that when an individual errs in her judgment, she should be rewarded on the basis of having exercised her reason:

When a judge gives a decision, exercising his reasoning (*fa ijtahada*) and he is correct, he receives a double reward. And if he gave a judgment, exercising his reasoning (*fa ijtahada*) and he errs, he receives a single reward (Sahīh Muslim, 1990:1716).

The point is, reasoned judgments are not infallible truths that are absolute and monolithic for all times. Such judgments are justifiable reasons proffered for particular claims and inferences. The mere fact that a person exercising *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion) is rewarded even if she makes a mistake is premised on the idea that humans are not infallible and their understandings and interpretations of events in the world are subjected to available knowledge and understanding. Considering their judgments will invariably alter when new evidence is available, they would not be criticised for their errors as their judgments are constrained by their temporal understanding of events.

Next, I examine as to how *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion) can enhance *ta'arruf* (associational knowing).

### **Enhancing *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) through *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion)**

The purpose of *ta'arruf* (knowing together or associational knowing) can loosely be linked to the cultivation of humanity in which people with commonalities and differences can encounter one another. It is not that one group of people dominates another or excludes another from exercising their freedom to live their lives as they deem appropriate but also that they encounter one another in their differences. Recognising one another's similarities and differences can go some way in people getting to know one another. Despite such a possibility, the world as we observe it today is marked by dystopias by which people seem to do as they please without any regard for other humans, some people continuing to exploit and oppress others, some people making claims to live in isolation from others and even preventing others to migrate to their lands, some people seeing the need to excommunicate people from their lands, some people continuing merrily to deny others their freedom to practise their cultural and ethnic ways of being, and some people just dismissing others and even invading their lands for further exploitation and colonisation, and some people just

enriching themselves despite human starvation and suffering in many parts of the world. The world has never been in turmoil as it is today and it seems as if dehumanisation at different levels seem to have consumed human living in the world. Likewise, humans everywhere seem to exhibit a profound disregard for the environment and non-human species with a dramatic escalation of carbon emissions, soil erosion, decreasing levels of groundwater, water pollution, and deforestation that endanger the earth and the lives of non-human species. There is no denial that environmental degradation is on the rise due to increased levels of carbon dioxide emissions; the continued threat of global warming that increases the chances of flooding as well as the chances of drought; the danger of excessive rains and storms that enhance the rate of soil erosion and decreasing water quality; the continued presence of water pollution and river wastes, and the irresponsible use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, as well as the incessant and destructive burning of coal and mineral oil. Today, more than ever before, the necessity for *ta'arruf* (knowing together or associational knowing) has become necessary to resolve the dystopias with which humans are confronted. By ignoring our earthly predicaments do not say much of the human species that have been commanded by Allāh Almighty to act as *khalāifah al-ard* (inheritors or protectors of the earth) in their attentiveness to the earth and the environment. Human flourishing is constantly under threat from all spheres of life, whether humans feel threatened by insecurity due to disasters and denial of access to this or that; or whether the personal safety of humans are challenged; or whether good social relations among humans are curbed; or whether their freedom of choice and action are curtailed. And, this calls for an approach to education that can contribute towards human flourishing. It is not that human flourishing is dependent on educated persons, but rather when humans are educated their actions can possibly enhance their flourishing.

It is in the above context, that humans cannot afford to relinquish their capacities for *ijtihad* (intellectual exertion) on the grounds that the action is intertwined with education. Of course, the assumption is that humans have the capacity to use their intellect and reasoning, But this capacity is always in potentiality the more they come to know and learn. In this sense, one can refer to their capabilities as humans that are always in potentiality. This brings me to an examination of *ijtihad* (intellectual exertion). Firstly, *ijtihad* (intellectual exertion) can stimulate humans to strive vigorously to eradicate forms of human and environmental injustice; secondly, when humans come together to resolve the mentioned dystopias they would invariably be guided by reasoned judgments; and thirdly, the challenging nature of the world's

problems requires that humans remain open and reflexive (*tadabbur*) about how they respond to deal with such predicaments, but also how they remain open to agreements and disagreements as they endeavour to resolve their (humans') most challenging dilemmas. That is, without *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion) the possibility of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) would not be there. The Qurān in *Sūrah al-Nisā* – The Women (chapter 4:verse 83) reminds humans as follows:

When there comes to them some matter touching (public) safety or fear, they divulge it. If they had only referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have tested it from them (direct). Were it not for the Grace and Mercy of Allāh unto you, all but a few of you would have followed Satan.

وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوْ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ  
الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَشَبَعْتُمْ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

## Summary

The Qurān challenges humans to act with contemplation (*tadabbur*) to address their pressing concerns that can endanger their lives and the environment. Humans can only cultivate their sense of associational knowing (*ta'arruf*) when they assume their responsibility as *mujtahidūn* or those who embark on intellectual exertion in the pursuit of resolving predicaments in the world. The significance of using one's *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion) is that the action is meant to expand humans' knowing. The point is, humans would stifle their knowing if they do not exert themselves in the pursuit of knowing. It is on the basis of *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion) that humans bring their knowledge claims in association with one another. It is not that they do not know but rather that what they know can both be expanded in brought into association with what others know and what humans can yet come to know as a collective.

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# 4

## JUSTICE (‘ADL) AND A PHILOSOPHY OF MUSLIM EDUCATION

### Introduction

Undoubtedly the Qurān advocates for the advancement of justice which is associated with Allāh: ‘Allāh is never unjust in the least degree: if there is any good (done) He doubles it, and gives from His own presence a great reward’ (*Sūrah al-Nisā* – The Women, chapter 4:verse 40):

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِنْ تَكَ حَسَنَةً يُّضَاعِفْهَا وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

In fact, recognising Allāh’s divine Justice is inextricably linked to one’s embodiment of justice and to undermine any form of oppression towards anyone human and non-human. The significance of recognising justice in every aspect of one’s living is associated with what it means to be Muslim. In the Qurān, *Sūrah Āli ‘Imrān* – The Family of Amran (chapter 3:verse 18) the following is affirmed:

There is no god but He: that is the witness of Allāh His angels and those endued with knowledge, standing firm on justice. There is no god but He, the Exalted in Power, the Wise.

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

If justice is inextricably connected to the actions of Muslims, then justice ought to be considered as the guiding principle of Muslim education. If Allah associates the attainment of justice as close to piety then a Muslim’s actions should never be devoid of justice: ‘اغتنوا اقربا للفقوى’ – Be just, that is closer to piety’ (Qurān, *Sūrah al-Mā’idah* – The Table, chapter 5:verse 8).

In the previous chapters I have examined the rationale for Muslim education, more specifically, what the guiding principle for Muslim education should

be. My argument in defence of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) has been substantiated by acts of *dhikr* (remembrance), *tadabbur* (contemplation), and *ijtihad* (intellectual exertion). Without remembrance, contemplation and intellectual exertion the possibility of associational knowing would not be there. In other words, *ta'arruf* is only possible when acts of *dhikr* (remembrance), *tadabbur* (contemplation), and *ijtihad* (intellectual exertion) are considered as constitutive of the concept. What follows from this, is that Muslim education which is inherently a matter of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) has purposes. That is, the way in which *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) manifests in human practices would be a corroboration of what such a form of education is meant for. My understanding of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is that it is inextricably connected to the enactment of justice ('*adl*) so that the reason for practising *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) should not be detached from an enactment of just ways of knowing, being and acting.

### **On the interrelationship between *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) and '*adl* (justice)**

The Qurān, considered as the primary source of Muslim education, is aimed at providing guidance (*hudā*) to humanity (*al-nās*). In *Sūrah al-Baqarah* – The Cow (chapter 2:verses 2-4) the following is stated:

This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allāh. Who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them. And who believe in the Revelation sent to you, and sent before your time, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter.

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ \* الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ \* وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

Guidance (*hudā*) informs Muslim education on the basis that it (Muslim education) aims to cultivate pious and righteous persons (*muttaqūn*) who believe in Allāh Almighty, perform prayer, and spend from the substance Allāh has provided, recognise the Qurānic messages and those of past scriptures, and accept the continuation of life in the hereafter. This commitment to the divine guidance of Allāh is further extended to '*adl* (justice) and *ihsān* (performance of good deeds) in the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Nahl* – The Bee (chapter 16:verse 90):

Allāh commands justice, the doing of good, and liberty to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that you may receive admonition.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَايَ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالَّذِي يُغْطِّكُمْ لِعَدْلِكُمْ  
تَذَكَّرُونَ

The extension of guidance (*hudā*) to cultivating ‘*adl* (justice) and *ihsān* (performance of good deeds) is contrasted with immorality (*fahshā*), wrongdoing (*munkar*) and oppression (*baghy*). Again, in the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Nisā* – The Women (chapter 4:verse 135) Allāh specifically mentions the importance of upholding justice (‘*adl*) in human affairs:

O you who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allāh, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allāh can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts) lest you swerve and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allāh is well-acquainted with all that you do.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَوَعْدُ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوَّلَ الَّذِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ إِنْ يَكُنْ  
عَيْنًا أَوْ فِئْرًا فَإِنَّهُ أُولَىٰ بِنَاهٍ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىَٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا وَإِنْ تَلَوُّا أَوْ نَعَرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا  
تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

Considering that justice (‘*adl*) is connected with guidance (*hudā*) and performance of good deeds (*ihsān*), and justice (‘*adl*) that involves subverting acts of immorality (*fahshā*), wrongdoing (*munkar*), oppression (*baghy*) and vanity (*hawā*), it could be inferred that justice (‘*adl*) constitutes the rationale of *ta’arruf* (associational knowing). In other words, a philosophy of Muslim education would not exist if it is not underscored by the notion of *ta’arruf* (associational knowing) which by implication is guided by justice (‘*adl*). Thus, when humans are summoned by the Qurān to perform *ta’arruf* (associational knowing) they cannot do so without the enactment of justice (‘*adl*). It is justice (‘*adl*) that makes *ta’arruf* (associational knowing) a philosophy of Muslim education.

How does justice (‘*adl*) make *ta’arruf* (associational knowing) what it is? Firstly, when Muslims enact justice, they do so truthfully: ‘And of the people of Mūsa (Moses) there is a community who lead with truth [*haqq*] and establish justice [‘*adl*] therewith (i.e. judge among [wo]men with truth and justice)’ [*y’adilūn*] (*Sūrah al-’Arāf* – The Elevated Places, chapter 9:verse 159). When Muslims act with truth [*haqq*] they do so with integrity, conviction, and selflessness. Their actions are just in the sense that they act with decency. Put differently, just actions are intertwined with cultivating truth [*haqq*] even if such truth happens to be against oneself. The point is, striving for truth [*haqq*] is uncompromising and Muslims will not ease until justice

prevails. It is not as if truth [*haqq*] is a goal that needs to be aspired towards, but rather, truth [*haqq*] is present in what a Muslim does. When she acts with truth [*haqq*] the possibility is invariably there that she acts with justice ('*adl*). Put differently, truth [*haqq*] is a condition of justice ('*adl*). So, when Muslims enact *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) their actions are guided by truth [*haqq*] because they do not want to act indecently and dishonourably –that is, unjustly. No wonder the Qurān describes those who act in the pursuit of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) as those who are imbued with *ikrām* (virtuosity) and *taqwāh* (piety) (*Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt* – The Apartments, chapter 49:verse 13). This link between justice ('*adl*) and truth [*haqq*] is corroborated by the following verse, 'And of those whom We have created, there is a community who guides (others) with the truth, and establishes justice therewith' (*Sūrah al-'Arāf*, chapter 7:verse 181). The significance of justice ('*adl*) is that it is driven by a concern for truth (*haqq*). So, if Muslims strive towards justice they are invariably guided by truthful actions otherwise they would not be acting justly. When Muslims exert themselves in the quest for justice their actions are inextricably underscored by a desire for truth as opposed to untruth.

Secondly, when a Muslim acts justly, she does so by rendering her trust in relation with others. As stated in the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Nisā* – The Women (chapter 4:verse 58):

Allāh does command you to render back your Trusts to those to whom they are due; and when you judge between people that you judge with justice: verily how excellent is the teaching which He gave you! for Allāh is He who hears and sees all things.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا  
بَصِيرًا

When one renders one's trust (*amānah*) in relation with other humans, one actually makes oneself vulnerable to others. That is, one is willing to reveal oneself in such a way that the relationship that unfolds between oneself and others is grounded in an atmosphere of trusting one another. And, in the case of Muslim education or *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) one does not hesitate to take risks in articulating what one knows. A Muslim's willingness to take risks because she trusts that she would not be ridiculed or dismissed for making particular truth claims seems relevant to *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) in the sense that one recognises the possibility that one can err but does not have to be concerned about possible resentment because of trusting the other who listens and who will treat one's judgments or reasons with the justice it deserves. In this way, trust (*amānah*) constitutes just

human action. The fact that one trusts others in association is indicative of the willingness one exercises to become vulnerable to others' judgments of what one claims. And, if one makes a mistake, one would not be subjected to the harsh judgments of others. In other words, in speaking one's mind one's claims would deserve the consideration it does because others in association would honour one's speech.

Thirdly, just human action for Muslims is intertwined with seeking to find reconciliation (*islāh*) among contending individuals or groups. The Qurān in *Sūrah al- Ḥujurāt* – The Apartments (chapter 49:verse 9) states the following:

If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make you peace [*asliḥū*] between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allāh; but if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair [*asliḥū*]: for Allāh loves those who are fair (and just).

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَت إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي  
تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ  
الْمُقْسِطِينَ

When Muslims exert themselves towards reconciling they either act in such a way to find agreement or they can even agree to disagree. The act of reconciliation means that humans exchange their points of agreement or disagreement with one another for the purposes of reaching an equitable point of understanding. When they arrive at an equitable solution (*qist*) their efforts to reconcile have contributed to their impartial or equitable moment of understanding. Put differently, their efforts to reconcile have resulted in an equitable solution. In this sense, the purpose of Muslim education is also to equitably reconcile (*islāh*). What follows from the afore-mentioned is that just human action is intertwined with equitable reconciliation. In this regard it can be argued that *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is oriented to achieve equitable reconciliation (*islāh*). By implication a philosophy of Muslim education is constituted by equitable reconciliation (*islāh*). Equitable reconciliation (*islāh*) becomes necessary considering that Muslims strive towards uncovering truth and justice in their societal acts of living.

Thus far, I have shown that the rationale of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is constituted by justice (*'adl*). And, considering that *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) makes a philosophy of Muslim education what it is, one can infer that such a philosophy is underscored by the notion of justice (*'adl*). Now bearing in mind that justice (*'adl*) manifests in truth (*haqq*), trust (*amānah*),

and equitable reconciliation (*iṣlāh*), one can unequivocally posit truth (*haqq*), trust (*amānah*) and equitable reconciliation (*iṣlāh*) constitute *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) – the basis of a philosophy of Muslim education.

## **Towards truth (*haqq*), trust (*amānah*) and equitable reconciliation (equitable reconciliation (*iṣlāh*) in Muslim education**

From a reading of the Qurān in *Sūrah al-An'ām* – The Cattle (chapter 6:verse 115) the following is stated:

‘The Word of your Lord does find its fulfilment in truth and in justice: none can change His Words: for He is the one who hears and knows all’.

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

This verse clearly affirms that Allāh’s message in the Qurān is articulated on the basis of truth and justice. What is significant about this verse is the emphasis on Allāh’s immutable message. In other words, it is impossible to change what Allāh has revealed. And if humans endeavour to have any understanding of the Qurānic message, they have to rely on their fallible interpretations as immutability only belongs to Allāh – the All-Knower. Therefore when Muslims rely on their interpretations of the Qurānic messages they do so in an atmosphere of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing). The basis of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is that absolute knowledge belongs only to Allāh because He is for Muslims (and for others) without any doubt the all-Knower. And, even if Muslims were to strive all their lives in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding they would not be capable of exhausting the vastness of Allāh’s knowledge on the basis that His knowledge is for all times. Consequently, no Muslim can ever claim to have an absolute understanding of matters pertaining to Allāh’s knowledge. Knowledge from Allāh is timeless and Muslims who exert themselves with *ijtihād* will only come to understand Allāh’s knowledge in a limited way. Even in association their knowing will always be restricted and applicable for limited times. Allāh makes this point very clear in the Qurān in *Sūrah Āli ‘Imrān* – The Family of Amran (chapter 3:verse 7) as follows:

He it is Who has sent down to you the Book: in it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: others are not of well-established meaning. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is not of well-established meaning. Seeking discord, and searching for its interpretation, but no one knows its true meanings except Allāh, and those who are

firmly grounded in knowledge say: 'We believe in it; the whole of it is from our Lord'; and none will grasp the Message except [wo]men of understanding.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي  
قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ  
فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَأَمَّنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Considering that for Muslims Allāh's knowledge is vast and meant for all times, it is inconceivable that they (Muslims) can and should claim an absolute understanding of His knowledge. This is not the point of Allāh's knowledge but rather that they endeavour through striving to ascertain what the message means according to their understanding. Instead Muslims are summoned to acquire knowledge and to seek understanding through reflection and contemplation in order to live truthful and just lives which is also possible through their limited understandings of Allāh's Divine and everlasting knowledge as they should interpret the message of the Qurān relevant to their times and ways of living. The message of the Qurān remains a guidance for Muslims. This implies that the judgments of humans have to be brought into conversation with one another on the basis of which more credible judgments can ensue. In other words, Muslims should make judgments about the Qurānic messages according to truth (*haqq*), trust (*amānah*), and equitable reconciliation (*iṣlāḥ*). Failing to do so, might result in extreme forms of relativism.

Firstly, when Qurānic messages are interpreted in accordance with truth (*haqq*) it means that Muslims with their fallible dispositions make reasoned judgments that can be subjected to further scrutiny. They do not consider their reasoned judgments as immutable or uncontestable truths and in the spirit of seeking truth they endeavour to come up with defensible truth claims for a specific duration until proven wrong. At least, for some time their interpretative judgments will be authentic and directive of their human living. Secondly, on the basis that Muslims trust (*amānah*) one another they do not decline any form of human engagement. Through human engagement they open themselves up to one another without being concerned of being criticised or pointed out where they might be wrong. They become vulnerable in one another's presence because of the trust they share in listening to one another, perhaps contending claims about, say, human affairs. In this way, they become adept at taking risks towards more plausible ways of understanding matters that concern them. Thirdly, throughout their associational drive towards knowing, they remain

cognisant of the immense capacity of equitable reconciliation (*iṣlāḥ*) that will invariably encourage them to search for compromises in the wake of agreements and disagreements. They are not discouraged by provocative and belligerent human actions because they are always in search of more prudent and justifiable ways of seeing things in the world. Instead, Muslims evoke one another's potentialities in search of more plausible judgments that can impact their lives more meaningfully.

## Summary

*Ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is a form of just human action constituted by truth (*haqq*), trust (*amānah*), and equitable reconciliation (*iṣlāḥ*). If such a form of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) manifests in Muslim practices, one can legitimately speak about a philosophy of Muslim education. It is such a philosophy of Muslim education that remains open to truth claims that should always be subjected to contemplation (*tadabbur*) and intellectual exertion (*ijtihād*). If this were to be the knowing practices of Muslims the possibility of so much resentment, denial and exclusion will be thwarted. There cannot be more plausible practices than remaining open to new thoughts that can enhance human living towards an adherence to Allāh's Qurānic guidance. The danger is that if some humans want to claim absolute understanding of the Divine message and deny others their fulfilment of duty to exert themselves in the quest to find out what Allāh has summoned them to do through understanding the Qurān, the possibility that knowledge in association would be undermined. And not being privileged to enact *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) would not only insulate ourselves and remain satisfied with limited understandings of the Qurān in relation to the vast sciences, but also assign ourselves as Muslims to the abyss of knowledge without understanding and contemplation.

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# TA'ARRUF AS TEACHING AND LEARNING

# 5

## Introduction

Education, as has been articulated thus far, is a human practice. When humans engage they establish relations among one another. They bring to such educational relations their understandings, beliefs, cultures, and political persuasions. In this way, their educational relations evolve into encounters of which *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is such an encounter. In the previous chapter I analysed justice ('*adl*) as a human action that frames an understanding of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing), the rationale of Muslim education. A philosophy of Muslim education that has justice ('*adl*) as its purpose is invariably cultivated by notions of truth (*haqq*), trust (*amānah*), and equitable reconciliation (*islāh*). In this chapter I examine as to how just human action along the lines of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing), guides practices of teaching (*ta'līm*) and learning (*ta'allum*) in higher education. My specific focus on teaching (*ta'līm*) and learning (*ta'allum*) is premised on the notion that *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) guides such educational practices justly and it is important for a philosophy of Muslim education to find out how *ta'arruf* can manifest in Muslim practices. Of course, there are multiple ways in which *ta'arruf* manifests, for instance, in schools, meetings, seminars, conferences, universities, and non-formal institutions. For purposes of this book, I focus on *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) in higher education, in particular how two interrelated actions, namely, teaching and learning are organised. By way of introduction, I refer to teaching and learning as two pedagogical actions in an intertwined way: One teaches when one provokes students to come to learn; and conversely, one learns when one's potentialities are evoked to come to understanding. Thus, the notions of teaching and learning that underscore discussions on *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) invariably involve provocation and evocation.

## On learning as an evocative act of justice

To my mind, the encounter that involved the Qurānic Adam, the angels and Allāh, illustrates a highly credible form of learning that links up with the practice of evocation. This is so, on the basis of the angels having listened to Allāh when He explained to them the reasons for making humankind the protectors or inheritors of the earth (*khalāifah al-ard*). The Qurān in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* – The Cow (chapter 2:verse 285) explains learning, firstly, as listening:

The Messenger believes in what had been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the [wo]men of faith. Each one (of them) believes in Allāh, His angels, His books, and His Messengers ‘We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His Messengers’. And they say: ‘We hear and we obey; (We seek) Your forgiveness, Our Lord, and to You is the end of all journeys’.

ءَاْمَنَ الرَّسُوْلُ بِمَا اَنْزَلَ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُوْمِنُوْنَ كُلٌّ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلٰٓئِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَانْفِرُقُ بَيْنَ  
اِحْدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا غُفْرٰنَكَ رَبَّنَا وَاِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيْرُ

To learn requires beings to listen to what they have been informed about. There cannot be learning without listening. Put differently, when students learn they listen (*sam*) to that which they have been initiated into. Students cannot learn philosophy, literature, history, mathematics, physics, geology or zoology if they do not listen – a matter of being attentive – to what they are introduced to. It is through attentive listening that students begin to learn. Consequently, the successful ones (students) are those who learn through attentive listening as stated in the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Nūr* – The Light (chapter 24:verse 51):

The answer of the Believers when summoned to Allāh and His Messenger in order that He may judge between them, is no other than this: they say ‘We hear and we obey’: it is such as these that will attain felicity.

اِٰمَنَّا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اِذَا دُعُوْا اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ اَنْ يَقُوْلُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا ؕ وَاُوَّلٰٓئِكَ هُمُ  
الْمُقْتَدِرُوْنَ

It is through attentive listening that humans can make sense of what is being said. That is, they construct and reconstruct meanings on the basis of what they have heard. Of course, to listen might not be the only way through which one learns. For example, one can use one’s senses of smelling, seeing, and feeling to learn as well. However, without listening to one’s senses it would not be possible to learn. By implication, learning depends on listening.

Secondly, learning to listen also requires a willingness to reflect, as aptly stated in the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Jāthiya* – The Kneeling (chapter 45:verse 8) as follows:

Who hears the Verses of Allāh (being) recited to him, yet persists with pride as if he heard them not. So announce to him a painful torment!

يَسْمَعُ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُنزَّلُ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يَصِرُ مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَأَن لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا فَبَشِيرَةٌ بِعَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ

Showing a willingness to reflect is necessary as it affirms one's recognition of what one is initiated into. One recognises what one learns and hence does not abruptly denounce what has been heard. In this sense, learning requires reflection and not just an instant denial of what one has been informed about.

Thirdly, the Qurān in *Sūrah al-An'ām* – The Cattle (chapter 6:verses 104-105) makes it clear that learning is also by discernment:

Now have come to you from your Lord, proofs (to open your eyes): if any will see, it, will be for (the good of) his own soul; if any will be blind it will be to his own (harm): I am not (here) to watch over your doings. Thus do We explain the Signs by various (symbols): that they may say 'You have learnt this (from somebody), and that We may make the matter clear to those who know'.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَكُمْ بَصَائِرُ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَظَنَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِخَفِيظٍ \* وَكَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ لِيَتَفَكَّرُوا وَلِيَتَذَكَّرُوا أَلَيْسَ لِقَوْمٍ عَلِيمُونَ

Learning through discernment is a matter of learning with insight (*baṣar*). Learning through discernment allows one to gain deeper insights into matters so that more clarity is acquired by students. And, when clarity increases, students do not merely accept things in an unquestioning way as that would be in contrast to discerning matters. Students with insight look critically at knowledge without just accepting what they encounter. In this way, their learning becomes critical.

Thus, when students learn through listening, willing reflectiveness, and discernment their understandings about knowledge would invariably be deepened. That is, their insight increases as they reflect more intensely about matters that confront them. The Qurān aptly states the following in *Sūrah al-Zumar* – The Companies (chapter 39:verse 22):

Is one whose heart Allāh has opened to Islam, so that he has received enlightenment from Allāh, (no better than one hard-hearted)? Woe to those whose hearts are hardened against celebrating the praises [remembrance] of Allāh! They are manifestly wandering (in error)!

أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ بِالْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّنْ رَبِّهِ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي صَعَلٍ مُّبِينٍ

Allāh opens humans' minds to what they have initiated into as they are willing to contemplate with commitment and discernment. And, when they recognise truth, they are not deviant to that which is persuasive. They are convinced by reasons and their minds are open reflectively to what they make sense of. That is, their potentialities have been evoked to discern matters that confront them – that is, they have learned.

### Remembrance (*dhikr*) as a form of learning

Now that I have looked at the ways listening, willing reflection and discernment manifest through learning, I examine specifically how remembrance (*dhikr*) connects with learning. The Qurān is replete with verses that accentuate the significance of remembrance (*dhikr*) in relation to the verb *dhakara* (to remember or recall or recollect). More specifically, remembrance is used in relation to the act of protecting or guarding the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Ḥijr* – The Rock (chapter 15:verse 9):

We have, without doubt sent down the Message (*dhikr*); and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption) [*ḥāfiẓūn*].

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

In this verse remembrance (*dhikr*) of the Qurān is specifically linked to guarding or protecting it (*ḥifẓ*). So, when Muslims endeavour to remember the Qurānic message some embark on a process of memorising portions or Qurān or the entire Qurān. One cannot deny that memorising the Qurān is a form of learning as one who has done so is capable of recalling verses of the Qurān without necessarily understanding meanings of such verses. Unless a *ḥāfiẓ* (person who committed the Qurān to memory) has also acquired a knowledge of the Arabic language he or she would not be able to understand what he or she recites. Even without any understanding of the Qurān, the *ḥāfiẓ* usually recites the Qurān in a melodious voice that draws listeners to its recitation. In this way, the reciter and listener of the Qurān can be aesthetically drawn to the melody of the verses that are recited without necessarily any form of understanding. Without being too hasty to dismiss learning as memorisation on the basis that one can be drawn aesthetically to the inner beauty of Qurānic recitation and then be encouraged to acquire understanding, the very act of having committed so many verses to memory

is also as a consequence of having learned the sequences of the verses and the appropriate mode of recitation of such verses, known as *tajwīd*. It is not just a matter of recalling numerous verses of the Qurān but recitation also involves pronouncing the words correctly in a form that has been learnt. In this way, memorisation does involve some learning even though understanding might be absent. The person who committed the Qurān to memory has learned in the sense that her potentiality to recall verses and chapters have been evoked. However, the problem with focusing only on *ḥāfiz* (guarding) and *dhikr* (remembrance) is that understanding through attentive listening, reflection, and discernment will evade one. Consequently, there would be limitations on what a *ḥāfiz* person (one who has committed the Qurān to memory) can do other than reciting the Qurān during prayers and at Muslim festivals without necessarily advancing understandings of the guidance (*hudā*) from Allāh Almighty. If guarding (*ḥifz*), remembrance (*dhikr*), listening (*samʿ*), reflection (*taffakur*) and discernment (*baṣīrah*) can be combined to advance contemplation (*tadabbur*) and intellectual exertion (*ijtihād*), the act of Muslim learning (*taʿallum*) will invariably be expanded. And, when learning (*taʿallum*) expands, the possibility that is always there for *taʿarruf* (associational knowing) to be more substantive on the basis that learning actively invokes contemplation (*tadabbur*) and intellectual exertion (*ijtihād*). In this way, one's potentialities would have been evoked to recall and discern.

## On teaching as a provocative act of Justice

The Qurān in *Sūrah al-Nisā* – The Women (chapter 4:verse 113) refers specifically to the practice of teaching (*ʿallama*) as follows:

But for the Grace of Allāh to you and His Mercy, a party of them would certainly have plotted to lead you astray. But (in fact) they will only lead their own souls astray and to you they can do no harm in the least. For Allah has sent down to you the Book and wisdom and taught you (*ʿallama*) what you knew not (before); and great is the Grace of Allāh unto you.

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَهَمَّت طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ أَنْ يُضِلُّوكَ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ۗ وَمَا يَصُدُّونَكَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۗ وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ ۗ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا

Again, the act of teaching in Muslim education is most poignantly and extensively in the context of the conversation among angels (spiritual beings), Allāh and humankind that is described in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* – The Cow (chapter 2:verses 30-39):

Behold your Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth'. They said 'Will you place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? While we do celebrate Your praises and glorify Your holy (name)?' He said: 'I know what you know not.' And He taught Adam the names of all things; then He placed them before the angels and said: 'Tell Me the names of these if you are right'. They said: 'Glory to You: of knowledge we have none, save that You have taught us: in truth it is You who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom'. He said: 'O Adam! tell them their names'. When he had told them their names, Allāh said: 'Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heaven and earth, and I know what you reveal and what you conceal?' And behold We said to the angels: 'Bow down to Adam'; and they bowed down: not so Iblīs: he refused and was haughty: he was of those who reject Faith. We said: 'O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) you will; but approach not this tree, or you run into harm and transgression'. Then did Satan make them slip from the (Garden) and get them out of the state (of felicity) in which they had been. We said: 'Get you down all (you people) with enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time'. Then learnt Adam from his Lord words of inspiration and his Lord turned toward him; for He is Oft-Returning Most Merciful. We said: 'Get you down all from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me' whoever follows My guidance on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. 'But those who reject Faith and belie Our Signs, they shall be Companions of the Fire; they shall abide therein'.

وإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّىْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةًۗ \* قَالُوْا اَتَجْعَلُ فِيْهَا مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيْهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الْاَنْهٰرَ  
وَيَحْنُ نُسْتَجِبْ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَۗ قَالِىْ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ \* وَعَلَّمَ اٰدَمَ الْاَسْمَآءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضْنٰهُم  
عَلٰى الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ فَقَالَ اَنْبِئُوْنِىْ بِاَسْمَآءِ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ \* قَالُوْا سُبْحٰنَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا بِاِلٰهَاعِلْمَتِنَاۗ اِنَّكَ  
اَنْتَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْمُ \* قَالَ يٰۤاٰدَمُ اَنْبِئْهُم بِاَسْمَآئِهِمْۗ فَلَمَّآ اَنْبَاَهُمْ بِاَسْمَآئِهِمْۗ قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَكُمْ اِنِّىْ اَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ  
اَسْمَآءِ الْاَرْضِ وَاَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُوْنَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُوْنَ \* وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوْۤا اِلَّا  
اِبْلِیْسَۗ اَبٰىۗ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ \* وَقُلْنَا يٰۤاٰدَمُ اسْكُنْ اَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ  
شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هٰٓذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُوْنَا مِنَ الظَّٰلِمِيْنَ \* فَاَزَلَهُمَا الشَّيْطٰنُ عَنَّا فَاخْرَجْنٰهُمَا مِمَّا كٰنَا فِيْهِۗ  
وَقُلْنَا اٰهْبَطُوْا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّۗ وَلَكُمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّۗ وَمَتَعٌۙ اِلٰى حِيْنَ \* فَلَقَىۤ اٰدَمُ مِنْ  
رَّبِّهِۗ كَلِمٰتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِۗ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْتَوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ \* قُلْنَا اٰهْبَطُوْا مِنْهَا جَمِيْعًاۗ فَاِذَا يٰۤاٰدَمُ اَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ  
فِي الْجَنَّةِ كٰتِبٰتٍ لِّمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ \* وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْۤا وَكٰذَبُوْۤا بِآيٰتِنَاۗ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِۗ هُمْ  
فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ

In the conversation among humankind (Adam), the angels and Allāh at least three aspects pertaining to teaching (*ta'allum*) emerge: firstly, teaching takes the form of telling 'the names of all things'. In this sense, teaching involves telling students what they do not know. Here, teaching is about socialisation in the sense that students are initiated into a body of knowledge about which they had no prior knowledge and have to make sense of as part of their learning. Muslim teachers initiate students into knowledge about the sciences (human, physical and applied), literature,

history, languages, mathematics, and the Qurān, *Ḥadīth* (Prophetic sayings), and *Sharī'ah* (laws of jurisprudence). The expectation is that they learn on the basis of both socialisation (being told what to learn) and individuation or a matter of learning through questioning and discernment. Of course, it depends on the level of preparedness of learners so that one expects learners in a preparatory and primary school to be more inclined to socialisation whereas high school and university learners would use a combination of socialisation and individuation to expand their learning. However, avoiding individuation at high school and university levels would substantively constrain Muslim learning. Put differently, the expectation is that students learn through questioning and deliberation at high school and university levels. And, when such practices of critique and deliberation are absent from students' learning they would not be in a position to make autonomous judgments.

Secondly, teaching (*ta'allum*) also involves evoking students' potentialities so that they can 'dwell' on earth and explore things for themselves. In this way, teaching is a matter of summoning students to think for themselves and to make reasoned judgments. When teachers inspire students, they summon students to use their reason to come to understanding – a matter of thinking for themselves even though their learning might not always be to their advantage. The point about teaching as individuation in the sense that students' potentialities are evoked whereby they can make independent judgments about what they learn is emphasised just as 'Adam' made the 'incorrect' judgment in having exercised his independent reasoning. The advice given 'Adam' was to have used both what he has been informed with together with his critical questioning in order to have made an informed decision. However, 'Adam' seemed to have privileged independent thought without a substantive knowledge base – that is, it seems as if 'Adam' undervalued socialisation. Put differently, although teachers usually provoke students to make autonomous judgments, students can only do so if they have an established knowledge base. What is the point of questioning when one does not know on what basis one questions?

Thirdly, teaching is also about establishing encounters that will provoke participants (students) to act with wisdom (*ḥikmah*) – that is, ethically with an expanded form of learning. When teachers encourage students to act with wisdom they do so on the grounds that teaching would be assertive but not dismissive. In other words, teaching would be inspirational in the sense that teachers would inspire students to become curious so that they

can even look at things as they could be otherwise. That is, teaching with wisdom inspires students to look at things anew because they recognise their creative capacities to imagine the unexpected or the surprise. Such inspirational teaching would not dismiss students as if they have nothing new to say and that they cannot influence the pedagogical encounters. After all, Adam learned ‘words of inspiration from his Lord’, which suggests that students have the potential to be inspiring themselves. In this way, teaching can provoke students to see beyond that which they encounter. Of course, when Adam exercised independent judgment could not have been the actual problem. Rather Adam exercised autonomy by being oblivious of the guidance provided by Allāh. But Adam was not denied the opportunity to ever use independent judgment for that in itself would deprive Adam of taking risks and explore the unexpected and unimaginable – actions required to pursue on earth to which Adam was assigned an immense responsibility. What can be inferred from Adam’s departure from his given context, is that he acted without using established understandings to make a particular wrong judgment. Judgments would be more informed if such judgments are underscored by an established knowledge premise so that one does not judge without understanding.

## Summary

Muslim teaching is about telling students, provoking them to think independently, and to inspire them towards unimaginable understandings. It is in this regard that the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Nisā* – The Women (chapter 4: verse 113) states the following about teaching (*ta'allum*):

But for the Grace of Allāh to you and His Mercy, a party of them would certainly have plotted to lead you astray. But (in fact) they will only lead their own souls astray and to you they can do no harm in the least. For Allah had sent down to you the Book and wisdom and taught you what you knew not (before); and great is the Grace of Allāh unto you.

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَهَمَّت طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ أَن يُضِلُّوكَ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ ۗ وَمَا يَضُرُّونَكَ مِن شَيْءٍ ۗ وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ ۗ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا

The ‘Grace of Allāh’ will invariably not evade Muslims who learn on the basis of socialisation and individuation that would encourage them to act with understanding and insight prepared to take risks in their learning. In this way, Muslims will learn not only to become diligent and insightful but

also stimulated to look at things differently with renewed intelligence to advance knowledge in and about matters that concern them. Teaching and learning are pedagogical actions of provocation and evocation respectively so that pedagogical encounters among teachers and students would be about enhancing their potentialities to come to teach and learn.

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# 6

## CARING AND COMPASSIONATE ACTION IN THE PURSUIT OF TA'ARRUF

### Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have analysed teaching and learning in relation to provocation and evocation. Yet, one should not be oblivious to the fact that at times such forms of teaching and learning have the potential to exclude. Now considering that exclusion is possible it would be plausible to make a case for teaching and learning that can be more inclusive. And for inclusion to unfold in pedagogical encounters, teachers and students should act with virtues of care and compassion that would draw them to one another rather than separating them on the basis of threatening encounters. Therefore, in this chapter I draw our attention to virtues of caring and compassion. More specifically, I analyse the significance of caring and compassion for a philosophy of Muslim education. Considering that Muslim education is most appropriately guided by *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) it becomes even more prudent for *ta'arruf* to engender practices such as care and compassion on the basis that human encounters can at times be belligerent, distressful and hostile and would want to draw on emotions like care and compassion to curtail human aggression. Any form of human encounter, more specifically an educational one, cannot succumb to practices of disdain, resentment and hostility otherwise the possibility of any encounter would either be truncated or not happen at all. That is the possibility that encounters would end is real with the manifestation of hostility. Therefore, the actions of caring and compassion are examined to ascertain as to how *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) might enhance a philosophy of Muslim education in relation to unconstrained human encounters.

## On caring (*ri'āyah*)

The Qurān in *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* – The Table (chapter 5:verse 105) states the following about caring.

O you who believe! Guard your own souls: if you follow (right) guidance, no hurt can come to you from those who stray. The goal of you all is to Allāh: it is He that will show you the truth of all that you do.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنفُسِكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَن ضَلَّ إِذَا أَهْتَدَيْتُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرَجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ  
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

My understanding of this verse is that Allāh Almighty reminds all believers that they need to care for themselves through adherence to Allāh's guidance otherwise the possibility exists that they might be misguided. In this way, addressing believers (*mu'minūn*) in the plural, Allāh affirms that the most plausible way of caring for yourselves would be to adhere to Allāh's guidance (*hadaytum*). Basheer Hajaltom (1982:141) is therefore incorrect when he uses this verse to exonerate people from caring for their societies. People (believers) cannot be exempted from caring for society, and by implication for other humans, only because he interprets and restricts *anfusikum* to individual selves that need to care for themselves. Hajaltom seems to be remiss of the fact that the verse refers to individual selves that are misguided and thus cannot necessarily care for others but instead need to care for themselves first. It seems as if the verse accentuates the necessity of caring that begins with the self rather than exempting the self from caring about others in society. If this were not the case, the Qurān would not refer to believers (*mu'minūn*) as those who protect, and by implication, care for one another. In *Sūrah al-Tawbah* – The Immunity (chapter 9:verse 71) the following is stated:

The Believers, men and women, are protectors of one another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allāh and His Messenger. On them will Allāh pour His mercy: for Allāh is Exalted in power, Wise.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ  
الصَّلَاةَ وَ يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

To be considered by Allāh as protectors of one another, believers are regarded as humans who care for one another. And, when they care they are guided by Allāh's Qurānic messages whereby they cultivate good actions in society. Good actions enacted through caring are explained in the Qurān

in relation to *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* – The Table (chapter 5:verse 3) as follows:

O you who believe! violate not the sanctity of the Symbols of Allāh, nor of the Sacred Month, nor of the animals brought for sacrifice, nor the garlands that mark out such animals, nor the people resorting to the Sacred House, seeking the bounty, and good pleasure of their Lord. But when you are clear of the Sacred Precincts and of pilgrim garb, you may hunt and let not the hatred of some people in (once) shutting you out of the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgression (and hostility on your part). Help you one another in righteousness and piety, but help you not one another in sin and rancour: fear Allāh: for Allāh is strict in punishment.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْلُوا شَعِيرَةَ اللَّهِ وَلَا النَّسِيرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَئِدَ وَلَا أَمِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ  
يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا ۚ وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا ۚ وَلَا يَجْرِمُكُمْ شَيْئًا مِّن قَوْمٍ أَن صَدَّقْتُمْ فِي  
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا ۚ وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ  
اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

The Qurān is quite clear that helping one another (that is, caring for one another or *ta'awun*) should be based on acts of righteousness (*birr*) and piety (*taqwa*). These acts of goodness stand in contrast to crime (*ithm*) and rancour or hatred (*'udwān*). By implication, when Muslims care for one another they do not show animosity and resentment towards one another because they are guided by the Qurān to act with care (*ri'āyah*). Now when Muslim education through *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is enacted, humans act in association without succumbing to aggression and hatred. To be aggressive and resentful to other humans would constrain and undermine educational encounters. When humans enact *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) they do so in accordance with righteousness (*birr*) and piety (*taqwa*) which implies that their actions are guided by acts of goodness and not hostility. This makes sense because human encounters that involve getting to know one another would be constrained by acts of aggression and hatred on the grounds that people would not show a willingness to want to engage with one another. By contrast, the Qurān encourages humans to act with goodness in order that caring manifests. The point is, caring would be undermined when aggression and resentment hold sway. In this regard, it is worthwhile referring to the Qurān in *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* – The Family of Amran (chapter 3:verse 104) in which humans are encouraged to act with virtue as carers for one another:

Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong; they are the ones to attain felicity.

وَلْتَكُن مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

The significance of caring for one another is corroborated by a *Ḥadīth* (Al-Nawawī, No. 13) in which it is claimed that the Prophet (ﷺ) said the following:

None of you [truly] believes until he [she] loves for his brother [her sister] that which he [she] loves for himself [herself].

إِلَّا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ

Loving one's fellow-humans is an act of caring for them which the *Ḥadīth* reconciles with belief (*īmān*). Such caring implies that one has aspirations for other humans to be as successful perhaps as one has become. When one enacts *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) such human relations would be more righteous (*birr*) and pious (*taqwa*) if extended to the practice of caring for one another. According to another *Ḥadīth* (Sunan Abū Dāwūd, 2008:4875) the following is said:

A Muslim is a Muslim's brother: he does not wrong him or abandon him. If anyone cares for his brother's need, Allāh will care for his need; if anyone removes a Muslim's anxiety, Allāh will remove from him, on account of it, one of the anxieties of the Day of resurrection; and if anyone conceals a Muslim's fault, Allāh will conceal his fault on the Day of resurrection.

الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ لَا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلَا يُسْلِمُهُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةِ أَخِيهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ فِي حَاجَتِهِ وَمَنْ فَرَّجَ عَنْ  
مُسْلِمٍ كُرْبَةً فَرَّجَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ بِهَا كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

What follows from the above, is that when humans enact *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) they will thrive when they care for one another. The point about caring is that it emanates from the desire to continue acquiring knowledge where the possibility of contestation and dismissiveness become real. And caring for one another would not result in human encounters collapsing into encounters of struggle and conflict.

## On compassion

In a *Ḥadīth* (Sunan Ibn Mājah, *Ḥadīth* 4293), the Prophet is reported to have said:

Allāh has one hundred (degrees of) mercy, of which He has shared one between all of creation, by virtue of which you show mercy and compassion [*rahmah*] towards one another and the wild animals show compassion towards their young. And He has kept back ninety-nine (degrees of) mercy by virtue of which He will show mercy to His slaves on the Day of Resurrection.

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مِئَةَ رَحْمَةٍ فَسَمَّ مِنْهَا رَحْمَةً بَيْنَ جَمِيعِ الْخَلَائِقِ فِيهَا يَتَرَأَّحُونَ وَبِهَا يَتَعَاطَفُونَ وَبِهَا تَعَطَّفُ الْوَحْشُ عَلَى أَوْلَادِهَا وَأَخْرَجَ تِسْعَةَ  
وَتِسْعِينَ رَحْمَةً يَرْحَمُ بِهَا عِبَادَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

In fact, the Qurān is replete with verses pertaining to compassion (*rahmah*) in the sense that every chapter except chapter 9, contains a reference to Allāh's compassion, whereas chapter 27 contains two references to the concept. The chapters commence with the famous verse: 'In the name of Allāh, the Compassionate [*al-Rahmān*], the Merciful [*al-Rahīm*] - بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ - . By implication, adhering to the guidance (*hudā*) of the Qurān is inextricably connected to an enactment of compassion (*rahmah*). Likewise, one cannot claim to embark on *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) without being compassionate (*rahmān*). In this case, a philosophy of Muslim education would be incomplete if humans do not act compassionately. In this regard the Qurān in *Sūrah al-'Arāf* – The Elevated Places (chapter 7:verse 204) states the following:

When the Qur'ān is read, listen to it with attention, and hold your peace: that you may receive Mercy. And do you (O reader!) bring your Lord to remembrance in your (very) soul, with humility and in reverence, without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings; and be not you of those who are unheedful. Those who are near to their Lord, disdain not to do Him worship: they celebrate His praises and bow down before Him.

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ ۖ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ \* وَأَذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً  
وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصْنَالِ وَلَا تَكُن مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ \* إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ  
عِبَادَتِهِ - وَيَسْتَجِونَهُ ۖ وَهُوَ يَسْتَجِدُّونَ

The point about the above verse is that compassion should be enacted according to the received guidance (*hudā*) of Allāh. Muslims cannot claim to act justly without, firstly, enacting their compassion towards other humans in accordance with the guidance (*hudā*) from Allāh. Secondly acting compassionately implies that Muslims do so with humility on the basis that they recognise the vulnerabilities of their fellow-humans. Thirdly, Muslims acting with compassion (*rahmah*) do not treat other humans with disdain or disrespect because they endeavour to alter the vulnerable situations of their fellow-humans. In *Sūrah Hūd* (chapter 11:verse 9) Allāh Almighty reminds us that compassion should not be withheld from people otherwise they would remain in despair:

If We give man a taste of mercy from Ourselves, and then withdraw it from him, behold! he is in despair and (falls into) blasphemy.

وَلَيْنَ آدْفْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً ثُمَّ نَزَعْنَاهَا مِنَّهُ إِنَّهُ لَكَيْفُوسٌ كَفُورٌ

Thus, showing compassion for humans and non-humans is central to what a philosophy of Muslim education is about. One cannot claim to be practising *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) without recognising the importance of acting compassionately. When a Muslim acts with compassion, she not only recognises the vulnerabilities of other humans but also do something about their conditions of despondency and unhappiness.

## Summary

I have shown that caring and compassion (*rahmah*) are constitutive virtues of a philosophy of Muslim education. On the basis that *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) constitutes the rationale of Muslim education one cannot enact *ta'arruf* without showing care and compassion. The very practice of knowing together (*ta'arruf*) has to be guided by care (*ri'āyah*), cooperation (*ta'āwun*) and compassion (*rahmah*) on the basis that humans would avoid animosity and hatred whenever they encounter one another. In turn when they recognise one another's vulnerabilities they act with mutual respect such as to change one another's vulnerabilities that can be distressing for humans. Therefore the Qurān commences every chapter but one with a sentence containing a reference to compassion so that human encounters might be guided by such an emotion. When the emotion of compassion is exercised on the part of Muslims their associational endeavours of remembrance (*dhikr*), contemplation (*tadabbur*) and *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion) would be guided by actions that would treat them with the care and compassion they require as they endeavour to strive towards just action.

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# TA'ARRUF AND COMMUNITY (UMMAH)

# 7

## Introduction

The very practice of knowing through association (*ta'arruf*) lends itself to community on the basis that humans do things together. However, *ta'arruf* is a specific community of people that takes the advancement of knowledge for society seriously to the extent that such a community can be referred to also as a community (*Ummah*) in the quest for knowledge. In this chapter, I build upon the notion of *Ummah* (community) as espoused in the Qurān and argue for an understanding of a community without community. Such a community (*Ummah*) comprises unequal, subjective humans who endeavour to cultivate a justly balanced sense of community (*ummatan wasaṭan*). A justly balanced community cultivates actions in accordance with truth, decency and justice and opposes any form of radical extremist action. In a different way, the enactment of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is guided by what a justly balanced community pursues.

## Cultivating *Ummah* (community) as virtuous action

The Arabic meaning for *amma* (the root word from which *Ummah* is derived) is to direct or pursue a course (of action) (Lane, 1863:88). Etymologically *Ummah* refers to a course or manner of action pursued by humans or non-humans (Lane, 1883:90). In the Qurān, *Ummah* is explained in relation to the pursuit of communal action: **وإِنْ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ** 'And verily this *Ummah* (community) of yours pursues a common course (of action) and I am your Creator so act with virtue' (*Sūrah al-Mu'minūn* The Believers, chapter 23:verse 52). When humans endeavour to pursue a virtuous course of action they act as a *Ummah* (community). In reference to the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Mu'minūn* - The Believers, chapter 23:verses 52-53, different

messengers of diverse communities in the past (*rusul*) have been guided by Allāh to encourage them to perform righteous actions (*amālan ṣāliḥan*) without succumbing to their own course of action. Such an *Ummah* can be explained as a community of unequal selves on the basis that humans having constituted such communities were different and even the communities differed among one another. Messengers were sent to unequal communities that differed on the basis of where they lived, where they came from, and the languages they spoke. In this sense *Ummah* refers to a community of unequal selves in comparison with other communities. In reference to *Sūrah al-Mu'minūn* – The Believers, chapter 23:verses 52-53 the following can be inferred:

O you messengers! Enjoy (all) things good and pure, and work righteousness: for I am well-acquainted with (all) that you do. And verily this common action of yours is a single one and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore fear Me (and no other). But people have cut off their affair (of unity), between them, into sects: each party rejoices in that which is with itself.

يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ \* وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً  
وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ - فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ

## Ummah as a subjective, justifiable community

As has already been alluded to, *Ummah* as explained in the Qurān refers to people with their own subjectivities, that is, beliefs, values, ideologies, faiths, and other modes of action. In *Sūrah al-Naḥl* – The Bee (chapter 16:verse 36) the following is stated:

For We assuredly sent among every People a messenger, (with the Command) 'Serve Allāh, and eschew Evil': of the people were some whom Allāh guided, and some on whom Error became inevitably (established). So travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who denied (the Truth).

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الصَّلٰوٰتِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ هَدَىٰ اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ  
عَلَيْهِ الضَّلٰلَةُ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْفِرِينَ

So, a community of subjective selves share commonalities with every community having its own distinctive subjectivities. In this regard, the *Ummah* of Prophet Abraham differed from the *Ummah* of Prophet Jesus – each *Ummah* consisted of its own subjective selves.

Yet, the Qurān, also refers to the notion of خَيْرَانِه (khayr ummah) or the most justifiable community in Sūrah Āli ‘Imrān – The Family of Amran (chapter 3:verse 110):

You are the best of peoples, evolved for humankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. If only the People of the Book had faith it was best for them; among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ۗ وَلَوْ ءَامَنَ أَهْلُ  
الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِمَّنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

My understanding of the most justifiable community (*khayr ummah*) is that such a community is present among all of humanity and in service of it (humanity). In other words, such a community of subjective unequal selves does not constitute *the* community rather they make up a community without community. On this basis such a community without community recognises and enjoins what is right, forbids what is wrong, and believes in Allāh. And when such a community urges what is right and prohibits what is wrong on the basis that wrong-doing is detested by Allāh such a community is one where people co-belong. Their individual subjectivities and unequal affairs do not make them a community. Rather they co-belong without a community to address the most pressing problems and challenges they encounter. They are stimulated by their eagerness to subvert any form of injustice as a community that co-belongs without any condition of belonging. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong on the basis of being a community that co-belongs and acts in the interests of all human beings. So, irrespective of their beliefs, ethnicities, cultures, religions, faiths, ideologies, nationalities, and statuses such a community without community will most appropriately tackle wrongs and advance what is good for humanity. They co-belong on the basis of love, care and compassion for all human beings and loathe the destruction of humans and non-humans. I would posit that such a community without community is a Muslim community where being Muslim implies an indebtedness to Allāh Almighty that obliges such a community to be in service of all of humanity.

## A community in service of humanity

In the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* – The Cow (chapter 2:verse 143) the following is stated:

Thus have We made of you an *Ummah* justly balanced That you might be witnesses over the nations and the Messenger a witness over yourselves; and We appointed the Qiblah to which you were used to, only to test those who followed the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels (from the faith). Indeed it was (a change) momentous except to those guided by Allāh. And never would Allāh make your faith of no effect. For Allāh is to all people most surely full of kindness, Most Merciful.

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ  
الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ ۗ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ  
هَدَى اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّكُمْ ۗ إِنْ أَنَّى اللَّهُ بِالنَّاسِ لَرُءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

In this verse the notion of a justly balanced *ummatan wasaṭan* – أُمَّةٌ وَسَطًا – is pronounced. *Wasaṭan* is derived from the root verb *wasata* meaning to be in the middle, moderate, fair or just (Lane, 1863:2940). By implication, a moderate or just community is one that treats all humans with decency and hospitality. It is a community that is concerned with the cultivation of moderation and justice and has no place for prejudice and intolerance. Now such a community is in service of the entire humanity on the basis that Allāh links the role of such a community to His own commitment to serve humanity – إِنْ أَنَّى اللَّهُ بِالنَّاسِ لَرُءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ – (For Allah is to all people most surely full of kindness, Most Merciful). Being a moderate and just community orients the purpose of community without community to the parameters of justice and kindness to all humans. So, when humans are wronged such a community stands up against injustice and endeavour to establish conditions of fairness, equity, and just living.

A justly balanced community undermines radicalism and extremism in the sense that people can only alter their unfavourable conditions through acts of deliberative engagement and the recognition of one another's differences. Acting justly and moderately is what is required when humans resolve matters pertaining to discrimination, prejudice, inequality and exclusion. When the Qurān encourages Muslims to act with dignity and justice it does so by making a claim towards being justly balanced as a community (*ummatan wasaṭan*). In this regard, there seems to be no place for unjustifiable hostility, aggression and extremism. A community justly balanced (*ummatan wasaṭan*) will invariably act in accordance with truth and justice towards all

of humanity. As stated in the Qurān in *Sūrah al-'Arāf* – The Elevated Places (chapter 7:verse 181): 'Of those We have created are people who direct (others) with truth, and dispense justice therewith' – *'وَمِنْ خَلْقِنَا أُمَّةٌ يَتَّبِعُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَيُبَيِّنُونَ*

## Summary

A justly balanced community (*ummatan wasaṭan*) is a community without community according to which people co-belong in the realisation of truth and justice towards all of humanity. Such a community acts with moderation and impartiality in service of all of humanity especially when injustices are inflicted on them. It is a community that takes a stand against all forms of wrong-doing even if the community itself enacts a wrong. In this way, embarking on *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) cannot happen without a justly balanced community on the basis that such a community comprises subjective, unequal individuals who co-belong without any condition of belonging. A community without community considers the cultivation of truth and justice wherever and whenever it is required.

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# 8

## TA'ARRUF AND THE QUEST FOR JUSTICE AMONG HUMANITY

### Introduction

Thus far, the notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) has been articulated as a form of Muslim action that can connect diverse humans in the pursuit of knowledge. However, knowledge has distinctive purposes for the advancement of humanity as well. And, considering that humans are currently faced with actions that seem to undermine their ways of living, it would be apt to show as to how *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) can oppose such dystopias. Consequently, in this chapter, I examine as to why the concept of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) offers a way to counteract dystopias in society, particularly in relation to three dystopias in the world today: autocracy, patriarchy, and a violence of dehumanisation. These acts of dystopia seem to undermine any pursuit of credible human engagement and hence, I shall show as to how human living can be mitigated from such acts through the responsibility of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing). In addition, I argue as to why *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) seems to be most appropriate to deal with the challenge of environmental ethics.

### On counteracting autocracy through *ta'arruf*

By far the most disturbing societal dystopias that seem to permeate communities in the world today, include the prevalence of autocracy, patriarchy, and violence against individuals and communities. The prevalence of several autocratic regimes that deny citizens of some nation-states their rights and responsibilities manifests in the repression of individuals who dare to challenge the state, the continuous withering away of people's freedom of association and movement, and the denial of disenfranchised people's right to choose rulers of their choice. Autocratic regimes act with

impunity against citizens who face dire living conditions such as poverty, starvation, and a lack of security and dare not rise up against dictatorial regimes. Several autocratic regimes imprison opposition politicians, silence critical media, treat public wealth as their own, and even withhold funding designated for civil society groups that deviate from the state's agenda. Such regimes even use their military forces to squash pro-democracy protests in their countries, censor the public from accessing the Internet, and accelerate the convictions of political dissidents and bloggers, and embark on different kinds of human rights abuses. If *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) were to manifest in the practices of autocratic nation-states political rulers would think of themselves as legitimate functionaries of states that actually serve citizens. This means that political rule would function on the basis of a legitimate opposition, criticism, a recognition of dissidence, and the prevention of human rights violations.

*Ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is incommensurable with autocratic human actions on the basis that the very act of association advances intersubjective (consultative) human action. In this regard, the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Shūrā* – Counsel (chapter 42:verses 38-39) encourages people to conduct their affairs in mutual consultation with one another and also permits those who are denied such an opportunity to dissent:

Those who harken to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation [*shūrā*]; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance; And those who, when an oppressive wrong is inflicted on them, (are not cowed but) help and defend themselves.

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ \* وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا  
أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ

In fact, the Qurān summons people to engage in mutuality and trust in *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* – The Family of Amran (chapter 3:verses 158-159):

It is part of the Mercy of Allāh that you deal gently with them. Were you severe or harsh-hearted they would have broken away from you; so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allāh's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment) [*wa shāwir hum fi al-amr*]. Then when you take a decision, put your trust in Allāh. For Allāh loves those who put their trust (in Him). If Allāh helps you, none can overcome you: if He forsakes you, who is there after that that can help you? In Allāh, then, let believers put their trust.

بِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنَحَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ  
وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ \* إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمْ اللَّهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ  
لَكُمْ وَإِنْ يَخْذَلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

When mutuality and trust prevail, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) thrives. By implication, autocracy would not be possible. It is autocracy that undermines the quest for a genuine *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) because often autocratic regimes are responsible for excluding legitimate participants from engaging in the pursuit of matters pertaining to knowledge. When autocracy dissipates and vanishes it is more likely that matters of knowledge and the cultivation of a Muslim university should flourish as autocracy has the political power to derail legitimate efforts to advance knowledge.

### **On counteracting patriarchy through *ta'arruf***

Patriarchy derives from ancient Greek and it literally means 'rule of the father'. Currently there are multiple understandings of the concept such as those that describe patterns of male domination derived from the structures of the family and workplace; to those that relate it to a system of oppression built on prejudice against women and their exploitation and brutalisation. In its simplest form, it represents a societal structure of male supremacy that operates at the expense of women. It operates through inequalities in the private and public spheres of life. Patriarchy is mostly normalised through culture, tradition, education and religion. It undermines equal rights in society and are kept in place by political, legal, educational and cultural institutions.

The problem with patriarchy is that it privileges the domination and exclusion of others, like women, perceived to be inferior humans on the basis that social privilege and moral authority reside with male chauvinism. Consequently, in many societies women suffer through sexism and gender discrimination as domestic workers, factory workers, agricultural workers, athletes, soldiers, teachers, students and academics. For instance, often many women have to endure discrimination in terms of earnings, social status, promotions in the workplace, and family inheritance. On what basis can *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) help us to think and act differently towards those who have to endure pervasive patriarchy.

In *Sūrah al-Nahl* – The Bee (chapter 16:verse 97) the following is stated about the equality among men and women:

Whoever works righteousness, man or woman and has Faith, verily, to him [her] will We give a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.

مَنْ عَمِلْ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۗ وَ لَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا  
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

Again in *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb* – The Allies (chapter 33:verse 35) the Qurān makes no distinction between male and female:

For Muslim men and women – for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves) for men and women who guard their chastity and for men and women who engage much in Allāh’s praise – for them has Allāh prepared forgiveness and great reward.

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ  
وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّالِمِينَ وَالصَّالِمَاتِ  
وَالْخَافِضِينَ وَالْخَافِضَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

In light of the Qurānic affirmation that men and women are equal one can only deduce that patriarchy is a human construct that has been made possible through misconstrued understandings of human responsibilities. The problem with rampaging patriarchy is that it makes any enactment of *ta’arruf* (associational knowing) a human impossibility. And, unless patriarchy is legitimately undermined any effort to advance knowledge in Muslim education might be constrained.

## **On counteracting the violence of dehumanisation through *ta’arruf***

Dehumanisation takes many forms but in its most basic form it refers to acts of relegating people to the status of being non-human whereby they (people) are either victimized, tortured or starved as unwanted beings. Thus, when immigrants are considered as rapists and criminals or Jews referred to as rats and vermin by Nazis and Tutsis called cockroaches and snakes by Hutu extremists, they are dehumanised on two accounts: firstly, they are equated with animals, vermin, insects, or diseases and in this way

they are considered as less than human; secondly, they are narrativized as outcasts in society and deserve to be exterminated – thus being subjected to violence.

Likewise, dehumanising humans such as torturing them during incarceration is morally wrong. This is so, on the basis that being tortured does not necessarily mean that a person is insulted and verbally humiliated, but more so because the rights of the victim are violated; the will of the victim is turned against the victim herself; and, the victim is completely exposed to the torturer (Maier, 2011:107). According to Ralf Stoecker (2011:7), torture is not the only way of violating human dignity and, that the most common violation of human dignity is world hunger and poverty, since almost every individual is dependent on a sufficient satisfaction of his or her basic needs. In this regard, Peter Schaber (2011:151) posits that poverty violates the dignity of persons. He contends that a violation of human dignity is due to a lack of a basic good as a right to bodily integrity. For him, poverty and starvation violates dignity, insofar as poor and needy people are dependent on others in a degrading way.

Does *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) offer a countenance to the violence of dehumanisation? When humans are victimized, tortured or starved as unwanted beings such vile acts only occur because of the potentiality of humans to act inhumanely. *Ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is an invitation from Allāh Almighty to all of humanity to act in association and with civility. We are aptly reminded in the Qurān to respect the dignity of all human beings, and by implication, acting with *ta'arruf* cannot be a justification to advance the degradation and humiliation of all humans. In the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Isrā* – The Israelites (chapter 17:verse 70) humans are spoken of as being honoured by Allāh, so therefore, humans should not perpetuate dehumanising acts that only treat one another unjustly.

We have honoured the sons of Adam [humanity]; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our Creation.

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا

If Allāh affirms His honour of creation He bestowed on humans, they would violate His favour bestowed on humans. Humans do not have the moral right to deny one another's existence and to treat one another with disrespect as they have already been honoured by Allāh. And, the least humans could

do is to reciprocate Allāh's honour on humanity. In sum, the violence of dehumanisation only undermines human coexistence and interdependence. It is through dehumanisation that people become immersed in social enmity and rancour considered as tantamount to corrupting the earth (*fasād fi al-'ard*). Therefore, cultivating human interrelations on the basis of understanding and knowledge (*ta'arruf*) and mutual affection (*ta'āluḥ*) are pursuits of human excellence.

### ***Ta'arruf* as a way to advance environmental ethics, equality, and anti-corruption**

There is no doubt that environmental ethics is a practice that encourages humans to take care of the environment. The Qurān makes it clear that humans have a responsibility towards the environment. In *Sūrah al-Anbiyā'* – The Prophets (chapter 21:verses 30-33) the following is stated:

Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of Creation), before We clove them asunder? We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe? And We have set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with them and We have made therein broad highways (between mountains) for them to pass through: that they may receive guidance. And We have made the heavens as a canopy well-guarded: Yet do they turn away from the Signs which these things (point to)! It is He Who created the Night and the Day, and the sun and the moon: all (the celestial bodies) swim along each in its rounded course.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا \* وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ \*  
أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ \* وَجَعَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا فِجَاجًا سُبُلًا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ \*  
وَجَعَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ سَفًّاءَ مَحْفُوظَةً \* وَهُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا مُعْرِضُونَ \* وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ  
وَالْقَمَرَ \* كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ

Allāh Almighty is responsible for His creation and reminds humans that they not only have a relation with His creation but also a responsibility to learn from it and to care for it. Consequently, Allāh constantly asks humans to contemplate about what they observe in His creation because ultimately humans can advance towards Allāh through knowledge of His creation. Recognising their physical and spiritual connection with Allāh's creation, in particular the non-human world, humans are summoned by Allāh not only to learn about the universe and celestial bodies, the earth and its natural resources (especially water), and other living species but also to enact their responsibility towards the creations of Allāh. In this way, *ta'arruf*

(associational knowing among humans) should be a practice in pursuit of cultivating an environmental ethics whereby humans not only contemplate and respect the environment but also enhance its sustainability. In other words, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing among humans) requires that humans enact their ethical responsibility to the environment. Consequently, it becomes the duty of humans of *ta'arruf* to care for the environment which involves developing a renewed consciousness towards a decrease in plant life, biodiversity, wildlife, ecosystems, and climate change (Atfield, 2014).

## **Summary**

People of *ta'arruf* would not neglect their responsibility to cultivate their Anthropocene human influence on earth and would do something about the escalating global temperatures, the damaged caused to the Great Barrier Reef, rising ocean acidification, increases in global flooding, and the continual consumption of more than the production of the earth's resources. In line with the practice of *ta'arruf* humans are obliged to promote an environmental ethics that can assist in preserving the environment. If not, humans will be at risk and their flourishing would be curtailed by, for instance, the impact of pollution on health, and decreasing resources that influences the quality of human living.

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# TA'ARRUF AND A NON-DICHOTOMOUS UNDERSTANDING OF KNOWLEDGE

# 9

## Introduction

In this chapter, I argue, firstly, that knowledge is always constructed irrespective of whether the sources of knowledge are different. Considering the Qurān and Ḥadīth are distinctive sources of knowledge, the former associated with Allāh's guidance (*hudā*) and the latter with the Prophet's life experiences (*Sunnah*), such sources of knowledge are invariably interpreted by the human mind. Similarly, I show that physical, applied and social sciences are different sources of knowledge and are also constructed, reconstructed and even deconstructed by the human mind. Concomitantly, and secondly, I argue that the bifurcation of knowledge into revealed (*'ulūm al-naqliyyah*) and non-revealed (*'ulūm al-aqliyyah*) sciences, is a distinction that accentuates the different categorisations of knowledge but not a justification to bifurcate knowledge into transmitted and acquired or rational sciences. Thirdly, I show as to why the Islamisation of knowledge has emerged as an effort on the part of Muslims to harmonise knowledge that had been instigated by a dichotomous account of knowledge but has not been done successfully.

## On the sources of knowledge

That Allāh Almighty is knowledgeable of everything everywhere is confirmed by the Qurān in *Sūrah al-'An-ām* – The Cattle (chapter 6:verse 59):

With Him are the keys of the Unseen, the treasures that none knows but He. He knows whatever there is on the earth, and in the sea. Not a leaf does fall but with His knowledge: there is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered) but is (inscribed) in a Record Clear (to those who can read).

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِيحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْتَفْتُونَ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا  
حِثٌّ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

Of significance in this verse is that knowledge of Allāh's creation is in a Clear Book (*kitāb mubīn* – كِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ). Likewise, Allāh has the 'the keys of the Unseen, the treasures that no one knows' (مَفَاتِيحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ). By implication, for Muslims Allāh is the source of all knowledge on earth, sea and the environment. In this sense, at least for Muslims, Allāh is the all-Knower, the Originator or primary source of all knowledge. Of course, one might immediately question as to whether Allāh produced knowledge that is harmful to humans. The producer of knowledge is not responsible for acts of wrong-doing as embarking on irresponsible acts in the application of knowledge reside with humans who have been imbibed with reason to make choices about its use. The point is, according to the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Mulk* – The Kingdom (chapter 67:verse 14), Allāh knows everything and is the primary source of all knowledge (*'ilm*):

Should He not know – He created? And He is the One that understands the finest mysteries (and) is well-acquainted (with them).

إِلَّا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

According to the Qurān in *Sūrah Qāf* (chapter 50:verse 16):

'It was We who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein':

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

Of course, Allāh is aware of humans' indiscretions but this does not deny Allāh being the primary source of all knowledge. What follows from this argument is that Allāh is the primary source of all knowledge on the basis of which other sources of knowledge are construed or misconstrued for that matter. This makes the Qurān the primary source of knowledge known to Muslims. As Allāh says in *Sūrah al-Ḥijr* – The Rock (chapter 15:verse 9):

We have, without doubt sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption).

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1991:42) categorises the Qurān (its recitation and interpretation or *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*) under religious sciences (*'ulūm al-naqliyyah*). What is important to note is that its reading and

interpretation are human actions whereas the Qurān itself is *kitāb mubīn* – كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ or the primary source of all knowledge. Again as stated in *Sūrah Yūnus* (chapter 10:verse 15), the Qurān comprises Divine messages of Allāh that are unalterable such that even the Prophet (ﷺ) could not change its guidance:

But when Our Clear Signs are rehearsed unto them those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, say: 'Bring us a Reading other than this or change this'. Say: 'It is not for me, of my own accord to change it: I follow naught but what is revealed unto me: if I were to disobey my Lord, I should myself fear the Penalty of a Great Day (to come)'.

وَإِذَا تَنَزَّلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٌ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا أَتَنْتَ بِفُرْعَانٍ غَيْرِ هَذَا أَوْ بَدَّلَهُ ۗ قَالَ مَا يَتَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَبَدِّلَهُ ۗ مِنْ تَلْفَافٍ نَفْسِي ۗ إِنْ أَتَّبِعْ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ ۗ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

The immutability of the Qurān as the primary source of all knowledge is confirmed by the Prophet's admission that he had no hand in the guidance from Allāh and that he was only a recipient of such knowledge. Whereas for Muslims, the Qurān is the ultimate source of knowledge as it contains Allāh's guidance for humanity; Muslim scholars categorised knowledge into religious sciences (*'ulūm al-naqliyyah*) and rational, intellectual and philosophical sciences (*'ulūm al-aqliyyah*) (al-Attas, 1991:42-43). The following categorisation of the sciences is provided at length by al-Attas: On the one hand, religious sciences include, the recitation and interpretation of the Qurān; the *Sunnah* as the life experiences of the Prophets and past prophets coupled with its authoritative transmission of the *Aḥādīth* (Prophetic sayings); the *Sharī'ah* as jurisprudence and law; theology of God, His Essence, Attributes, Names and Acts (*al-tawhīd*); Islamic metaphysics (*al-tassawuf*) that includes, psychology, cosmology, ontology, philosophy; and the linguistics of Arabic, its grammar, lexicography and literature. On the other hand, rational, intellectual and philosophical sciences include, human sciences, natural sciences, applied sciences, and technological sciences. Under this category, the human sciences are expanded to include, comparative religion with an Islamic bias; Western culture and civilisation; Islamic languages other than Arabic; Islamic thought, culture and civilisation comprising of Islamic history, Islamic philosophy of science, and the development of the sciences in Islam (al-Attas, 1991:43). In line with al-Attas's categorisation of knowledge, Ghazali Basri (2015:217) posits that the Qurān is 'the source of all knowledge' and constitutes given knowledge that deals with 'faith, the unseen matters such as creation of the universe, life in the hereafter, divine reward and punishment and the like' and that all other forms of knowledge

are acquired by human reasoning, learning, and experience through the senses and can be categorised as 'intuitive, philosophical, intellectual, and sensory knowledge'.

Of course, the categorisation of sciences is important because it gives one an idea of what knowledge interests are pursued and what underlying assumptions constitute such knowledge interests. However, what I find somewhat disconcerting is that these categorisations make particular assumptions about knowledge that are not always tenable. In the first place categorising knowledge or science as 'religious' and contrasting it with knowledge or science that is 'rational, intellectual and philosophical' is an affirmation that faith is absent from rational knowledge and in turn, rationality is absent from religious knowledge. Surely for a Muslim faith is present in her pursuit of what is rational and rationality in turn organises her faith. Unless Muslims live compartmentalised lives they incorrectly assume that their rational pursuit of knowledge is independent of their faith in Allāh. Equally, one's faith in the Unseen can also be rationalised. That is, it is quite possible to think of one's creation in a rational way such as to offer justifications based on the Qurān itself. In this way, demarcating knowledge or science as 'given' (with faith) and 'acquired' is not necessarily a defensible categorisation. It is not that the actual categorisation of knowledge *per se* is defective but rather the demarcations under which such categories of knowledge are subsumed and organised seem somewhat implausible. For Muslims, it is not tenable to refer to religious sciences as distinct from rational sciences on the grounds that what is religious should be rational and conversely, what is rational should be religious. The point is, only the Qurān in itself is the only form of knowledge that is immutable and that all other forms of knowledge are subjected to construction and reconstruction. The Qurān has already been provided to us by Allāh and therefore, there is no reason to reconstruct it again. If so, Allāh's knowledge would have been tampered with which for obvious reasons are not the case. The *Sunnah* of the Prophet is an attempt to clarify the guidance of the Qurān which occurred under the supervision of Allāh Almighty. It is the first intersection of human agency (the Prophet) to make sense of Allāh's guidance for Muslims. In this regard, al-Attas (1991:41) is clear in his articulation that knowledge considered as 'given' and 'acquired' should be bridged through the human intellect ('*aql*') so that what is considered as 'given' and 'acquired' are not bifurcated forms of knowledge, but rather knowledge that are relational.

## **On the non-bifurcation of knowledge and constructive, reconstructive, and deconstructive inquiry**

So what does it mean for Muslims to embark on *ta'arruf* (associational knowing)? My position is that one of the reasons as to why Muslim higher education has been in intellectual decline is because of the erroneous bifurcation of knowledge. In relation to Islamic traditional sciences or Islamic studies, Rosnani Hashim (2015:110) has a similar view in the sense that she avoids knowledge bifurcations as 'secular and religious, as well as revealed and acquired, in order to assert the Islamicity of both sciences'. However, she uses a different depiction by referring to 'traditional sciences' – sciences based on the Prophet's Traditions and the Qurān – and 'intellectual sciences', that is, in reference to acquired sciences. And, in this regard, her enunciation of 'traditional' and 'intellectual' sciences also seem to succumb to an untenable bifurcation. There seems to be an assumption on Hashim's part that intellectualism has no bearing on what is traditional and tradition is unrelated to human intellect. Her position would be more tenable if she were to have made the argument for an integration of knowledge or science without her traditional-intellectual enunciation of knowledge.

Throughout this book, I have avoided references to 'Islamic knowledge' or 'Islamic science' or 'Islamic studies' on the basis that knowledge (*'ilm*) is a human construct that is continuously evolving without any claim to being absolute or certain. In this regard, al-Attas (1991) posits that knowledge as 'given and 'acquired' require both human intellect (*'aql*) for its understanding. For him, 'given' knowledge can be grasped through the spiritual senses whereas 'acquired' knowledge can be understood by means of the physical senses. And, in both instances, *'aql* (intellect) serves as bridge between the two forms of knowledge. Now knowledge (*'ilm*) derives from the Arabic verb *'alima* (to know) and that humans can and will never completely know – that is, they constantly strive to know on the basis of contemplation and intellectual exertion. The concept Islam is linked to completeness in reference to the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* – The Table, chapter 5:verse 3 – *الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا* ('This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion'). And, when one refers to 'Islamic knowledge' then the understanding is that such knowledge can have only one absolute understanding that cannot be the case as human interpretation

– construction, reconstruction and deconstruction – is always subject to alteration. In other words, new understanding based on human intellectual exertion (*ijtihād*) is always possible.

What follows from the above is that classifying knowledge as ‘Islamic’ versus ‘secular’ or ‘religious’ as distinct from ‘rational’ or ‘revealed’ from ‘acquired’ would be to be remiss of the distinctiveness about knowledge pursued by Muslims. When Muslims embark on *ta’arruf* they do so on the basis that they want to know in association with fellow-humans. The knowledge (*‘ilm*) that they construct and reconstruct – as some understandings might be rethought – happens on account of their intellectual exertions (*yajtahidūn*). Considering that Muslims are fallible beings their understandings are always incomplete and subject to further elucidation and scrutiny. Thus to bifurcate knowledge as if some knowledge requires further scrutiny and others not is to be remiss of the fact that human construction and reconstruction of knowledge is always in potentiality. It cannot be that knowledge (re) constructed by Muslims can ever be complete as that in itself would render the quest for knowledge superfluous and therefore not subject to any form of further inquiry. The Qurān in *Sūrah Ṭā Hā* (chapter 20:verse 114) considers the quest for knowledge as always in becoming and hence summons Muslims to pursue it endlessly:

High above all is Allāh, the King, the Truth! Be not in haste with the Qurān before its revelation to you is completed, but say ‘O my Lord! increase me in knowledge’.

فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ ۚ وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ ۚ وَ قُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

So when Muslims embark on the pursuit of knowledge (*‘ilm*) in association with others (*ta’arruf*) they do so relentlessly. They do not bifurcate knowledge because they presume that some knowledge does not require intellectual exertion whereas other knowledge should be pursued. In this sense, the bifurcation of knowledge cannot be a reason to limit one’s investigation into some knowledge. All knowledge should remain subjected to scrutiny on the basis that human constructions and reconstructions of knowledge can never be infallible. Fallibility only belongs to Allāh Almighty. It is in this sense that I understand a *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet (ﷺ) that states, ‘Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim’ – طَلِبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ (Ibn Majah, 224) to mean that Muslims should always be in pursuit of knowledge. And, when they categorise the sciences they do so on the basis of understanding and not to curtail further examination of knowledge or even assume that some knowledge does not require further investigation.

In light of the above understanding of knowledge, it does not make sense to bifurcate knowledge because doing so would not exonerate knowledge from further scrutiny. Categorising knowledge is something else as one would get some understanding of the actual sources of knowledge. But knowledge was never meant to be bifurcated as if meanings have no bearing on one another. Such a misconception about knowledge brings into discussion of what is central to inquiry. And, this is where I want to bring into the discussion the significance of philosophical thinking.

## On philosophical thinking about knowledge

In *Sūrah al-Baqarah* – The Cow (chapter 2:verse 151) reference is made to wisdom [*ḥikmah*] as follows:

A similar (favour have you already received) in that We have sent among you a Messenger of your own rehearsing to you Our signs, and purifying you, and instructing you in Scripture and wisdom [*ḥikmah*], and in new Knowledge.

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم  
مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ

In the above verse, the Qurān mentions that Allāh teaches wisdom (*ḥikmah*) in relation to that which one does not have any knowledge of. Again, the Qurān in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* – The Cow (chapter 2:verse 269) explains wisdom as follows:

He grants wisdom to whom He pleases; and he to whom wisdom is granted receives indeed a benefit overflowing; but none will grasp the message but men [people] of understanding.

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Here, wisdom (*ḥikmah*) is used in the context of human understanding in the sense that one cannot claim to have been granted wisdom without any understanding. From my reading of wisdom (*ḥikmah*) in the Qurān one can deduce the following meanings: wisdom (*ḥikmah*) is a form of thinking that humans exercise when they exert themselves to scrutinize matters; wisdom (*ḥikmah*) is evoked through rigorous reflection on the Qurānic guidance from Allāh; and wisdom (*ḥikmah*) is a form of thinking that inspires humans to think about that which they have not given thought to before. In this way, wisdom (*ḥikmah*) can be recognised as a philosophical way of thinking through which one asks questions that enable one to move beyond taken-for-granted understandings. Whereas, knowledge is constructed through reason

(*'aql*), reconstructed through reflection (*fahm*) and contemplation (*tadabbur*), it can be looked at in a way not thought of before through intellectual exertion (*ijtihad*) so that new meanings come to the fore on the basis of applying (*hikmah*) – a matter of looking at things in a deconstructionist way. In this way, wisdom (*hikmah*) seems to be a form of philosophical thinking that uses deconstruction in the sense that meanings are derived on the basis of looking insightfully at a text but then to ask questions about what is not present in one's understanding of a text – that is a matter of looking beyond that which confronts one's thinking.

## **On the polemic of the Islamisation of knowledge**

The Islamisation of knowledge idea that called for the integration of different categorisations of knowledge made famous by Syed Naquib al-Attas (1980) and Isma'il al-Fauqi (1982) seemed to have reached an impasse. Whereas al-Attas (1991) blames deislamisation through which alien concepts have been infused into the intellectualism of Muslims, Hashim (2015:111) attributes the failure of Islamisation to the decline of intellectualism in Muslim higher education. According to Hashim (2015:112) many graduates 'are not critical, creative, or original in their thinking ... [and] lack the Islamic intellectualism ...'. More poignantly, she avers that Muslim teachers 'cannot articulate a lot of pressing contemporary issues especially in a multi-faith society ... [and] our Islamic education system has failed to bring the Islamic traditional sciences to bear on others spheres of life' (Hashim, 2015:112). The most important reason as to why Muslims fail in their endeavour to Islamise knowledge, she purports, is because 'nowhere are they encouraged to question, discuss, debate, challenge, or argue over ideas' (Hashim, 2015:123). My understanding of Hashim's criticism towards Muslim higher education is that Muslim students lack the philosophical capacity – wisdom (*hikmah*) to make credible judgments on the basis of their learning. In this regard, I support Hashim's (2015:136) recommendation that philosophy be reintroduced into the curriculum of Muslim higher education. In her words,

I have recommended the reintroduction of philosophy, in particular the history and philosophy of science and religion, for specialists in the Islamic traditional studies in order to meet the need for intellectualism as well as the reintroduction of *tasawwuf* to refine their hearts (Hashim, 2015:136).

I think another reason as to why Islamisation proves to be unsuccessful is because of the bifurcation of knowledge into 'traditional' and 'intellectual' sciences. Despite Muslim efforts to bridge the dichotomy between two

exclusive understandings of knowledge by means of a 'unifying' conception of knowledge (Basri, 2015:221) such efforts will invariably be more challenging because the problem of knowledge is a conceptual one that does not merely require instrumental imposition. By this I mean that it is not just a matter of designing unifying courses such as 'Islamic worldview; Philosophy of Islamic education and Comparative Study of Religions' to connect the realms of religious sciences and non-religious sciences, as Basri (2015:228) asserts. Rather, what is required is a philosophical thinking of *ḥikmah* that can rupture understandings that dichotomised knowledge in the first place.

## **Summary**

The Qurān in its multiple references to *ḥikmah* (wisdom) actually introduces the practice of philosophical thinking so necessary to pursue knowledge in association with others (*ta'arruf*). It is for this reason that the next chapter is devoted to a discussion of a Muslim university of thinking on the basis that such a university cannot be detached from pursuing *ḥikmah* as a wise means of pursuing philosophical thinking.

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# 10

## TOWARDS A UNIVERSITY OF ASSOCIATIONAL KNOWING (JĀMI'ATU AL-TA'ARRUF)

### Introduction

Any discussion of the idea of a Muslim university would be inadequate without an analysis of the monumental intellectual efforts by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1991) in his establishment of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation – ISTAC – on 4 October 1991. My own experiences during a short visit to ISTAC in 1997 suggests that the Muslim institute of higher learning functioned as a university. For al-Attas, a Muslim university reflects virtues of a universal human being such as intellect, spirit, wisdom, courage, temperance and justice in harmony with the natural environment (Wan Daud, 1998:176). Thus, for al-Attas the Muslim university reflects a person of *adab* (goodness). At ISTAC al-Attas organised the curriculum around three broad interconnected categories called, Islamic Thought, Islamic Science and Islamic Civilisation. Of interest to me, is the focus on philosophy as *falsafah-hikmah*, *tasawwuf-irfān* (metaphysics), and theology that all formed part of Islamic Thought (Wan Daud, 1998:197). These courses formed the foundation of Islamic Science and Islamic Civilisation. What is quite significant about al-Attas's conception of *ta'dīb* (good education) is that it constitutes the aims of his notion of a Muslim university: 'to conceptualise, clarify, elaborate and define key concepts relevant to cultural, educational, scientific and epistemological problems encountered by Muslims in the present age; [and] to provide an Islamic response to the intellectual and cultural challenges of the modern world and various schools of thought, religion, and ideology' (Wan Daud, 1998:200).

Now expositions about knowledge, understanding, thinking, reflection, education, and practices constitute most of the arguments within the previous chapters. Premised on what has been argued in the previous

chapters, and being cognisant of al-Attas's idea of a Muslim university with a focus on philosophy as *falsafah-ḥikmah*, I now offer an account of a university of associational knowing where Muslims can embark on encounters with humans, understandings, and conceptions of knowledge framed within an understanding of acting wisely and philosophically – that is, with *ḥikmah*.

## **In defence of a university of associational knowing**

A university of knowing where teachers and students gather (*jāma'a*) in association is one where they engage with one another about knowledge. So a university (*jāmi'ah*) is a place where scholars engage in meaning making on the grounds that they strive towards getting to know this or that and how. Simply put, a university of knowing is where scholars perform *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion) on the basis of which they come to know. Scholars (*ulamā*) become knowledgeable on account of everyone advancing the pursuit of knowledge with openness and reflectiveness towards knowledge they engage with, share with others and even disagree on. Thus, a university of knowing is premised on the actions of critique and dissent scholars embark on in relation to knowledge. Without analyses, critique and dissent a university of knowing would not constitute a university at all. It is on the basis of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) that scholars gather in the pursuit making critical and dissenting judgments in and about knowledge of which failing to do so would undermine what a university stands for. A university of knowing is so on the basis that its scholars (*ulamā*) open themselves up to one another as they endeavour to construct, reconstruct and deconstruct knowledge on the basis of *ḥikmah*.

When university scholars pursue knowledge through (re)construction and deconstruction they are engaged in the activity of research. By research I refer to a combination of fundamental or basic research – or research that has a concern for knowledge, truth and the disinterested exercise of reason – together with end-oriented research that can be applied or used for some end-oriented purpose. In other words theoretical (fundamental) and technological (end-oriented) research are both important for humanity. Research in this way would invariably have benefits for the individual or group of researchers and the broader public because 'it integrates the basic into the end-oriented ... the purely rational into the technical' (Derrida, 2004:145). In this way, Muslim *ulama* would become a community of wisdom (*ḥikmah*) – *ulu al-bāb* (people of contemplation) – in the sense that their rigorous analyses would not only be academic (theoretical) but also of

practical use to humanity so that the university of associational knowing represents society. Such a university would provoke its scholars to think and act responsibly towards humanity. With theoretical (fundamental) and practical (end-oriented) orientations towards research a university of associational knowing would become attentive to a 'society's scenography, its views, conflicts, contradictions, its play and its differences, and also its desire for organic union in a total body' (Derrida, 2004:154).

My interest in a university of associational knowing (*ta'arruf*) is its attentiveness to advance 'organic union in a total body' which suggests that such a university ought to advance the pursuit of knowledge on the basis of critique, mutuality and reasoned dissent, and the quest for truth and justice. Firstly, a university of critique is one that is open to forms of techno-scientific (theoretico-practical), non-bifurcated knowledge. Through critique, such knowledge is interrogated, affirmed, and sometimes troubled (deconstructed). Put differently, critique is thinking that provokes university teachers and students to look for possibilities that are not yet and where they take risks with rigorous reasons, questioning and competence as they enact their responsibilities towards humanity.

Secondly, a university of mutuality and reasoned dissent allows for thoughtful deliberation among teachers and students and where the cohesive (mutual) desire for knowledge is never without the possibility of dissent (disagreement). When scholars indulge in mutuality and reasoned dissent they encourage reading, interpretation and writing on the basis of the freedom to speak out in union about their theoretical and practical judgments. Mutuality and reasoned dissent demand that scholars act autonomously without being conditioned by the university to not take up a position. Together scholars pursue readings and interpretations of texts, and embark on argumentation where both agreement and dissensus become possible. In this way, a university of associational knowing judges, criticises rigorously, discerns between truth and untruth, and decides freely between just and unjust (Derrida, 2004:97).

Thirdly, a university of associational knowing should always be concerned with truth and justice about knowledge and its relevance to society. Consequently, such a university has to become a genuine institution of *hikmah* that takes a position on the most ethico-juridical problems that face humanity. A university concerned with truth and justice will have to make judgments about global cataclysms that cause humanity's self-destruction. This includes, making truthful judgments about phenomena, in particular

that which involve, the prevalence of autocratic totalitarian regimes whereby citizens are politically and economically excluded resulting in rampant migrations; the overt and covert physical and psychological torture of humans who show dissent; the hegemony of huge techno-scientific powers that promote organ transplants, and genetic manipulation; and with respect to the university itself, the denial of philosophical thinking in faculties of theology, law, medicine, and nowadays even education. As Derrida (2004:199) puts it, a 'new problematic' of the rights of humans in relation to politics, religion, and health calls for a different encounter with the philosophical. The point is, the practice of *ḥikmah* (what I interpreted as philosophical wisdom) cannot disappear from a university of associational knowing. Instead, a university of knowing calls for a resurgence of *ḥikmah* that can respond with a renewed interest to ethico-juridical problems in the world today. What I am calling for is a recourse to philosophical thinking that can be truly resistant to crises pertaining to psychoanalysis, militarisation, urbanism, the media, disease, death, torture, and starvation in the world today. It is a philosophical thinking of *ḥikmah* that can contribute towards Muslims making new incursions in the fields of knowledge today, whether in the fields of mathematics, logic, natural science, human or social science. But then such a university of associational knowing has to open itself to a renewed form of philosophical thinking (*ḥikmah*).

In conclusion, a university of associational knowing is an *active* university of *ḥikmah* that encourages the exploration and (re)organisation of the spaces of knowledge in all spheres of the academy thus rendering the university a place that puts into question that which is hierarchised. It is a university that engages its scholars openly, freely and pluralistically in an atmosphere of intellectual hospitality and cooperation urging one another towards new openings and possibilities. In this way, such a university genuinely evokes teachers and students towards a thinking that is constituted by *tadabbur* (contemplative thought), *ijtihād* (intellectual exertion), and where *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) is everywhere. Only then, it would be possible for a university to propose new interpretations and interventions that can unlock 'transversal breakthroughs' in knowledge (Derrida, 2004:210) beyond concerns with hierarchy and interdisciplinarity in and about knowledge. Through transversality a university would be able to organise knowledge beyond the integration and intersection of established disciplines of knowledge.

After all, knowledge from Allāh is universal but its construction, reconstruction and deconstruction involve the agency of humans, as Muslims indebted to Allāh Almighty for the honour He bestowed on us with His creation. We are human agents that have been put on this earth with a responsibility towards one another as humans in honour of Allāh's magnificence – His mercy, compassion, care and love for humanity. We cannot live a good life as humans in the pursuit of our flourishing without understanding and exerting ourselves wisely in the quest for knowledge. We are knowledge beings who have the capacity to make sense of Allāh's knowledge although we have our limitations to completely understand its vastness and timelessness. Al-Attas (1991:41) is quite clear in his depiction of Allāh's knowledge which he refers to as 'God-given knowledge'. And, al-Attas (1991:41) specifically connects such knowledge as referring to 'man's spiritual faculties and senses'. In other words, following al-Attas (1991:40-41) Allāh's knowledge refers to humans' 'spiritual faculties and senses', in particular, his or her soul (*rūh*), inner self (*nafs*), and spiritual organ – heart – of cognition (*fu'ād*). In other words, when engaging with Allāh's knowledge humans are required to use their spiritual (inner) faculties and senses. However, in dealing with knowledge that is acquired, al-Attas (1991:41) explains that humans use their bodies, physical faculties and senses. Yet, following al-Attas (1991:41) the connecting link between the spiritual and the physical, or given and acquired, is humans' use of their intellect ('*aql*) that enables them to understand spiritual reality and truth. In relation to such a use of '*aql* (intellect), *ḥikmah* (wisdom) seems to be highly relevant. At least we have the means to understand Allāh's knowledge on the basis of exercising *ḥikmah* (wise philosophical pursuit) or what al-Attas refers to as *falsafah-ḥikmah* (philosophical wisdom) (Wan Daud, 1998) as we endeavour to come to know one another with our responsibilities as humans, as Muslims, through *ta'arruf*. As Allāh Almighty reminds us in the Glorious Qurān in *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* – The Family of Amran (chapter 3:verse 18):

There is no god but He: that is the witness of Allāh, His angels and those endued with knowledge, standing firm on justice. There is no god but He, the Exalted in Power, the Wise.

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَابِئًا بِأَلْفِ سِتْرٍ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

## Summary

Allāh's knowledge is infinite and He remains the Ultimate, the Wise and therefore, such knowledge can and will never be exhausted. Yet, on the basis of *ta'arruf* (associational knowledge) humans have the opportunity to use their *'aql* (intellect) and *ḥikmah* (philosophical thinking) to expand their understanding of such knowledge at a Muslim university. As al-Attas (1991:41) so aptly reminds us in relation to Allāh's knowledge '... such knowledge is fluid and increases in scope and content as one increases in maturity and responsibility, and according to one's capacities and potentials'.

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In this book, Yusef Waghid constitutes his argument in defence of ta'arruf (associational knowing) as an expanded conception of ta'dib (good education). In the first part of the book he elucidates Abu Bakr Effendi's position on a Muslim educational philosophy which can be couched as rational, pragmatic and critical. As a backdrop to this, in the second part of the book, he argues for a notion of Muslim educational philosophy according to ta'arruf (associational knowing) on the basis that it enhances the notion of an autonomous self and its capabilities; summons different people to engage in deliberative encounters; and provokes the self to be reflectively open towards that which remains in becoming. This leads him to posit that ta'arruf (associational knowing) has the potential to cultivate humanity. His notion of ta'arruf extends practices of tarbiyyah (rearing), ta'lim (learning), and ta'dib (good education) associated with Muslim educational philosophy.



Yusef Waghid is among Africa's leading philosophers of education today and has been Professor (since 2002), Distinguished Professor (since 2014), and Dean of Education (between 2007 and 2012; and in 2017) at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. He is the recipient of the prestigious Education Research in Africa Award: Outstanding Mentor of Education Researchers (2015) from the Association for the Development of Education in Africa. He is internationally renowned for his ongoing research on African philosophy of higher education, and democratic citizenship education and recently published his highly acclaimed *Towards a Philosophy of Caring in Higher Education: Pedagogy and Nuances of Care* (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2019); and *Rupturing African Philosophy of Teaching and Learning: Ubuntu Justice and Education* (New York & London: Palgrave-MacMillan, co-authored with Faiq Waghid & Zayd Waghid, 2018).

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ISBN 978-1-928357-76-6



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